

5:30 *God Raised Jesus*

NOT DEFIANCE BUT COMPASSION.

CHRYSOSTOM: It was not with defiance that the apostles answered them, for they were teachers. And yet who, backed by an entire city and enjoying such grace, would not have spoken and uttered something big? But not these men. For they were not angered, but they pitied and wept over them and looked for a way to free them from their error and anger. No longer did they say to them, “You must judge,”³ but they declared, “He whom God raised, this man we proclaim.” It is by the will of God that these things are done, he says. They did not say, “Did we not say to you even then, that ‘we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard’?”⁴ For they do not lust after honor. He repeats the same things: the cross, the resurrection. And they do not say why he was crucified—that it was for our sakes, but they hint at this, though not yet openly, because they wish to frighten them for a while. And yet what kind of rhetoric is this? No rhetoric at all, but always the passion, the resurrection, the ascension and the wherefore. HOMILIES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 13.⁵

5:31 *To Give Repentance*

FORGIVENESS PROFFERED AS TO BENEFACTORS.

CHRYSOSTOM: Notice how every time they mention the crime, they add the mention of forgiveness, showing that what had been done was worthy of death but what was given was offered as if to benefactors. How else could anyone have persuaded them? HOMILIES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 13.⁶

5:33 *Wanting to Kill the Apostles*

DO EVIL, SUFFER EVIL.

CHRYSOSTOM: “And they wanted to kill them.” Behold again these in perplexity and in pain, and those relaxed, in high spirits and joyous. Not only did they suffer pain, but also they were enraged. This then illustrates the proverb, “Do evil, suffer evil.” These men were in chains, they had come to be judged in court; but the men who sat in judgment were in danger, in perplexity, in great helplessness. For the person who strikes a blow on steel receives the force of the blow himself. And they saw that not only was [the

apostles'] boldness of speech not stopped, but their preaching even increased, and they spoke without a thought of fear and yielded them no advantages. HOMILIES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 13.1

5:34 *Gamaliel Stood*

5:35 *Take Care What You Do*

FREEDOM FROM PASSION.

CHRYSOSTOM: Please note how Gamaliel discourses with gentleness. He speaks briefly to them and relates no ancient stories (though he could have), but he tells of recent events that are powerful in producing belief. He hints at this himself by saying, "For before these days," meaning, not many days ago. If he had opened by saying, "Let these men go," he would have aroused suspicion and his speech would not have been effective. Coming after the examples, however, it acquired its own force. . . . See how mild his manner is, the speech not long but succinct, and his mention even of those [imposters] without anger. "And all who followed him were scattered," he says. All this without blaspheming Christ. . . . Again, he checks them by the impossibility and the inexpediency of the thing, saying, "You might even be found opposing God!" HOMILIES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 14.4

5:36 *All Came to Nothing*

5:37 *Judas the Galilean*

5:40 *Taking Gamaliel's Advice*

GAMALIEL ALL BUT PREACHES THE GOSPEL.

CHRYSOSTOM: And he did not say, "if Christ is God," but his action makes this clear. He pronounces no judgment on whether it is "of men" or "of God" but entrusts the judgment to the future. "They were persuaded." Then why did you whip them? Such was the incontrovertible justice of his speech that they could not look it in the face; nevertheless, they satisfied their own anger, and again they expected to terrify them in this way. Because the apostles were not present at his speech, he gained a greater hearing, and the sweetness of his words and the justice of his speech persuaded them. In fact, this man all but preached the gospel. HOMILIES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 14.10

5:41 Rejoicing in Suffering

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF JOY.

CHRYSOSTOM: Let us take someone of consular rank, possessed of great wealth and living in the imperial city, who has no business to conduct but is at leisure to live in luxury, seated at the very summit of wealth, honor and power. And let us set against him a Peter, in chains, in evils beyond enumeration, and we will find the latter living in greater luxury. For where there is such an excess of joy, so that one is happy even in chains, imagine how great the joy must be! For just as those in high office, no matter how many terrible things happen, do not perceive them but continue in enjoyment, likewise these men rejoiced all the more precisely because of these circumstances. For it is altogether impossible to put into words the great joy that came to those who suffered something terrible for Christ's sake. For they delighted more in sufferings than in good things. If someone loves Christ, he understands what I am saying. But what about safety? What owner of countless riches, I ask, could escape so many dangers, visiting so many different peoples for the sole purpose of transforming their way of life? For they accomplished everything as if by imperial decree, only more easily. For a decree would not have been so effectual as were the words of those men. An imperial decree compels by necessity, but these men drew followers who came willingly, spontaneously and grateful beyond measure. What imperial decree, I ask, could have persuaded people to part with all their property and their lives, to despise home, country, kindred and even self-preservation? Yet the voices of fishermen and tentmakers accomplished this, so that they were both happy and stronger, more powerful than all others. HOMILIES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 13.11

PERSEVERANCE IN HOPE.

POLYCARP OF SMYRNA: Let us then continually persevere in our hope and the earnest of our righteousness, which is Jesus Christ, "who bore our sins in his own body on the tree," "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," but who endured all things for us, that we might live in him. Let us then be imitators of his patience; and if we suffer for his name's sake, let us glorify him. For he has set us this example in himself, and we have believed that such is the case. LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS 8.12

SUPERIORITY OF VIRTUE.

CHRYSOSTOM: Of course, the scourging was no cause of satisfaction, to be sure—rather of pain and distress; but scourging for the sake of God and the grounds on which they were scourged gave rise to

satisfaction in them. . . . Such a powerful and invincible thing is virtue, proving superior even in the course of suffering such torments. HOMILIES ON GENESIS 23.6.13