



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

The Early Church Series, Lesson 55

Lesson Title: The Witnessing Church

Take Home Point: Team up! Don't give up—no matter what!

Warm-Up:

Imagine a football team with players that don't want to train or play together. They want to play their positions without getting or receiving support from other team members. Or, imagine a team that is willing to work together but doesn't think understanding the game is important, nor that practice is necessary, nor that they need to know the coach's playbook or goals. Sounds silly, doesn't it? How well do you think they would do without unity of purpose, an understanding of the game and their part, and a willingness to do what the coach says to win?

Read: Acts 5:17-42

Observation (What happened?):

What did the angel tell the disciples to do once they were freed?

According to Acts 5:32, where did the disciples get the power to witness of Jesus, no matter what?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What made Peter and the other disciples willing to face injury and death as a result of their insistence to continue witnessing?

Why do you think Gamaliel's speech made the leaders reconsider putting the disciples to death? What were they likely thinking?

Insight:

We all understand the importance of the spiritual work we are doing, that God has given his "playbook" for us to know and use (that would be the Bible!), and that we can each play a part. But why is it so important for us to team up? Because we need each other's help and support to stay strong against weariness, temptation, and even pride. God uses our dependence on each other as a reminder of our dependence on him. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-27, Paul provides another analogy of working together. Not only that, God makes each of us unique and uses our uniqueness on his team. For an Old Testament example of how God used two very different personalities to do the work of being his prophet, read about the lives of Elijah and Elisha beginning in 1 Kings 17 through 2 Kings 13. It's some of the most interesting reading in the Bible!

Application (What does it mean to me?):

Where has Jesus called you to "go and make disciples of all nations?" Who are you teamed with to make this happen?

Think of as many different teams as you can that are joined to witness for Jesus Christ. (For example, missionaries with their prayer partners and financial supporters, you and other shepherds, etc.)