



APOSTLES

OF THE APOSTLES

# THE POWER OF PERSECUTION

## ACTS 4:5-37

What should we do when persecution comes? The Christians of the early church knew the answer: pray so that God's mighty hand could work in His power.

- St. Augustine said, *“Pray as though everything depended on God, and work as though everything depended on you.”*
- Prayer is not an escape from responsibility, it is our *response to God's ability.*
- True prayer energizes us for service and battle.

# DEFENDING HIS NAME v. 4:5-14

## 1. THE COURT CONVENES v. 5-7

The Jewish religious system had become so corrupt that the offices were passed from one relative to another without regard for the Word of God.

## 2. THE CASE IS PRESENTED v. 8-14

Since the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, Peter's statement was almost a declaration of war!

## 3. THE PROBLEM WITH THE OPPOSITION v. 13-14

# OPPOSING HIS NAME v. 4:15-22

1. THEIR DELIBERATION v. 15-18
2. THEIR CONCLUSION
3. THE FAILURE OF THE COUNCIL v. 19-22

All of us need to make our decisions on the basis of “*Is it righteous?*” and not “IS IT POPULAR?” or “IS IT SAFE?”

- To begin with, each of these “objectors” had a message from God that could not be questioned.
- Second, their convictions touched every area of their lives.
- Note also that our examples from the Bible acted with respect and courtesy, even when they defied the law.

# THE CHURCH: CALLING ON HIS NAME v. 4:23-31

The greatest concentration of power in Jerusalem that day was in the prayer meeting that followed the trial.

- This is one of the truly great prayers recorded in the Bible, and it is a good example for us to follow.
- Unfortunately, today there is little sense of urgency and danger because most of us are comfortable in our Christian walk.

**The early church strongly believed in God's sovereignty and praying for His perfect plan for His people.**

**FAITH IN A SOVEREIGN LORD** is a tremendous encouragement for *God's people to keep serving the Lord when the going is difficult.* **Persecution can bring power.**

- They did not ask for protection, they asked for power.
- They did not ask for fire from heaven to destroy the enemy. See **LUKE 9:51-56.**
- But for power from heaven to preach the Word and heal the sick. See **MATT. 5:10-12, 43-48.**
- Believing prayer releases God's power and enables God's hand to move. **ISA. 50:2, 64:1-8**