

eKids: Sun 18th July

We're back in Acts again! Today we will see that...

God is powerful and will keep helping His people to spread the good news!
(So don't give up telling people about Jesus)

Acts 5:17-42

Then the High Priest and all his companions, members of the local party of the Sadducees, became extremely jealous of the apostles; so they decided to take action. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But that night an angel of the Lord opened the prison gates, led the apostles out, and said to them,

"Go and stand in the Temple, and tell the people all about this new life."

The apostles obeyed, and at dawn they entered the Temple and started teaching. The High Priest and his companions called together all the Jewish elders for a full meeting of the Council; then they sent orders to the prison to have the apostles brought before them. But when the officials arrived, they did not find the apostles in prison, so they returned to the Council and reported,

"When we arrived at the jail, we found it locked up tight and all the guards on watch at the gates; but when we opened the gates, we found no one inside!"

When the chief priests and the officer in charge of the Temple guards heard this, they wondered what had happened to the apostles. Then a man came in and said to them,

"Listen! The men you put in prison are in the Temple teaching the people!"

So the officer went off with his men and brought the apostles back. They did not use force, however, because they were afraid that the people might stone them. They brought the apostles in, made them stand before the Council, and the High Priest questioned them.

"We gave you strict orders not to teach in the name of this man," he said; "but see what you have done! You have spread your teaching all over Jerusalem, and you want to make us responsible for his death!"

Peter and the other apostles answered,

"We must obey God, not men. The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from death, after you had killed him by nailing him to a cross. God raised him to his right side as Leader and Saviour, to give the people of Israel the opportunity to repent and have their sins forgiven. We are witnesses to these things—we and the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to those who obey him."

When the members of the Council heard this, they were so furious that they wanted to have the apostles put to death. But one of them, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, who was a teacher of the Law and was highly respected by all the people, stood up in the Council. He ordered the apostles to be taken out for a while, and then he said to the Council,

"Fellow Israelites, be careful what you do to these men. You remember that Theudas appeared some time ago, claiming to be somebody great, and about four hundred men joined him. But he was killed, all his followers were scattered, and his movement died out. After that, Judas the Galilean appeared during the time of the census; he drew a crowd after him, but he also was killed, and all his followers were scattered. And so in this case, I tell you, do not take any action against these men. Leave them alone! If what they have planned and done is of human origin, it will disappear, but if it comes from God, you cannot possibly defeat them. You could find yourselves fighting against God!"

The Council followed Gamaliel's advice. They called the apostles in, had them whipped, and ordered them never again to speak in the name of Jesus; and then they set them free. As the apostles left the Council, they were happy, because God had considered them worthy to suffer disgrace for the sake of Jesus. And every day in the Temple and in people's homes they continued to teach and preach the Good News about Jesus the Messiah.

Re-telling the story...

Remember that we've already seen that the Jewish leaders have been getting annoyed with Peter and John as they tell people about Jesus – they can't be silenced!

This is quite a long passage! Here's what happens...

The High Priest and his religious friends are now jealous. They've had enough of these pesky Jesus followers preaching & healing, so they grab the apostles and shut them in prison for the night! HA HA that'll teach them!

When morning comes the religious leaders get ready to put the apostles in their place and send the guard to fetch them from the cells....but....they are GONE! The guards in charge are still there, the gates are all locked but the prisoners have disappeared. How embarrassing for the leaders, they've lost their prisoners. And what about the prisoners? Surely they must have done a runner? They'll be long gone won't they?

Nope! The apostles haven't run away, in fact they have gone back to the temple to preach about Jesus – AGAIN. You see God's messenger set them free so they could go back to doing God's work.

Well now the religious leaders are super, super cross. They take the apostles back and tell them again – "We've told you many times now - STOP TALKING ABOUT JESUS!"

Peter (and the others) are very clear – "We can't. God is the boss, not men. He's told us what to do so we have to obey."

Of course the leaders are now beyond angry – they can't believe they've been told "NO" by these guys, there's only one thing to do – KILL THEM! That's when one of the Pharisees called Gamaliel speaks up. He reminds them that if these apostles are doing these things for themselves they won't last (others didn't), BUT if they ARE doing God's work then they should be left alone or these religious leaders could be fighting God.....

That was that (sort of). The apostles were whipped and sent away told never to speak about Jesus again. And what did they do?

They kept preaching and teaching about Jesus of course 😊

The apostles seem **small and powerless** compared to the important religious leaders
BUT....

GOD is the most powerful and His message cannot be stopped.

The apostles obey God and preach about Jesus wherever they are (even to these leaders 😊)

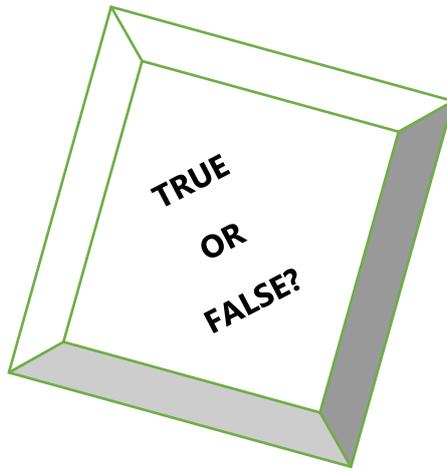
The apostles went back to the temple to tell people about Jesus.

The apostles broke out of prison.

The religious leaders were jealous of the apostles.

The religious leaders gave up looking for the apostles.

The apostles were arrested.



The apostles agreed that they would do whatever the leaders asked them.

The apostles were punished by the leaders

The leaders wanted to kill the apostles.

The apostles moved to a different place so the leaders wouldn't know if they spoke about Jesus.

Have a think....



Why are the religious leaders jealous?

*The apostles have been healing and teaching.
They are probably jealous of both of these things
– and worried they might lose their power and influence.*



Why don't the apostles use the opportunity to run far away?

The apostles have a job to do and have been given a mission by the Lord Jesus, they want to obey God.

Look at the passage again and count how many times you read about the apostles telling people about Jesus.

The passage opens with us hearing that the leaders are jealous (the bit before tells us why- they've been speaking about Jesus!), the apostles then go back to the temple to preach after they are set free, they then speak about Jesus to the religious leaders (so even these guys are hearing the gospel – HOORAY for God!), then they go straight back to preaching after they are released!



What does this passage tell you about

- **the apostles?**
- **the religious leaders?**
- **God?**

The apostles are obedient, and no doubt encouraged by God's intervention. They are BOLD and just can't stop talking about Jesus.

The religious leaders are threatened by the apostles, they want to shut them up. They are working against God.

God's power is so obvious in this passage, He isn't going to let anything stop the message of Jesus from spreading. He sets them free, He has them preach even to the religious leaders!

WE know about Jesus because God's work could not be stopped and the gospel DID spread from Jerusalem and Judea to the rest of the world – even to here in Bramcote 😊

Are there times when you feel small compared to other people?

*I know I do! Other people might have clever arguments about why they don't believe in God or Jesus and the good news about Jesus can FEEL very weak. I'm sure that the apostles could've felt small and weak compared to the religious educated leaders BUT **God is more powerful than anything or anyone** and He is at work all the time – **even in and through us by his Spirit** – WOWSERS!*





Are there times when it's easier NOT to obey God?

God wants us to obey because He loves us and knows what is good for us BUT it can be really hard to obey can't it? For example, when we feel like NOT speaking up for Jesus with our friends, or NOT doing the right thing at home because "it's not fair!". Thankfully Jesus understands us completely and knows our struggles AND we can pray and ask for his help – PHEW!

Will the good news about Jesus spread even now and does God need us to help Him do it?

The gospel IS reaching far and wide EVEN now (just think about some of our mission partners in Argentina, Germany, South Sudan). God's is at work always, he doesn't NEED us to help him BUT he very generously uses us to be involved. Just imagine the Queen ringing you up to ask you to help with some of her duties – what an honour. How MUCH MORE amazing that the God who created EVERYTHING wants us involved in His work! Mind blowing right?



Prayer ideas

(you might want to do some "Play-Doh" praying – see next sheet)

Thank you that you are a powerful God.

Thank you that there IS good news because of the Lord Jesus.

Thank you that you include us in your amazing work of spreading the good news.

We are sorry for when we think it's better NOT to obey you.

Praise you that the good news DID spread from Jerusalem to Bramcote

Praise you for the apostles and their obedience.

Help us to speak up for Jesus so He gets the glory.

Activities

- ❖ True/False sheet
- ❖ Rocks worksheet
- ❖ Boulders worksheet
- ❖ Jail craft (see instructions below)
- ❖ Possible/Impossible (sheet looking at what we can do)
- ❖ Acts bible verse colouring
- ❖ Go tell the world maze- go to every child in the maze as you spread the good news!
- ❖ See "other ideas"

Jail craft instructions

- Cut along the solid lines to produce the prison window.
- Colour the picture and use sticky tape to attach short sections of a drinking straw at regular intervals across the opening to make prison bars.
- Fold the card closed to imprison the apostles and open it to free them.

Play-doh praying

- Get some playdough.
- Roll the playdough into a ball. Pray for others around the world that are telling others about Jesus.
- Form the playdough into a cross. Pray for the church.
- Form the dough into a heart. Pray for your family and friends.
- Form the dough into their first initial. Pray for themselves.

Other ideas...

Make paper chains to symbolise being in prison. On each link, write your prayers for others who might be fearful at the moment, for courage to be fearless in telling your friends about Jesus.

If you have any dominoes, set up a course and watch how one falling leads to them all doing the same. Link this to the passage in that the gospel was still spreading rapidly as one person told the next.

Answers (True/False)

- The apostles went back to the temple to tell people about Jesus - **T**
- The apostles broke out of prison. – **F (God set them free!)**
- The religious leaders were jealous of the apostles - **T**
- The apostles were arrested - **T**
- The religious leaders gave up looking for the apostles. – **F (they heard where they were and went to get them)**
- The apostles agreed that they would do whatever the leaders asked them. – **F (Peter and the others said they must obey God NOT men)**
- The leaders wanted to kill the apostles. - **T**
- The apostles moved to a different place so the leaders wouldn't know if they spoke about Jesus. – **F (they kept preaching wherever God led them, they didn't care about who heard!)**
- The apostles were punished by the leaders - **T**

❖ *If you are accessing this via the website then worksheets are available via email – please contact Abby on 07950064272*