**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Resurrection Series**

Acts of the Holy Spirit

Acts 5:29 “We must obey God rather than men.”

July 21st, In the Year of Our Lord 2024

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(All Scripture is from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted.)

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Note: Final version of sermons is posted with possible additions.

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 **Recapping events** after Jesus’ 40-day Resurrection ministry from the week of the Jewish Passover and Ascension. . . to the ten (10) day wait-period in the upper room in Jerusalem. . .to be empowered by the Jesus-promised Holy Spirit. . . to the empowerment displayed at Pentecost, which was the day the Jews observed God giving the Law to Moses (about fifteen-hundred /1,500 years prior). . . to the apostles miraculously witnessing the Gospel Message in everyone’s native language who then returned home in far-away lands and shared their God-experience to their friends and neighbors. Then Peter, empowered by the Holy Spirit, preached his first sermon, to the Jews at the Temple, who had called for the crucifixion of Jesus. . . these Jews received the conviction of the Holy Spirit and their hearts were cut (circumcised Deut. 30:6-8), which humbled them to God, and, with a surrendering heart, they called-out to Peter, “What must we do?” (Acts 2:37-38). Now, for the first time in their lives, they were in a spiritual condition to be saved. They did not have any power within themselves to save themselves, so they called out. . . “What must we do?” in a desperate plea to be alleviated from their Holy Spirit conviction-pain being separated from the love and forgiveness of God. God then told the Jews through Peter, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38). Now, that they had availed themselves to God’s Spirit, with God at work in them. . . they gained the power from God to turn their life away (repent) from a practiced life of sin and death. In their life of sin and death, hate ruled their hearts. This is why they called for Jesus to be crucified. Scripture tells us that after these Jews surrendered to the Lord, about three thousand souls surrendered to the Gospel Message (Acts 2:41).

 After the events on the Day of Pentecost, Peter and John went to the Temple at the ninth hour when they encountered a lame man from birth who was healed by God because of his faith (Acts 3:16). This healing brought the attention of the Temple leadership who had Peter and John arrested. . .but empowered by God’s Holy Spirit, Peter gave a ready defense of the Gospel (Acts 4:8ff). Due to Peter’s defense, and the crowd in support of the crippled man being healed. . .the Jewish authorities released them.

**What happened after Peter and John were released from their first arrest?** They reported back to the community of Believers who prayed (Acts 4:24-30). When they prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness. Therefore, they all received additional empowerment to witness the Gospel Message in Jesus’ name (Acts 4:27-31).

Therefore, Peter and John were more encouraged to experience God at work in them, and they received more of God’s spiritual power as they had been directed to fulfill the Great Commission with preaching the truth (prophesying) in God’s Word, not speaking in a known or unknown tongue.

Luke then reports that they shared all things in common. However, Annanias and Sapphira betrayed God and the community. Therefore, they were judged by losing their earthly lives (Acts 5-11). The whole community was aware of their fate. This event did not stop people from coming to the Apostles for healing, both physical and spiritual (Acts 5:16).

For today’s sermon, let’s begin reading in Acts 5:14 to the end of the chapter (verse 42). In Luke’s report, we will see that Peter and John were arrested again because of the healing ministry, but, again, were released. This is another historical event taking place in the first few months after Jesus’ Crucifixion, Resurrection, Great Commissioning, Ascension and Pentecost.

**Acts 5:14** And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to *their number*, 15 to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them.

16 Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.

17 But the **high priest rose up**, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the **Sadducees**), and they were **filled with jealousy**. 18 They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail. **[ 2nd Arrest ]**

19 But during the night an **angel of the Lord** opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he **said**, 20

"Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the **whole message of this Life."**

21 Upon hearing *this*, they entered into the temple about daybreak and ***began* to teach**.

**Note**: Jews came to the Temple to pray in the morning. This is why they were there for Peter to witness.

**Note:** The Holy Spirit empowered Peter and John to “teach” in order to fulfill the Great Commission, not speak in tongues (Acts 4:31).

Now when the **high priest** and his **associates** came, they called the **Council** together, even all the **Senate** of the sons of Israel, and sent *orders* to the prison house for them to be brought.

 22 But the officers who came did not find them in the prison; and they returned and reported back, 23 saying, "We found the prison house locked quite securely and the guards standing at the doors; but when we had opened up, we found no one inside."

**Note**: Jesus’ tomb was sealed, guarded, but they found no one inside.

24 Now when the captain of the temple *guard* and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them as to what would come of this. 25 But someone came and reported to them, "The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"

**Note**: Peter and John, like Jesus, had continued to teach the Disciples and others during His Resurrection ministry time. Teaching is the primary goal of fulfilling the Great Commission.

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

(Matt. 28:19-20)

26 Then the captain went along with the officers and *proceeded* to bring them (Peter & John) *back* without violence (for they were afraid of the people, that they might be stoned). 27 When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them,

 28 saying,

"We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

 29 But Peter and the apostles answered,

**"We must obey God rather than men. 3**0 "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom **you** had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. 31 "He is the **one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior**, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 "**And we are witnesses of these things**; and ***so is* the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."**

 33 But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and intended to kill them.

**Note**: To frame Jesus in terms “exalted to His [God’s] **right hand**” and as **Savior** is to claim that Jesus is God. God’s right-hand saves.

**Psalm 138:7** Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch forth Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, And Your right hand will save me.

**Psalm 139:10** Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me.

**Psalm 17:6-7** 6 I have called upon You, for You will answer me, O God; Incline Your ear to me, hear my speech. 7 Wondrously show Your lovingkindness, O Savior of those who take refuge at Your right hand from those who rise up *against them*.

In addition, God’s right hand is directly associated with judgement.

**Psalm. 21:8-9** 8 Your hand will find out all your enemies; Your right hand will find out those who hate you. 9 You will make them as a fiery oven in the time of your anger; The LORD will swallow them up in His wrath, And fire will devour them.

 34 But a **Pharisee named Gamaliel**, (See Attachment) a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council **and gave orders** to put the men outside for a short time.

 35 And he said to them,

"Men of Israel, take care what you propose to do with these men. 36 "For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about four hundred men joined up with him. But he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.

37 "After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away *some* people after him; he too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered.

38 "So in the present case, I say to you, **stay away from these men and let them alone,** for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown;

**39 but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them;**

**or else you may even be found fighting against God."**

**Psalm 74:10-11** How long, O God, will the adversary revile, *And* the enemy spurn Your name forever? 11 Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand? From within Your bosom, destroy *them*!

**Psalm 98:1** A Psalm. O sing to the LORD a new song, For He has done wonderful things, His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him.

**Psalm 110:1** A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."

 40 They took his advice; and after calling the apostles in,

 they flogged them and ordered them **not to speak in the name of Jesus,**

and *then* released them.

 41 So they went on their way from the presence of the Council,

 rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for *His* name.

42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house,

they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.

 There were three primary offenses that got Peter and John arrested.

1. **Teaching in Jesus’ name.**
2. **Healing in Jesus’ name**.
3. **Identifying Jesus as God and Savior and One who judges.**

I see these three. . . to be a great offense in our society today. This tells us that fallen humanity, regardless of the century, nation, race, culture, or government will be resistant to, and, therefore, often rejecting, the Gospel Message.

**One of the main observations** we can receive from Peter’s defense is in Acts 5:29, **"****We must obey God rather than men.”** This is a challenging statement to all of us. Many may think of only one context to frame Peter’s defense, which is one refuting charges in a court. However, in my life-experiences, I see that the fallen secular culture and tradition basically dictates to all of society’s life rules, worldview, entertainment and basically how to live a life separate from God. God calls all of us to obey Him rather than fallen man.

With this said, my duty as a Christian Pastor, and what I am called to do by God is to represent and proclaim His desire for all people to learn His plan for their lives and learn His Word. . .which is the foundation for humanity’s survival. My Belief in God and His Word. . . .is experienced in the reality of life. I want to be clear. . .God’s Word is the foundation upon which all of our life’s experiences are to be weighed. Human experience alone is not sufficient for the foundation of truth. Anyone can claim an isolated experience and then claim they have the way of life for all humanity. This is how Mormonism, Jehovah Witnesses (Watch Tower Society) and Islam, to name a few, started. Human experience on its own is unbalanced and subject to great deviation from the stable truth in God’s Word. Fallen Humanity’s traditions and understandings change through the years.

**Ephesians. 4**:14-15 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,

**2 Timothy 4**:1-4 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

**1 Timothy 6**:3-5 3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, 4 he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

God’s Word is stable and unchanging. Here is a list of some of the foundational teachings proclaimed in God’s Word, which, like all of God’s Word, never deviates, and we are called to proclaim regardless of opposition. Therefore, we must obey God rather than men.

God is love. (1 John 4:8, 16)

God created people in His image. (Genesis 1:26, 27, 9:6)

We gain eternal life by loving God and our neighbor. (Matthew 22:35-40)

God, as Jesus, tells us, if we love Him, we will live according to His teaching.

 (John 14:15, 21; 15:10)

God incarnated Himself as the unique Son, who gave His life by dying on the

Cross to pay the price for our sin. (John 3:16)

Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, and raised on the third day according to

the Scriptures, and He appeared to Cephas and the twelve. (1 Cor. 15:3-5)

God allows us all to call upon His name to be saved. (Romans 10:13)

Believers are sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise. (Ephesians 1:13)

Believer’s eternal life never perishes;

and no one will snatch them out of Jesus’ hand. (John 10:28)

God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. (1 John. 4:12)

By this *love being perfected is us* we know that we abide in Him and He in us,

because He has given us of His Spirit. (1 John 4:13)

Christ resurrected and left an empty tomb behind. (All four Gospels)

Jesus Christ had a resurrection ministry. (All four Gospels)

Jesus Christ comes again Judging all people. (Revelation 20:11-15)

God brings an end to the age. (Revelation 21)

I see, we live in a world that must experience the truth in God’s Word. And along with that thought. . . a person needs to realize that all of life originated in God and our life experiences are calling us to acknowledge God as our Creator and organizer and sustainer of life. If a person makes God’s Word an academic exercise, just a function of learning data. . . then their relationship with God will be detached which makes their relationship with all others detached.

Why were Peter and John and the rest of the followers of Jesus successful? Because they had experienced the truth in God’s Word. Because they had walked with Jesus during His three-and one-half-year ministry, witnessing the Cross, empty tomb, Resurrection, Ascension, and then received the empowerment of Jesus’ promised Holy Spirit. So, we today… are commissioned and empowered, like the apostles, by the resurrected Lord to fulfill the Great Commission.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:19-**20**

**AMEN**

**Attachment**

**Gamaliel**

1. A traditional Jewish name: Num. 1:10; 2:20; 7:54,59; 10:23.

2. A Pharisee and eminent doctor of the law, who advised the council wisely to let the apostles alone (Acts 5:34, etc.),

 "for if this counsel or work be of men it will come to nought; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

He was Paul's teacher, "at whose feet he was brought up and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers" (Acts 22:3).

The Jews celebrated him as "the glory of the law," the first designated Rabban "our master." Son of rabbi Simeon, and grandson of Hillel; president of the Sanhedrin under Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius; he died 18 years before the fall of Jerusalem.

His counsel as to the apostles was not from any leaning to Christianity, but from opposition to Sadduceeism in a case where the resurrection was the point at issue, and from seeing the folly of unreasoning bigotry (Acts 23:6-9).

Saul his pupil was a leading persecutor when Stephen opposed Pharisaism; and probably Gamaliel would not altogether disapprove of his zeal in such a cause, though his own tendency was to leave the claims of Christianity to be tested by time.