



HOME GROUP STUDY

26th July 2026

Series: Signs of a growing church
Acts 5:17-42

17 But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy 18 they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. 19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 20 “Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.” 21 And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach.

Now when the high priest came, and those who were with him, they called together the council and all the senate of the people of Israel and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22 But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison, so they returned and reported, 23 “We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them we found no one inside.” 24 Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them, wondering what this would come to. 25 And someone came and told them, “Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.” 26 Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people.

27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, 28 saying, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us.” 29 But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. 31 God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

33 When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. 34 But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honour by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. 35 And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. 36 For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. 37 After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. 38 So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; 39 but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!” So they took his advice, 40 and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name. 42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

QUESTIONS

1. Look back at Acts ch2 – ch5. How would you summarise the first weeks of the church?
What is different between what we see then and what we see in our church in Chorleywood in 21st century? We see signs, wonders and healings in these chapters; why do we not see so much of these today?
2. The Jewish authorities were jealous of the early church because they were afraid of losing their influence and power (Acts 5 v17).
What examples of jealousy or opposition have you faced? How did you face it? – compare with v40 (“persuasion” to stop preaching) and v41 (“counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name”).
3. Look at v27-32. Peter is responding to the high priest.
What stands out for you in what he says and the way he says it?
4. V19-20 and v41-42. The apostles’ response to hardship: to share the gospel. Also read ch4 v29-31, which follows Peter and John’s first overnight in prison for preaching.
How do we compare with that today?
5. What has stood out for you in our journey through Acts over past few weeks?
How might your Christian journey be changed by it? – pray for boldness for that change, the same boldness the early church sought.