

Sept 20, 2015



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks
Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
The rewards of witnessing are worth the risks

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:
Lord, give us wisdom from above
To share the message of Christ's love;
And help us always persevere
To make that message loud and clear

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.

(Acts 13:49 NKJV)

(From "Our Daily Bread", Oct 12, 1995)

Series: THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY COMES ALIVE

UNIT: Seeds of New Growth

NEXT WEEK

Remembering God's Faithfulness

(Acts 7:2-4,8-10,17,33-34,45-47,52-53,55)

Witnessing to the Truth

Acts 5:27-29, 33-42

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson tries to get us to understand that **Witnessing to the Truth** is expected of every believer. The **study's aim** is to recognize that speaking to others about Jesus Christ may bring opposition. The **study's application** is to share the truth of Jesus Christ graciously and yet without fear of the consequences.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

William Wilberforce (1759-1833) became a Christian in 1785. Already a member of the British Parliament, he soon became a vocal opponent of slavery. He saw the need to acknowledge human dignity and decided to speak up for the cause of freedom. He devoted the rest of his life to passing laws that first outlawed the slave trade itself (1807) and then outlawed slavery altogether (1833) throughout most of the British Empire. Many names come readily to mind when we think of those who have spoken up for worthy causes. For Patrick Henry in the American colonies and for Gandhi in India, the cause was national freedom. For Martin Luther King, Jr., the cause was civil rights. When they saw situations that demanded their voices, they knew they had to speak up! For Peter and the other apostles, the cause was even greater: their cause was to liberate people from the shackles of sin, to bring the repentant into the heavenly kingdom. The apostles proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah not just because they felt strongly about the matter but because God himself did. That is why they knew they had to speak up, regardless of the opposition.

The church was born speaking. All the apostles spoke up on the Day of Pentecost, proclaiming the gospel message in many languages. Peter led out as the primary spokesman, convicting the crowd and urging people to repent (Acts 2). Sometime after the Day of Pentecost, Peter and John healed a crippled beggar at the gate of the temple and proclaimed Jesus to the crowd that gathered (Acts 3). When the Sanhedrin seized Peter and John to demand that they stop speaking about Jesus, Peter said, "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (4:20). When Peter and John rejoined the other believers, "the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly" (4:31). Official opposition mounted as the apostles continued to speak. They were arrested again and thrown into jail, but an angel from God opened the door and sent them back to the temple courts to preach (Acts 5:18-20). When the Jewish religious authorities sent for the prisoners, the jail was discovered to be empty. Soon someone reported that the apostles were preaching again—right back in the same place where they had been arrested! With considerable frustration, the authorities brought them in yet again. What could be done to make these Christians stop talking?

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

WITNESS THROUGH STEADFASTNESS IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD (ACTS 5:27-29)

Obedience is often tested (27-28)

- Tested by fire of trials (1 Peter 1:6-7)
- Tested through self-examination (Gal 6:4)
- Testing of holding on to good (1 Thess 5:21)
- Tested through perseverance (James 1:12)

Obedying God not man (29)

- Obedience through God's power (Philip. 3:20-21)
- Obedience without fear (Job 11:13-15)
- Obedience is a characteristic of saints (John 8:31)
- Obedience is never done in vain (1 Cor. 15:58)
- Obedience even if God does not rescue (Dan 3:16-18)
- Obedience is doing the will of God (Matthew 7:21)
- Obedience is doing right in the sight of God (Acts 4:19-20)

WITNESSING FOR GOD CAN NEVER BE DEFEATED (ACTS 5:33-39)

Holy Spirit works in people to ensure wise council (33-34)

Because the Holy Spirit controls the circumstances of believers (Acts 10:19-20)

Because the Holy Spirit directs the work of believers (Acts 13:2)

Because the Holy Spirit chooses the fields of operation (Acts 16:6)

History is important to understand the present (35-37)

- History defines the level of our faith (2 Tim 1:5)
- History teaches us the truths of our faith (1 Tim 4:6)
- History of family should not be forsaken (Prov 1:8-9)
- History can make us wise in our faith (2 Tim 3:14-15)

No one can fight God (38-39)

- No one can or should fight with God (Isa 45:9)
- God's plans will always prevail (Prov 19:21)
- There is no wisdom or plan that will succeed against God (Prov 21:30-31)
- Everything God does will endure forever (Eccl 3:14)

WITNESSING DURING SUFFERING WITH JOY (ACTS 5:40-42)

Joy because of being counted as worthy (40-41)

- Worthiness that leads to doing good works (Col 1:10)
- Worthiness that leads to being humble and patient (Eph 4:1-3)
- Worthiness that pleases God (Eph 5:10)
- Worthiness that comes from the calling of God (2 Tim 1:8-9)

Joy because of the ability to worship God (42)

- Ability to worship God with joy, gladness and thanksgiving (Ps 100:2-4)
- Ability to worship God acceptably with reverence and awe (Heb 12:28)
- Ability to worship during calamities (Job 1:18-20)
- Ability to worship and bring an offering (Ps 96:8-9)
- Ability to worship by rejoicing in God (Phil 4:4)