

**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 scary

**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 WOK THRO HIS PEOPLE TODAY  
As long as we.....like the Apostles .....are ready to see the inconvinence....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.**