

## **SEPT 19<sup>TH</sup> 2004: ACTS 5:17-42: MIRACLES SERIES: Triumphant thro Suffering**

**The book of Acts is one of the history books...**Presenting the story of the church....from its earliest beginnings in Jerusalem

**Commencing in chapter 2 with Pentecost.....it speaks of a period of time....  
both exciting & dangerous**

**A time, v13 of chpt 5 tells us.....when the young church was held in high regard by  
but they feared joining with them...→ Attracted by the excitement.....but fearful of .....**

Yet despite that the very next verse says:

***Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and  
were added to their number***

**It was not the age of seeker sensitive services.....where the aim was to attract people**

**But a time when people knew...that to become a Christian  
was to choose a hard & dangerous life.....But the power of God's Spirit compelled  
till they could do nothing less...than become part of this exciting movement of God**

**The passage read today....from 5:17-42.....revolves around the leaders of the church  
The Apostles**

**And presents a graphic account.....of the **PRESSURE** they lived under  
The **POWER** they lived by  
And the **PASSION** for sharing.....that consumed them**

**What we see here is what the filling of the Spirit is all about  
And I believe that we find it both attractive.....and scarey**

**THIS ACCOUNT.....SHOWS FOUR THINGS:-**

- **THE POWERLESSNESS OF THE ENEMIES OF CHRIST**
- **THE MIGHTY POWER OF GOD**
- **THE TRIUMPHS AND TRIALS OF THE BELIEVERS**
- **THE OVERCOMING POWER OF PRAISE**

**The High Priest...his cronies**....Sadducees....were at the very least consistent in their enmity against Jesus the Christ-

→**Resp for crucifying the Master**....they now persecute His followers  
And v17 tells us why.....**They were filled with jealousy**

*It's an interesting comparison*

*The disciples filled with Spirit.....and these people...filled with jealousy !!!*

Because of that jealousy.....they threw the Apostles into prison

**The problem for the authorities was**....not the first time they had tried force to contain  
And it hadn't worked

**They had locked up Peter and John**.....dragged them b4 the council.....  
And all they had achieved by that.....was to give Peter an opport to preach....

**AND**

**It was after that time of extreme danger**.....that the whole church prayed for boldness  
To continue preaching.....even tho.....been warned on the threat of death not to.

**AND PREACH THEY DID**

And people were drawn into the church

**AND so now**.....the authorities had to make good on their threat  
Which they did by locking all

**Already we see the powerlessness.....**

We can imagine.....in frustration.....WHAT can we do to stop them ????

**WELL at least...throw them all.....public jail =>Stop them for a while !!!**

**HOW WRONG THEY WERE !!**      5:19-20.....

**Note the instructions of the angel.....v20 go tell....**  
**Nothing will stop the Lord getting His message across (CHINA)**

**OF COURSE...THE POWERLESSNESS OF.....**  
**IS BECAUSE OF THE MIGHTY POWER OF GOD**

**He wants them out of prison**.....so He sends an angel to free them  
**But His power is more obvious than that**  
God deliberately makes a mockery of the opposition

**Look at 5:21b.....**

**Then to really cap it off.....God uses one of the enemy.....Gamaliel**.....  
To confirm God's power.....5:38-39.....

**God's power is still as great....still uses it to extend the message**  
(*In the book the Heavenly Man...there is the story of his escape from prison....p254* )

**What else comes thro.....in this account however**  
Concerns the TRIUMPHS AND TRIALS of the believer

**The powerlessness of.....**and the Almighty power of.....didn't mean .....  
A total absence of suffering.....

**The Apostles had their triumphs**  
Miraculously released from prison.....huge triumph::::**THEY also had their trials**  
**Acts 5:40.....**

*(Since the release of the Film...The Passion... have become more aware...flogging )*

**Yet they rejoiced.....**despite the pain they endured for the Gospel.....v41-42.....  
IT's here that we see.....**THE OVERCOMING POWER OF PRAISE**

**How different to the way we have become.....**Some 2,000yrs later...here in Australia

**Too often we give up b4 we even begin**

**We too often hesitate to share.....**because of the possible  
pain...cost....humiliation.....of doing so

**These people praised God.....**4 the joy of being able to suffer 4 the sake of the Gospel

And it was that joy.....that overcome all that Satan could throw at them

*(Diana Thomas.....p11 Australian Stories For the heart )*

**The Greatest miracle in this passage.....**is not their miraculous release

It's the effective and ongoing growth of church.....DESPITE the opposition

**THAT'S THE SAME MIRACLE** GOD WILL WORK THRO HIS PEOPLE TODAY

As long as we.....like the Apostles .....are ready to see the inconvenience....cost...pain

**That are part and parcel of sharing**

As both our joy and privilege

**Because of all that Jesus has first done for us.**