

Acts 030
Power and Purity
Acts 5:12-26
November 8, 2023
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Let's open our Bibles to the book of Acts chapter 5 and verse 12. I want to invite the men in the room to our men's fellowship breakfast, 8 a.m. Saturday. Paul Scharf is going to be presenting. And then we have a family fun day in the afternoon. So, we're trying to put the word fun back into fundamentalism. That's our new motto here. So big day, Saturday. But for this evening, let's open our Bibles to Acts 5:12. And verses 1 through 11, Ananias and Sapphira have been slain in the Holy Spirit, as we saw last time. Don't mean to make light of that, but there was sort of an issue of purity within the church. As you had these two people that were kind of bringing sin into the church, and the Lord dealt with them through maximum divine discipline. And then what typically happens is, when the issue of purity is handled correctly, then the church sort of takes on new power. So, you have, beginning with the rest of the chapter, the power of the church. There's a tremendous description of its power in verses 12 through 16. But as typically happens when God starts to bless or use somebody, it invokes jealousy. And so, you'll see jealousy there in verse 17 amongst the Sadducees, leading to persecution. So, the rest of chapter 5, you can kind of divide it up as the apostles' power, verses 12 through 16. And then how they were consequently persecuted, verses 17 through 42.

Acts 5:12–42 Church's Second Persecution

- I. **Apostles' Power (5:12-16)**
 - A. **Apostolic authority (12)**
 - B. General population's response (13)
 - C. Church's growth (14)
 - D. Peter's unique abilities (15)
 - E. Apostle's reputation spread (16)
- II. Apostles' Persecution (5:17-42)

So, let's go ahead and start off here with the apostle's power. Here's a little outline of the apostle's power, verses 12 through 16. And we start off with apostolic

authority. Verse 12, it says that *...At the hands of the apostles, many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico.* So, the first thing you see here, verse 12, is apostolic signs. And again, the apostolic signs are following the dealing-- how the Lord dealt with purity. So, the church is now practically purified with Ananias and Sapphira, who were bringing Satan's agenda into the church, now out of the scene. And then the church takes on a new authority or new power. So, I guess one point of application for us is, if we want to see the Lord's power in our lives, we need to maybe spend less time seeking power and more time seeking purity. Because God uses pure vessels, and the more we give ourselves to the issue of practical sanctification, the more we give room for the Lord to work through us via His power. And the power here in the first century was manifested through the apostles. Signs and wonders were taking place.

This is a sign gift. You have to understand a lot of these things in the book of Acts, in the context of it's the apostles on the earth. They are sort of foundational to the outworking of the church. And so, what you see in the book of Acts is miracles, signs and wonders will cluster around the apostles. Paul in Ephesians 2:20 says of the apostles: *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.* So, in this metaphorical temple, the first stone that goes in is the cornerstone. And the cornerstone is Jesus. The cornerstone is very important because through the cornerstone, you arrange all the other stones in the whole structure of the temple. And after the cornerstone is put in, then you put in the foundation stones. And so, the Lord built the church first, putting in the cornerstone Jesus, the most important stone, the stone by which all other stones are gauged and measured. And then after He was put in, in this metaphor that Paul is using, as he analogizes the church to a temple, in came the foundational stones of the apostles. And so that's what you see happening here. Second Corinthians 12:12 talks about the signs of a true apostle. It says: *The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs, wonders, and miracles.*

So that's what's taking place here. And one of the things to understand as we go through the book of Acts is, every single miracle that happens in the book of Acts was performed either by an apostle or it was performed by someone operating under the delegated authority of an apostle. Arnold Fruchtenbaum writes of verse 12. He says: "Verse 12 provides evidence of apostolic authority. The account of the second

persecution of the church begins by describing the apostolic signs (v.12a). Again, it is important to note that in the book of Acts, only the apostles and the apostolic [de]legates, who were appointed by the apostles by the laying on of hands, were able to perform miracles, signs and wonders (e.g. Acts 6:8).[113] This fact has come out four times before--" in the book of Acts. And he's got the verses there in parenthesis. "(Acts 2:43; Acts 3:6-7; Acts 4:22,33)" And then he says: "and now it is [once again] repeated in this verse." So, you see these apostolic signs taking place, and then you see the oneness that the believers here had with each other. You get a glimpse of their spirit of unity because the rest of verse 12 says ...*And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Portico*. Solomon's Porch.

Now when the church was just getting ready to start because it was birthed on the day of Pentecost; just prior to that in Acts 1:13, they were meeting in the upper room. It says: *When they had entered the city, they went to the upper room where they were staying...* And then it lists the twelve apostles. Well, by the time you get to Acts chapter 3, you can't cram everybody into the upper room. Peter preached that opening sermon on the day of Pentecost, where about 3000 were saved. And according to our last numerical count, Acts 4:4, now at least 5000 are saved. And now we're in Acts chapter 5. Some estimate that there could be as many as 10,000. So, the church just as was predicted, once the Spirit fell, would start to grow exponentially. And so, they couldn't fit in the upper room anymore. So, they had to move to the portico or the porch of Solomon within the temple. You see them doing that in Acts 3:11. It says: *While he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so-called Portico of Solomon, full of amazement*. So, part of the temple was named the Porch of Solomon because Solomon was the builder of the first temple all the way back in 966 BC. And one of the things that's interesting is the early church had no problem meeting in the temple. They weren't saying, you know: 'We've got to get out of get out of here. We need to become Methodists as fast as we can. We need to become Presbyterians as fast as we can. We need to become Episcopalians as fast as we can. We're going to need some stained-glass windows. Let's get rid of all this Jewish stuff.' They had no intention to separate themselves from Judaism. All the believers at this point are Jewish. And you don't even have a Gentile converted in the book of Acts until Cornelius in Acts chapter 10. And, as Jews, they had no problem celebrating Yeshua-- Jim in his opening prayer used the word *Yeshua*, which is just the Hebrew name for Jesus. Jesus is the Greek name, but they had no problem celebrating their newfound life in *Yeshua* in

the temple because they saw Jesus as the fulfillment of Judaism. Judaism points to Jesus. One of the major purposes of the nation of Israel is to bring Jesus into the world. So, you know, we sort of have drawn, as Gentiles, this line between us and the Jews. But the early church never did that. They didn't see the need to because they saw Christianity. In fact, this movement isn't even called Christianity yet. The word Christian is not even going to be used until Acts 11. They're just believers in *Yeshua* or Jesus, and they saw that as being connected to Judaism. Judaism pointed to that, and they had no ambition to, you know, disconnect themselves from the temple in Israel.

And then this expression, "one accord" is very interesting to me because that's what Jesus said would happen in the upper room. He said in John 17:20-23 just a few days before His death, when He prayed. And He prayed there the Lord's Prayer. John 17 is the Lord's Prayer, right? Because that's the Lord praying. Matthew 6 is not the Lord's Prayer-- although we errantly call it the Lord's Prayer--because Jesus never prayed that prayer in Matthew 6. That's the Disciples prayer. He was teaching the disciples how to pray. And I hope He didn't pray that prayer, because one of the lines in it is "forgive us our debts." Jesus was sinless. So, if you really want the true Lord's Prayer, read John 17, where He prays first for Himself, verses 1 through 5. And then He prays for the twelve--really the eleven because Judas left the room, verses 6 through 19. And then from there, I think to verse 26, the end of the chapter, He prays for the church or those that would believe through the ministry of the apostles. And as He's praying for the future church, He mentions the unity that the Holy Spirit would bring to the church. He says in John 17:20, *"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; [v. 21] that they may all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they may also be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. [v. 22] The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; [v. 23] I in them and You in me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You loved Me."*

So, there's a prayer there in His true Lord's Prayer, where He says, everyone that's going to be affected by the ministry of the eleven, I pray that they would be just as unified as We members of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are unified. And that's a prayer that God answered through the baptizing ministry of the Spirit where the body of Christ started in Acts 2. Paul describes the body of Christ in First Corinthians 12:13.

And he talks there about when anybody believes in the Savior, they are identified with Christ's body. This new man called the church. And the book of Ephesians in chapter 4 says, since you're unified in this way already positionally, then you should act like it. So, this is the tragedy of schisms related to interpersonal conflicts within the church. Because when those things happen, we're not functioning according to who we are.

You know, we're to be unified whenever possible. Disunity becomes appropriate if there's some issue of truth at stake. But sadly, most churches split not because of some doctrinal issue, but it's usually some kind of personality issue or somebody wants their preferences met or something. And so, there's a split within a church because of that issue. And when we go in that direction, we're not really acting the way our position has been decreed by the Lord. In fact, it got so bad in Corinth that they were suing each other in front of unbelieving judges. And Paul writes to them in First Corinthians 6, and he says, what's the unbelieving judge supposed to think when he when he sees two Christians fighting to such an extent that you can't even work out your differences amongst yourself and you've got to appeal the case before someone that's unsaved? I mean, is that unsaved judge going to be drawn to Christ? No, because Jesus said the world will know the truth when they see the unity in the church that is positionally available to them. So as these Christians are suing each other, Paul writes in First Corinthians 6:7, he says, *Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?* Yeah, but pastor so-and-so is ripping me off. Paul says, well, it's better to be ripped off than to have such a conflict with another Christian that you have to get it settled before an unsaved governing authority.

John 13:35, Jesus said, *"By this all men will know that You are My disciples, if--"* you're able to win as many arguments as you can. Oh, it doesn't say that. *"By this all men will know you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* So, there wasn't love in Corinth. And Paul says, you're defeated. You've destroyed them. You've destroyed your testimony to the world because God has set up the church so that when the world looks at the church, they would see the love of God in the church and be drawn to Christ. So, this is kind of something to keep in mind as we're in this social media age where anybody can take their angry thoughts and with the click of a button, send them around the world in a nanosecond, where it's very common for Christians to be at odds with each other publicly in front of the unsaved world. There are several

"Christian" Youtube channels where their whole presence on YouTube is attacking another teacher or attacking another Christian. And the problem with all of that is the unsaved world is watching all of that. Every time you click send or whatever, it goes out to the whole world. And so, we have to be very careful, you know, in this technological age to maintain the unity of the spirit within the church.

That's why Paul says to Euodia and Syntyche, in Philippians 4, I plead that you get along with one another in the Lord. They had some kind of fight between them. We're not told the details. But Paul says, I plead that you cooperate with one another in the Lord. So, when the church was born, it's meeting here in Solomon's portico. And if it's 10,000 people, there's a lot of people that can get mad at other people over a lot of different things. The potential for division is great, but what characterizes the Jerusalem church is this unity that they had. They were all unified around the same thing. So, the apostles are moving in apostolic authority, and then you go down to verse 13. And typically, what happens is the unsaved world looks and observes. And their response is recorded for us in verse 13. It says: *But none of the rest--* now that would be unbelievers. *But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem.* Now the unsaved Jews would not become part of the church. It probably had to do with the persecution that had already come against the church. The Sadducees in Acts 4:17-18 had already put a gag order on the apostles. And the gag order is going to get worse, because by the time the Sadducees are finished with the apostles in Acts 5, by the time we get to the end of the chapter, there's going to be a physical beating.

I. Apostles' Power (Acts 5:12-26)

- A. Apostolic authority (12)
- B. **General population's response (13)**
- C. Church's growth (14)
- D. Peter's unique abilities (15)
- E. Apostle's reputation spread (16)

So, this flogging in Acts 5 is the first time physical persecution comes against the church. And so that may be the reason why the unsaved world just wouldn't associate with them. But notice what it says in verse 13: *however, the people held them in high*

esteem. So, the unsaved world was looking at the church, and they didn't want to get too close to it because they didn't want to be persecuted. But at the same time, you know, they looked at the church with respect. They respected the church. Paul, when he talks about the selection of elders and deacons within the congregation, First Timothy 3:1-13, He says leaders must have a good reputation amongst the unsaved. They can't just have a good reputation within the church. They've got to have a good reputation amongst those outside the church, because if that doesn't happen, the message of the church will be very quickly discredited. So, you can't have a leader in a church that you know has a bad reputation that they brought on themselves. I mean, if they're bouncing checks all over Houston, probably not the best person you know to become a deacon or an elder.

So, there's a lot in the Bible about our reputation amongst the unsaved. And the early church is sort of functioning like Jesus in the sense that a lot of people like Jesus, but they didn't want to get too close to Him. And that's sort of what's happening as Jesus is replicating His ministry here through the early church. And you go down to verse 14, and the church is growing. Its growth is documented for us in verse 14.

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It says: *And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women--* notice the women. The women are held very highly in Luke and Acts. Unfortunately, in the first century world, women were held in very low esteem. But not so in God. The women are always elevated, always treated with dignity and respect. That's why I think it's funny to listen to these feminists today blame the plight of women on Christianity. And it's these same feminists that are aligned with Islam, which to me makes no sense at all because women are treated like dirt within Islam. Christianity has done more to elevate women than any other movement that's ever, ever existed. So, it says: *And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to*

their number. This reminds me of Acts 2:47, at the end of Peter's sermon where about 3000 were saved.

It says in Acts 2:47, *praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.* Jesus said, "...I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it." That's wonderful liberating teaching for church leaders because sometimes we put on our own shoulders the success of a church or the growth of a church, when the truth of the matter is, there is not a shred of Scripture indicating that it's the pastor's job to make the church grow. That is the Lord's job. A shepherd, what he's supposed to do is be faithful where the Lord has put him. So, this becomes one of our progress reports of the church. Remember, Luke is writing to a man named Theophilus who is contemplating whether Christianity is really for him or not. And Luke is documenting the birth and the growth of the church supernaturally to make its way all the way to Theophilus-- who was likely in Rome-- showing that it's a supernatural work that God did from beginning to end, because he loved Theophilus that much and wanted to see the gospel get to him in the remote parts of the earth. So, the purpose of Acts is to present Theophilus with an orderly account of the birth and growth of the church, to affirm him in what he has believed. And Luke, in the book of Acts, does this by documenting the birth and the growth of the church in three areas. Numerically, geographically, and ethnically.

Ethnically, how it transitioned from a primarily Jewish beginning to a primarily Gentile dominated institution. Which would include Theophilus, a Gentile. How the church grew geographically; how it made its way all the way from Jerusalem to Rome and everywhere in between. And then how the church grew numerically. That's why Luke gives us these numerical progress reports. It starts off with 11 and then Matthias is chosen, so that boosts the number to 12. And the next time you have a numerical count, it's 120. And then the next time you have a numerical account count, it's about 3000. And then you get to Acts 4:4 and it's about 5000 people. Scholars suggest that by now it's probably up to 10,000. So, Luke gives these very clear progress reports.

Progress Reports

- Clearest:

- Acts 2:47; 4:4; 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30-31

■ Less clear:

- Acts 1:13, 15; 2:41; 4:4:31; 5:14, 42; 8:25, 40; 11:21; 13:49; 17:6

Numerically, the clearest ones are on the top. Some of the less clear ones, like the one we're reading here in verse 14, are at the bottom. But this is all for the benefit of Theophilus showing him that this, what's happening here, is a movement of God. This is real. Your Christianity is real. God did this supernatural work to get the gospel to you. This is real stuff. So, you don't need to doubt the one in whom you have believed.

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And then you see the tremendous uniqueness of Peter. You look at verse 15 and it says: *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.* So, there were tremendous healings taking place to the point where people came under the influence of Peter's shadow. And they were healed. So, Peter is unique amongst the apostles. Because Jesus said to him [Matt 16:18] *"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock--"* his confession of faith-- *"I will build my church."* He says to Peter in the next verse [19], *"I will give you the keys of the kingdom..."* A key is something that opens the door. *"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."* And so, Peter turned the keys, and he's the one that that led the first Jews to Christ, Acts 2. He's the one that led the first Gentiles to Christ, Acts 10. He's taken these keys that God gave him, and he's putting them in the door, and he's opening the door of the gospel and kingdom citizenship when the kingdom comes one day to all these people.

So, Peter is the main man in Acts 1 through 10. And I hope you see the grace of God there, because this guy messed everything up in the Gospels, right? Right down to

denying Christ and walking out on the water and sinking. And even here he's going to mess up. Matthew 16, he opens his mouth again and Jesus says, get behind me, Satan. So, a great verse in the Bible concerning Jonah. Jonah 3:1 says, *Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time*. Well, I'm glad that's in there. Because he sure messed up the first time. As you know from the book of Jonah, he went the opposite direction. And God had to put him in time out for three days, right? Three days, three nights in the belly of a fish. And so, the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time. The word of the Lord is coming to Peter a second time. I can tell you about stuff in my personal life where I've just completely messed a lot of things up. But the word of the Lord has come to me a second time, and a third time, and a fourth time. And the word of the Lord can come to you a second time. So don't think that if you've fouled up something somewhere along the line that somehow God can't use you.

The truth of the matter is, God wants to use us more than we want to be used. And you see this with Peter, with these healings. Peter in the book of Acts is juxtaposed against Paul. We don't know anything about Paul yet, but there'll be a persecutor of the church, a religious leader named Saul, who will be converted on the Damascus Road. His name will become Paul. And what Luke is doing in the second half of the book of Acts is showing that Paul is just as legitimate as is Peter. Even though Paul was not one of the original twelve, Paul refers to himself as the Apostle born out of due season. And not even fit to be called an apostle because he persecuted the Church of God. And it's probably through the ministry of Paul that Theophilus--the one that this book is written to--was impacted. And so Theophilus might be wondering, well, if I got saved through Paul, is that a legitimate salvation? And Peter is saying it is legitimate because everything that Paul did, Peter had already done. And everything that Peter did, Paul would do. So that's why you see literary parallels constantly in the book of Acts between Peter and Paul. In this particular case, Peter is going to heal by his shadow. And Paul is going to heal by a handkerchief.

Peter

- Heals a man lame from birth (3:1-11)
- Heals by shadow (5:15-16)

- Success is a cause of jealousy (5:17)
- Confronts a sorcerer (8:9-24)

- Raises Dorcas (9:36-41)
 - Jailed and miraculously freed (12:3-19)
 - Heals by handkerchief (19:11-12)
 - Success is a cause of jealousy (13:45)
 - Confronts a sorcerer (13:6-11)
 - Raises Eutychus (20:9-12)
 - Jailed and miraculous freed (16:25-34)
- Paul**
- Heals a man lame from birth (14:8-18)

In Acts 19:11-12, in Ephesus, when Paul was ministering there, it says: *God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.* Peter healed a man lame from birth, Acts 3. That's exactly what Paul's going to do, Acts 14. Peter is going to heal by his shadow. That's almost exactly what Paul is going to do, Acts 19 just via the handkerchief. We're coming up to verse 17 where we're going to learn that the persecution that came against Peter was due to jealousy. That's exactly what happens to Paul in Acts 13:45. So when this happens, I'll keep putting this list up. And it helps to understand why Luke would include certain things. And if you put yourself in the shoes of Theophilus, these literary parallels make sense. He's answering a question that Theophilus would have. Is his salvation legit? Because it came through Paul rather than Peter. And then the apostle's reputation spreads, verse 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.* Now you'll notice the word Jerusalem. They're still in Jerusalem. Because that's what Jesus said would happen when He talked to them before He ascended. He says, you're going to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, then in Judea and Samaria, and then to the remote parts of the earth.

That's an easy way to outline the book of Acts. The ministry in Jerusalem, chapters 1 through 7. The ministry in Judea and Samaria--that the media is today calling the West Bank. But biblically, there's no such thing as a West Bank. It's Judea and Samaria, that ministry will happen in chapters 8 through 12. And then chapters 13 through 28. It's how it gets outside the borders of Israel and goes to the remote parts of the earth through the various missionary journeys of Paul, and how it's finally going to get to Rome, where Theophilus is going to be impacted. So, the word "Jerusalem" there, verse 16, tells us that we're still in the earlier section or part of the book. Notice it

says everybody was healed. They were all being healed. Arnold Fruchtenbaum says this: "They brought two categories of people to the apostles for healing: those with physical problems and those who had demonic problems." Because as you look at this. It talks about some who were afflicted with unclean spirits. And before it talks about that, it talks about those who were sick. So those who were sick are one category. Those who are afflicted with unclean spirits is another category. And so, Arnold Fruchtenbaum says: "The latter group also may have had physical illnesses, but in their case, the physical issues were caused by demons. This verse makes a clear distinction between mere physical sickness and demonic problems. It is wrong to teach that all physical afflictions are caused by demons. In fact, the majority of physical ailments are due to human frailty, not due to sin or to demons."

A lot of people have a mindset that anytime there's a sickness, it must be a demon, or it must be a sin in the person's life that brought on the sickness. In fact, there's a whole book of the Bible that refutes that, right? What book am I thinking of? Earliest book of the Bible. The book of Job, where Job had all his problems. And we know why he had his problems; because we have the first two chapters. There was a conversation between God and Satan in heaven that Job didn't know anything about. So, God allowed Satan to have his way up to a point in Job's life. He was smitten with a skin condition. Deaths in the family. Destruction of his business. And the only family member left is his wife, who says "Curse God and die!" Appreciate that moral support. Thank you. And so, as you're going through the book of Job, all of Job's counselors-- and there's a line in the book of Job. Sarah and I are reading it in the evenings. Job says, 'What miserable counselors you are.' And the counselors' names are Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. And then there comes another guy at the end named Elihu. And every single one of them is blaming Job for his problems. You're having these problems because you brought it on yourself. And all of them are wrong. And we know they're wrong because we have the first two chapters of Job that these counselors don't have. So just remember the book of Job when people apparently say every sickness is caused by a sin, or Satan or demons. This is a chart here that I like to use. It gives different physical infirmities in the Gospel of Matthew; and demons and Satan aren't mentioned in any of those chapters or verses.

Not all Physical Infirmities are Attributable to Satan/Demon

- Matthew 8:5-13
- Matthew 9:19-20, 27-30

- Matthew 12:9-14
- Matthew 14:35-36

So, can sin cause sickness? Yes. Can Satan cause sickness? Yes. Is every single sickness attributable to sin? No. Is every single sickness that people suffer attributable to Satan? No. So when you're dealing with someone that's had a problem, don't make these wild assumptions that, oh, well, there must be some kind of sin in your life that put you in this condition. Because if you do that, you're no better than Job's counselors who he calls miserable. And we're assuming things about a person's life that we don't even know about. A lot of sicknesses happen to people just because we're living in a world that's falling apart. I mean, we're not getting any younger. Amen?

God said that in Genesis 3:19. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Paul writes in Second Corinthians 4:16, our outer man is decaying. Is your outer man the king? Someone in the back was saying no, but he looks like he's twenty. Romans 8:19-22 says the whole creation is suffering and groaning. It's personified as groaning because of original sin. So, the whole creation groans and suffers. A lot of sicknesses happen just because of that reality. And they have nothing to do with personal sin and a person's life, or a demon influencing that person. Now, don't get me wrong, there are circumstances in the Bible where a sin can lead to sickness, like the paralytic in John 5, that Jesus heals. And he says, leave your life of sin or something worse is going to happen to you. So, through sin, we can make ourselves sick. And of course, demons can cause physical problems in our lives. But don't assume that every physical ailment is related to those sources. There's a lot of variables in play, and this helps us to be more graceful. This theological understanding helps us to be more graceful as we minister to people.

So, you'll notice that healings are taking place. And it says in verse 16, all were healed through the apostles. Now, does that mean today that everybody's going to be healed? This is an apostolic ministry, that's why everyone was healed here. Arnold Fruchtenbaum writes: "One at a time, one by one, everyone who came to the apostles walked away cured. This is certainly not true of faith healers today. There have been people who have gone to faith healers and have come back claiming to have been healed, but a year later they were dead of the very thing they were 'healed' of. Merely exercising 'positive confession' will not do any more than 'positive thinking' will do.

These mental exercises may heal psychosomatic problems, but they will not heal genuine physical ailments. God may choose to heal miraculously; He may choose to heal through medical treatment today; He may choose not to heal at all." Paul the Apostle (Galatians 4:13) suffered from frequent illnesses it says. And he had (Second Corinthians 12:7-10) a thorn in the flesh. We don't know exactly what it was, but to me it hurt because it's a thorn. And he asked God three times to take it away. And God said no, My grace is sufficient for you. And this was necessary in Paul's life because he had been taken to the third heaven and heard things ordinary people don't hear. And he was prone to being lifted up with pride on account of these revelations. And once you're lifted up with pride--God doesn't use people that are prideful. First Peter 5:5 says He opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

So how does God keep pride out of Paul's life? How He keeps pride out of a lot of our lives is He gives us a problem that won't go away. That we can't figure our way out of. And sometimes it's a physical problem. And yet that's the very thing that keeps us in a position of dependance on God. Avoiding arrogance, making us usable. So, if you have some kind of issue in your body that doesn't seem to go away. It could be that sin didn't put it there and an evil spirit didn't put it there, but God put it there. Just like Jacob with his hip. Right? As we're studying in the book of Genesis, he had a hip problem. God broke his hip basically, and he calls it a blessing. See, American Christianity doesn't think this way. If you have a problem, it must be a curse. God says it could be your--it could be your friend, because that's what keeps you close to the Lord. And that's what keeps you usable. You know, everybody was healed here under the apostolic ministry in Jerusalem. But that's not true of all people of all places and all times. And these so-called faith healers make it sound like if you have some kind of problem in your body, then it's your own fault.

We just really need to put together the full council of God's Word when we start analyzing situations like this. One of the great heroines of the faith, in my view, is Johnny Erickson Tada, who suffered the terrible accident as a teenager and has spent her life paralyzed from the neck down. And if you listen to her testimony, countless people have told her she doesn't have enough faith, or she'd be out of that wheelchair by now. There must be some kind of unconfessed sin in your life that put you here. Look what the devil did to you. When, if you actually listen to her talk about it, she says, it's the Lord that allowed me to have this because I right now have a worldwide ministry.

You take away this ailment? No more worldwide ministry. So, this whole issue of suffering sickness, there's a lot of factors in play. So, we shouldn't be overly simplistic because when we're overly simplistic and we say, well, Johnny Erickson Tada is in that wheelchair because of some kind of lack of faith, you just put her in the double jeopardy. Because she's got to go through life with this physical problem and then some well-intentioned theologically naive Christian comes along and says, you put yourself in that position. So that's two burdens on her. And we're not called to be putting burdens on people, right? We're called to be freeing people and being merciful to people.

Fruchtenbaum says: "Although faith healers claim to be performing the same miracles as the apostles, they cannot do what these apostles did." So that's the power of the church. And now the church comes under persecution. And the persecution is recorded in verses 17 through 42.

Acts 5:12–42 Church's Second Persecution

I. Apostles' Power (5:12-16)

II. **Apostles' Persecution (5:17-42)**

A. Apostles' arrest (17-26)

1. Arrest's cause & instigators (17-18)

2. Divine rescue (19-21a)

3. Sanhedrin's meeting (21b-24)

4. Apostles' second arrest (25-26)

B. Apostles' examination (27-33)

C. Gamaliel's interruption & advice (34-39)

D. Results (40-42)

And we first see the apostles arrested. So obviously we're not going to get too far into that section tonight. But let's at least look at a couple of verses. Notice the cause of the arrest and the instigators of the arrest, Verse 17. *But the high priest rose up--* Here they come, the religious crowd. I mean, with all these people getting healed, you think they would just say, well, praise the Lord! But they're not interested in all these people getting helped. They're jealous that all the people like the apostles and not them. So, religion is always in the way of grace. It goes right back to Cain and Abel, right? Who did Jesus reserve His harshest criticism for? The religious leaders. So here they come. Verse 17: *But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates. (that is the sect of*

the Sadducees), and look at the end of verse 17, *they were filled with jealousy*. So, who are these religious people? These are the Sadducees.

The Pharisees were legalists. The Sadducees were always sad-you-see, as we like to say, because they were liberals, modern day liberals. They only believed in the first five books of Moses. They didn't believe in angels, and they didn't believe in resurrection. Matthew 22:23, *On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and questioned Him*. And when they were trying to question Him, they were trying to fool Him. Let's stump the professor. Which is not that smart when you're dealing with the Son of God, right? They're trying to trick or make Jesus look dumb. Why? Because they didn't believe in resurrection. The problem with the early church is they kept talking about resurrection. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost Acts 2:24? Resurrected Jesus. When Peter preached in Acts 3:15, what did he talk about? The resurrected Jesus. That's causing a problem with the Sadducees because they don't believe in any resurrection, let alone the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And they were filled with jealousy. If and when God uses you, the time to watch your six-- your back, so to speak-- is when God starts to bless you and prosper you. Because the moment that happens, it invokes jealousy of people and that's where you become a target. And you'll see this over and over again in the Bible.

Go back to the book of Daniel. Daniel 6:3-4. It says: *Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the whole kingdom*. So fantastic. Daniel, you're getting ahead. Oh, there's another verse here. Verse 3 is followed by verse 4. *Then the commissioners and satraps-- those are the people that he was distinguishing himself among by God's power. Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him*. So, they start going through Daniel's life, and they start trying to find a skeleton in the closet, because not everybody was happy with Daniel's success. And not everybody is going to be happy with your success either or effectiveness or fruitfulness. And you'll start getting attacked sometimes from the inside. Don't be surprised when it happens. It's just a Biblical pattern. And you'll notice here why they

were upset. They were jealous. Notice how Paul is being juxtaposed against Peter, or with Peter.

Because when you look at the first, second, third one down there, Peter was persecuted because of his success on account of jealousy. The same thing happened to Paul. Acts 13:45, when he was ministering outside the borders of Israel in southern Galatia on his first missionary journey. It says this: *But when the Jews saw the crowds--* Hey, your parking lot is fuller than it used to be. I mean, there's more people going to your church than are going to my church down the street here. *When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul and were blaspheming.* So, the motive for trying to discredit Paul was jealousy. The motive for arresting Peter here is jealousy. So, Paul, when you look at this chart, is just as legitimate as Peter. Even though Paul is the apostle who wasn't one of the twelve and was born out of due season. Now Theophilus, says Luke as he's documenting this history, don't let that bother you. Don't let it bother you that you were influenced by Paul rather than Peter. Your salvation is real. Because look at these literary parallels that I've developed for you throughout the book. And this leads to the arrest. Look at this [Acts 5:18], *They laid hands--* Now it's getting physical. *They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail.* See how the persecution is escalating? In chapter 4, the people under arrest were Peter and John and the man that was healed. Now these Sadducees are going after all the apostles.

It's probably the same prison that Peter and John were in there, in the temple area in Acts 4. But here come the attacks against the church. Chapter 4, External attack from the outside. Chapter 5:1-11, Ananias and Sapphira, internal attack. Chapter 5:12 through the end of the chapter, we're starting to read about it here, external attack. Chapter 6:1-7, the crisis of not having deacons, internal attack. Chapter 6: 8 through the end of chapter 7, the martyrdom of Stephen, external attack. You follow what Satan is doing here? I'll attack the church from outside. I'll attack the church from inside. I'll attack the church from outside. Then I'll attack the church from inside. Then I'll attack the church from outside. What did Paul say? Even from your own number, men would arise and speak perverse things. That's the twofold attack that's always going on within Christianity. External. Internal. External. Internal. External. The problem Satan has-- and he has a lot of problems. But one of his problems is every time he attacks the church externally, the church grows. Look at the church in China, Iran, all these places thriving

underground. So, when that's not working so well, Satan says, well, I'll apply for membership and join the church. Let me teach Sunday school. Let me into the pulpit. Let me lead the men's group. Have me as one of your speakers. Let me sort of come into a church and try to stir up trouble from the inside, you know, whatever he's going to do. And I think his-- and far be it for me to give Satan advice, but the internal attack works way better than the external attack, because when there's an external attack where hands are laid on from the outside, the church always grows through that.

Do you realize that every time something big happens in our culture, like the lockdowns and mandates, like the war in Israel? Every time that happens, all our numbers at this church go up. Website numbers go up. Finances go up. Sometimes more people come to the building, and that number goes up. So, it's kind of like people are saying, you know, pastor, aren't you worried about the next outbreak or whatever that's going to hit? I'm actually kind of looking forward to it, to be honest with you, because I can't wait to see what God does in it and through it.

So, the apostles are arrested. They're thrown in jail. But then someone pays the bond and lets them out. An angel. And we'll see that next time.