

Without Fear: Obeying God in the Face of Worldly Pressure

Acts 5:17-42 · Kaká Monteiro · August 2, 2026

The door fear can't lock, the question of whom we obey, the joy of those beaten for the Name

THE CENTRAL IDEA

"Whoever has heard God's verdict doesn't live hostage to the verdict of people."

Fishermen and tax collectors face the most feared court in Jerusalem and leave flogged, and rejoicing. It isn't thick skin or stoicism: it is the discovery that public opinion, cancellation and threats don't have the last word. People sentenced Jesus to death; three days later, God gave the verdict of life.

THE MESSAGE IN 3 MOVEMENTS

01 The fear of people can't lock up the truth.

The arrest came from jealousy disguised as zeal, and the same men who arrest them for fear of losing the people are later afraid of being stoned by them. The angel doesn't promise an easy life: he gives a task. The same reason that put them in jail was the reason they were set free.

02 The question is whom you obey.

It isn't license to defy every authority (Romans 13 still stands); it is the precise exception of when a human order demands silence where God demands speech. Jesus is the Prince who opens the road of salvation for anyone to walk.

03 Courage is the reflection of those who already have a hero.

As Tim Keller observes, the apostles endure humiliation because they know the protagonist of the story isn't them. God writes the story, and he reversed the worst sentence of all. That is why cancellation and the whip don't dictate what we say about him.

READING THE TEXT · ACTS 5:17-42

Acts 5:17-26 · The door no one can lock

Full of jealousy, the high priest and the Sadducees arrest the apostles. At night an angel opens the doors and commands: "Go, stand in the temple courts and tell the people all about this new life." By dawn they are already teaching, and the guards find the prison locked and empty.

Acts 5:27-32 · Whom do you obey?

Brought before the Sanhedrin, they hear: "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name." Peter and the apostles answer: "We must obey God rather than human beings." And they proclaim Jesus, exalted as Prince and Savior, to bring repentance and forgiveness.

Acts 5:33-42 · The joy that shouldn't exist

Gamaliel advises: if this is of human origin, it will fail; if it is from God, you will not be able to stop them. The apostles are flogged and forbidden to speak, and they leave rejoicing because they were counted worthy of suffering for the Name. Day after day they keep teaching.

QUESTIONS FOR THE GROUP

To open: tell about a time you didn't do or say something because you were afraid of what others would think. How was it afterwards?

- 1 The leaders arrested the apostles out of jealousy disguised as zeal. Where do you notice this "wrong zeal", in you or around you? How can we tell conviction from wounded pride?
- 2 The angel opened the prison and gave a task: go back and tell it again. What "prison" of fear controls you most today: a person, an opinion, social media? What might God be asking you to say or do anyway?
- 3 "We must obey God rather than human beings." Whose approval are you most afraid of losing? What changes when we remember that God's verdict on us in Christ has already been given?
- 4 The apostles left rejoicing after being beaten, because they knew who the hero of the story was. In what hard situation do you need to remember that you are a supporting character and that God is writing the ending?

KEY PASSAGES

John 16:33, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." There is no triumphalism in Acts 5: there is the certainty of someone who has already won.

Proverbs 29:25, "Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe." The fear of what others think is older than any social network.

Matthew 5:11-12, "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you... because of me. Rejoice." The joy of the flogged apostles is that beatitude, lived out.

TO CLOSE

A step for this week. Identify a "prison" of fear in your life (a person, a situation, a platform) and take a step of obedience despite it: a conversation, a testimony, a truth spoken with love.

Prayer. Thank God that his verdict on us in Christ is life. Ask for courage to obey God rather than people and joy to carry the Name even when it costs.



Watch the message again: point your phone camera here.