

Jesus' Life is Our Life
Acts #8 | 5:12-42
October 4, 2020

Pre-Sermon Remarks

- I was *not* in Spokane last weekend, I was in Deer Park | The Vine Community
 - 40 min away, like Seattle to Carnation, WA

PRAYER

Introduction

- Originally, people didn't know what to call the Jesus movement
 - The Way | Acts 9:2 (Saul going to find those belonging to The Way)
 - Christians | Acts 11:26 (in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians)
 - Atheists | Church history (martyrdom of Polycarp, *away with the atheists*)
 - This Life | Acts 5:20 (Go stand in the temple, and tell the people all about this life)
- Questions:
 - Instead of "how are you?", say "how is your life?"
 - Instead of "what do you do?", say "tell me about your life."
 - This often generates much more interesting conversation!
- Christ is our life | **Colossians 3** ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.
 - Not an add-on or a hobby, but the very core of who we are
 - To take it one step further, our life becomes inseparable from Christ's life

Big idea: To know Jesus is to have his life become our life.

- This life comes with incredible joys and blessings, but it also comes with some challenges

I. Tell the Story | Passage

¹²Many signs and wonders were being done among the people through the hands of the apostles. They were all together in Solomon's Colonnade. ¹³No one else dared to join them, but the people spoke well of them. ¹⁴Believers were added to the Lord in increasing numbers—multitudes of both men and women.

- Did nobody join, or were increasing numbers joining? Yes!
- Ajith Fernando *The church did not lower its standards in order to win the lost.*

¹⁵As a result, they would carry the sick out into the streets and lay them on cots and mats so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them.

- *As a result of being added...these are **Christians** who want to get closer.*

¹⁶In addition, a multitude came together from the towns surrounding Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

- People starting to come in from Jerusalem, setting up the next stage in the story!

¹⁷Then the high priest rose up. He and all who were with him, who belonged to the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.

- Official party in charge. Jealous of what?

¹⁸ So they arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. ¹⁹ But an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail during the night, brought them out, and said, ²⁰ “Go and stand in the temple, and tell the people all about this life.” ²¹ Hearing this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach.

- Miraculous deliverance! And miraculously boldness to go right back out and preach.

When the high priest and those who were with him arrived, they convened the Sanhedrin—the full council of the Israelites—and sent orders to the jail to have them brought. ²² But when the servants got there, they did not find them in the jail; so they returned and reported, ²³ “We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing in front of the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” ²⁴ As the captain of the temple police and the chief priests heard these things, they were baffled about them, wondering what would come of this. ²⁵ Someone came and reported to them, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple and teaching the people.” ²⁶ Then the commander went with the servants and brought them in without force, because they were afraid the people might stone them.

- *Imagine a world where there was tension between law enforcement and the people*

²⁷ After they brought them in, they had them stand before the Sanhedrin, and the high priest asked, ²⁸ “Didn’t we strictly order you not to teach in this name? Look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.”

- These specific leaders were responsible for Jesus’ death.

²⁹ Peter and the apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than people.

- Remember what I said about civil disobedience: worship of God, preservation of life.

³⁰ The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had murdered by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted this man to his right hand as ruler and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³² We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.”

- Once again, the healing is in service of the gospel message

³³ When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. ³⁴ But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was respected by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered the men to be taken outside for a little while.

- Gamaliel is mentioned one other time, Acts 22, as Saul’s (Paul’s) mentor
- He is a wise leader, reasonable, willing to work to bring people together

³⁵ He said to them, “Men of Israel, be careful about what you’re about to do to these men. ³⁶ Some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, and all his followers were dispersed and came to nothing. ³⁷ After this man, Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and attracted a following. He also perished, and all his followers were scattered.

- Jesus of Nazareth was not the only claimant to be the Messiah in this time

³⁸ So in the present case, I tell you, stay away from these men and leave them alone. For if this plan or this work is of human origin, it will fail; ³⁹ but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even be found fighting against God.”

- Sometimes, the most godly course of action is to do nothing and trust in a) God’s sovereignty, b) the fickleness of people, c) time’s ability to reveal things

They were persuaded by him. ⁴⁰ After they called in the apostles and had them flogged, they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus and released them.

- A more severe punishment than the night before

⁴¹ Then they went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be treated shamefully on behalf of the Name. ⁴² Every day in the temple, and in various homes, they continued teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

II. Blessings of the Jesus Life

1. Forgiveness | Acts 5:31 [Jesus came] to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.
 - a. Cut off from the tree of life, now a new tree of life stands on the hill of Calvary
2. Holy Spirit | Acts 5:32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.
 - a. Luke, of all the gospel authors, emphasizes the HS role in Jesus' life and ministry
 - b. The Holy Spirit is the life of Jesus within us | Rom. 8 "the same Spirit"
3. Restoration | Acts 5:16 the sick and those who were tormented by unclean spirit...were all healed.
 - a. The life of Jesus heals us, and empowers us to be healers
4. Community | Acts 5:14, 42 Believers were added to the Lord in increasing numbers—multitudes of both men and women...Every day in the temple, and in various homes, they continued teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.
 - a. Jesus said the world would know that we belong to him by our love for each other
 - b. True community comes from the life of the Triune God, three persons, one love
5. Perseverance | Acts 5:41-42 Then they went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be treated shamefully on behalf of the Name. Every day...they continued teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.
 - a. Jesus persevered to the end, the cross itself, his life in us enables us to persevere
 - b. Related: suffer for the gospel, not for being a fool | **1 Peter 3** *If you suffer for good, you are blessed. But don't suffer for being a fool or doing evil.*

III. Challenges of the Jesus Life

1. Marginalization
 - a. In the context of the Roman empire, these disciples were a minority, fringe
 - i. Our context: "moral majority" | foreign idea to these disciples
 - b. Myeong's analogy - ambassador to a nation that hates them (US/N. Korea)
 - i. Stephen Biegun served as *special representative* to NK, *Dennis Rodman*
 - c. **Jon Tyson** We need a vision that is not based on a fear of a godless future, or a longing for an idealized past, but a rich presence in our own time that inspires the beauty and possibility of Christ's church. The good news is that the church has advanced and borne beautiful fruit in cultural situations much more complex and challenging than our own. The advancement of the Kingdom of God does not depend on the cultural situation in which we find ourselves, nor upon our own

performance in response. Rather, we are invited to follow the way of Jesus in His great redemptive work in our time.

2. Uncertainty
 - a. Things in this story are varied, not consistent with the rest of Acts
 - i. Prison stays are not always the same | One time freed, another time flogged
 - ii. Healings are not always the same | Peter's shadow (nowhere else)
 - iii. End of story is not the same | (ch. 11) Peter freed, James is executed
 - b. To belong to Jesus is to have absolute certainty that we are loved by God, saved from eternal death. But, to belong to Jesus is to face uncertainty.
 - i. Jesus in Luke 9, *Foxes have holes, birds have nests...*
 - c. **ARMENIA UPDATE | massive uncertainty in need of prayer**

Practical Application

How do we experience the life of Jesus in a more tangible way?

****Become a Christian!!****

1. Practical: eliminate distractions
 - a. These disciples were laser-focused on the Jesus life
 - b. Podcasts, sports, politics, social media
2. Spiritual: formative habits
 - a. Scripture, prayer, community, silence, fasting
 - b. Lord's Table as eating and drinking the life of Jesus into our lives
3. Mental: meditate on blessings and challenges

Benediction | Adapted from 1 Peter 3:14-17

Even if we should suffer for righteousness, we are blessed. We will not fear or be intimidated. In our hearts, we will regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks for a reason for the hope that is within us. We will do this with gentleness and respect, for it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Sermon Description

Peter and John face increasing opposition from the religious and political leaders, and find themselves in prison. When an angel shows up to free them, he gives them one instruction: go tell people about “this life.” This phrase is important to understanding what it means to follow Jesus. When God saves us, the very life of Jesus becomes our life, a life that comes with both blessings and challenges.

Discussion Questions

1. One of the primary ways that the Bible speaks about salvation is the idea of “death to life.” How have you seen this idea play out in your own life and salvation? What does it mean to you personally that Jesus’ very life has become *your* life?
2. Of the blessings highlighted in this passage (forgiveness, Holy Spirit, restoration, perseverance, community), which one are you most grateful for? Which one do you need to spend more time thinking about?
3. What distractions, fears, etc. keep you from regularly experiencing the life of Jesus in your own life? What changes do you need to make in order to live the life that Jesus has for you?
4. As our culture pushes historic, orthodox Christianity to the margins, how can we cultivate an attitude of “rejoicing that we would be counted worthy to be treated shamefully on behalf of the Name”? How can we suffer like Jesus, without arguing and complaining?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would experience the life of Jesus in greater measure as individuals and as a church community.
2. Pray that we would rejoice in the blessings of Jesus’ life, and that we would embrace the challenges with an attitude of rejoicing.

For Further Study

- [*Creative Minority*](#) by Jon Tyson. This short book is very helpful in helping Christians learn how to live in the margins of a non-Christian society.