

When People Fight Against God

Text: Acts 5:17-40

Introduction:

1. Earlier in chapter **5**, a couple was caught lying to the Holy Spirit and paid the ultimate price for their sin. After this, great fear came upon the church when this news was told.
2. The disciples did many other signs and wonders in Jerusalem to prove that they were from God. The Jewish leaders did not like this new religion being taught and they thought that they could quench the religion before it got too big of a foothold by arresting the messengers (*the apostles*) and putting them in prison (**v18**) and warning them not to teach anymore. An angel of the Lord opened the prison doors (**v19**) and they all came out of the prison. They went and preached the life saving message at the temple. (**v20**) They were then brought before the high priest of the Jewish council and told, "*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.*" – **Acts 5:28**
3. When Peter heard this, he made the following statement: "**We must obey God rather than men.**" **Acts 5:29** – **for it is His words whereby we will be judged** - "*He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.*" – **John 12:48**
4. Peter and the other apostles preached the gospel message to the Jewish council (**30-32**) and told them that they had put Jesus to death and that this same Jesus was now exalted on the right hand of God. (**v31**) The Jewish council in turn, were cut to the quick and wanted to kill them for the message that was brought. (**v33**) Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, stood up and told the council of various other's who claimed to be someone as they drew people away from God, but when they died their '*false*' religion died with them. (**v36-38**)
5. Then Gamaliel made a profound statement in **v39** that all people everywhere should consider in their heart: "**but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God.**"
6. This morning we are going to look at what the statement means *to fight against God*.

I. If It Is Of God You Cannot Overthrow It (v39)

A. Meaning if God is the Author of this religion.

1. Gamaliel realized that there was a **possibility** that this religion was divine.
2. By Gamaliel **supposing** that this religion was from God, it put the Sanhedrin (*who did not believe in the resurrection*) who were in the council ill at ease because of the resurrection of Jesus was part of this divine religion.
3. The **miracles** that were done on the day of Pentecost or the apostles receiving the Holy Spirit from God.
4. The **healing** of the lame man in the temple as proof.
5. The **miracle** release of the apostles from prison as proof.

B. You cannot overthrow it.

1. Because **God has almighty power**, and can execute His purpose.
2. Because God is unchanging and will not be diverted from His plans. "*But He is unique and who can turn Him? And what His soul desires, that He*

does. For He performs what is appointed for me, And many such decrees are with Him” – **Job 23:13-14**

3. The plan that God forms ‘**must**’ be accomplished.
 - a. All devices of men are ‘*feeble*’ at best when they oppose Him.
 - b. People have opposed God since the beginning, but it has come to no avail.
 - c. Christianity has been reviled, persecuted, ridiculed, and fought by sword with even attempts by science to silence, but to no avail with **all in vain**.
 - d. Christianity has survived the storms and trials over the centuries and **WILL NOT** be stomped out no matter what device of man is brought against it.

II. If It Is Of God You Would Be **Fighting Against Him By:**

A. When people oppose His ‘*Gospel*’. (**They fight against God**)

1. In its preaching (*by refusing to listen or lend an ear to the life saving message that God has for us*) – by countries that absolutely refuse the gospel of Jesus Christ even spoken or even a Bible being in the same household – such as Soviet Russia for nearly 70 years, such as Muslim countries today.
2. In its plans (*in how to life in a godly way giving our total life to Him as we go down that path to eternal life*)
3. In its influence among people (*the change that comes over a person when they have become a Christian, their examples will be as Christ wants them to be.*)
4. In its prevention of being taught and preached – same as (1) above – the old adage that by killing the ‘*messenger*’ you will kill the message. But God’s Word cannot be stopped - “*So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.*” – **Isaiah 56:11**
5. By withdrawing family and friends from its influence (*not letting family members or friends hear the truth by ridiculing the message or the TRUTH*)

B. When people oppose the ‘*doctrines*’ of the Bible. (**They fight against God**)

1. By becoming angry when the real truths of religion are preached that are counter to their beliefs.
 - a. Such as the **plan of salvation** that **belief is necessary**; “*Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.*” (**John 8:24**) that **repentance is necessary**; “*Peter said to them, “**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**) that **confession is necessary**; “[And Philip said, “*If you believe with all your heart, you may.*” And he answered and said, “**I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.**”] (**Acts 8:37**), and that **baptism is necessary FOR** the remission of your sins; “*Peter said to them, “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) and that **remaining faithful** until the end is required in order to have eternal life; “They were **continually devoting themselves** to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” Acts 2:42

b. Such as **godliness** required until the end (*how to live our lives here on earth*) “But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.” – **1 Timothy 6:11**

2. Being ‘excited’ and with an ‘unwillingness’ that these doctrines should be true and that they should even be presented to a person at all.
3. Man must realize that he can never find peace until he is ‘willing’ that God’s truth be allowed to exert its influence upon his own soul.

C. When oppose the ‘Law’ of God. (**They fight against God**)

1. When it seems too ‘stern’ or ‘harsh’ to them – (*in God’s dealing with sin in the Bible – of the doctrine of hell, etc*)
2. When the Law of God condemns them and they are unwilling to have the Law applied to them (*their toes are stepped on and they do nothing about it*)
3. A sinner who wishes to remain in his sins and totally disliking the pure and Holy Law of God.

D. When they fight against the ‘providence’ of God. (**They fight against God**)

1. When they are afflicted they rebel.
2. When God allows ones health, property, friends to be taken away it seems to them that it is harsh and cruel, instead of finding peace in submission to Him
3. When afflicted there is no peace accept knowing that God is ‘right’ and until this ‘**TRUTH**’ is realized, one will be like a troubled sea that cannot rest.
4. Opposition by the wicked is foolish.
5. It is God who has given our comforts and He has every right to remove them, if He so desires.
 - a. We should be still and know that He is God and we aren’t. “Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” – **Psalm 46:10**

E. When they do the following: (**They fight against God**)

1. **Seek** evil companions and pleasures rather than submitting to God and His commandments.
2. Come up with all kinds of **excuses** in spurning their friends from becoming Christians.
3. **Stifle conviction** on their part, refusing to think of the eternal welfare on their self.

Conclusion:

1. No man can be opposed to God without endangering himself every minute.

- a. Wisdom tells us to submit to the requirements of God, because without submitting to Him we **MUST** expect conflicts with Him, and peril and ruin.
2. One's submission cannot be halfway, but must be in its entirety and must extend to every **DOCTRINE** and **DEMAND** and **LAW** and every **ACT** by our Almighty God.
 - a. In all of our tranquility we should submit to Him.
 - b. In all of our afflictions we should submit to Him.
 - c. Because by doing so is the only way that we will have peace. *“And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* – **Philippians 4:7**
3. Many who have opposed God have nothing to gain. They have been frustrated and unsuccessful and will be still today as they oppose Him. For nearly 2,000 years they have been trying to destroy the Christian religion, but after all efforts they have been in vain and will continue to do so.
4. The question that must be answered today by each and every one of us is the following: **“Are you fighting against God?”**
5. If the answer is ‘yes’, then now is the time to submit to Him – not tomorrow, nor next week, nor next year, but now.