

**Theme:** As You Are Going: The Church on Mission (Mt 28:16-20)

**Title:** – God’s Plan - Acts 5:17-42

**Aim:** Walk thru Luke’s account of the arrest & release of the apostles.

**Intro:** We’ve all heard “good news/bad news” jokes, like “the story of a pastor who got up one Sunday and announced to his congregation, ‘I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program. The bad news is, it’s still out there in your pockets.’” Or the one of a man who cut off a toe when he dropped his knife. “After the surgery to reattach it, the doctor came in & said, ‘I have some good news and bad news. Tell me the bad news first doc. The bad news is they mistook a piece of candy for your toe. No way. What’s the good news? The good news is the surgery was successful. What are you trying to say? You now have a Tic-Tac toe’” I’ll stop! Life is like that sometimes, really all the time: good news & bad news. Thankfully, God is in charge. Theme: As you are going: the church on mission. As w/the early Church, we’ll experience good news & bad news day by day, but God is in control & the gospel & our mission doesn’t change. Our text is Acts 5:17-42, which we’ll read in segments as we go. All of chap5 is a good news/bad news account. After the wonderful good news summary of 4:32-37 – One heart & soul, great power displayed by God, those who had giving to those who needed – there was the bad news of Ananias & Sapphira’s deception (5:1-11, last week), then the good news of multitudes more being added to the church & great wonders being done by God (5:12-16). That’s followed by a continued series of the same. 1) **Good news/bad news.** 1) Vs17 – The high priest & Sadducees, who didn’t believe in resurrection, were jealous of the apostles’ & Christianity’s popularity, so they arrested the apostles – all of them, including Matthias - & put them in prison. That was bad. How to put a damper on things. 2) Vs18-25 – An angel of God came at night & opened the doors of the prison & brought them out, w/the instruction to go straight to the temple & speak to the people coming to worship “all the words of this Life,” which we’ll get back to shortly. The apostles obeyed, entering the temple & teaching at daybreak. Shortly thereafter, the high priest & the council of the Jews gathered & sent to the prison to have the

apostles brought, but they weren't there! Then someone came w/a report that the apostles were in the temple "teaching the people." This left the high priest & company "greatly perplexed." Good news. 3) Vs26-28 – Had them brought from the temple & reminded them of their "strict charge" "not to teach" in the name of Jesus – remember chapter 4, when they reprimanded Peter & John for preaching in Jesus' name after the healing of the lame man at the temple gate. **"Yet,"** they said, **"here you have filled Jerusalem w/your teaching, & you intend to bring this man's blood upon us."** Note that they didn't speak the name of Jesus, filled w/such hatred for Him. This was somewhat of both good news & bad news. They were intent on keeping the apostles & all the church silent about Jesus, but they would not be successful. 4) Vs29-32 – Peter reminded the council of his words & the apostles' commitment in chap4. **"We must obey God rather than man."** Then he reminded them that they did kill Jesus in the sense of handing Him over to be crucified by the Roman authorities. We'll get back to how Peter shared the gospel w/the council. Of course, the gospel is good news. 5) Vs33 – After Peter's response, Luke records that the high priest & council were enraged – "cut to the quick; sawn thru mentally; rent w/vexation." They were hopping mad! So, they wanted to kill them! Ooo, that's bad news! 6) Vs34-39 – Gamaliel was a "celebrated Jewish doctor, an authority in the Jewish Mishna" – oral traditions, & was the rabbi under whom Saul/Paul learned. He was a "champion of Mosaic law" (Strong's). Well-respected by the council, they listened to him. He reminded them of some groups that had arisen but then faded when their leader was killed. The important advice he gave was to leave the apostles alone. If their movement was of man, it would die a natural death; but if it was of God, they couldn't stop it & didn't want to be opposing God. The council took his advice – temporarily. That's good news. 7) Vs40 – Then bad news - they beat them & again ordered them "not to speak in the name of Jesus!" But they let them go – good news. 8) Vs41-42. They rejoiced in being counted worthy (by God) to suffer for the name of Jesus. And they went right on teaching & preaching Jesus as Savior/Lord. This was, of course, according to God's plan. II) **The Gospel (good news) is "the words of this Life"** (vs20). In the ESV (not sure about other translations) the word life is capitalized. "This Life" is life in Christ. Go tell the people the good news of

salvation, new life. After they were re-arrested, Peter took the opportunity to speak the words of this Life to the chief priest & all the council – vs30-32. Jesus, the Messiah died – will infer that He died for our sins. They knew that Jesus died, because as Peter said, “you killed Him by hanging Him on a tree.” The Jewish religious leaders didn’t personally kill Jesus – didn’t want to get their hands dirty. Rather they saw to it that He was killed by handing Him over to the Roman authority who would kill Him on the cross – but all according to God’s plan. Throughout the history of the Church the Jews have been called “Christ-killers,” only the leaders so opposed Christ. And in reality, we can’t/shouldn’t blame the Jews. Jesus came to die & laid down His life for us. But we know the grave could not hold Him! God the Father raised Him up from the grave, as proof of His acceptance of Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf. Then the Father exalted Jesus at His right hand. He ascended into heaven to be at the Father’s side. He is exalted as “Leader & Savior.” The word “leader” means “Prince.” Jesus is Lord of all, Prince of Peace, before whom every knee will bow & every tongue confess that He is Lord. As we have celebrated, we serve a risen Savior. He is Savior – His death paid the full penalty for the sin which separates us from God & condemns us to eternal death – the wages which sin deserves. The price of His life blood is applied for all who believe/ receive Him by faith. The opportunity is given to all who believe for repentance. Faith that saves is faith that includes repentance – acknowledgement of our sin & need of a Savior & desire to turn from sin & going our own way to follow Jesus, surrendering our lives to Him as Lord. W/faith in Christ forgiveness is given – a putting away of our guilt before God, bringing reconciliation w/God as we who believe are given the right to become children of God (John 1:12). Peter said, “we are witnesses to these things” – we saw the risen Lord; we’ve experienced His salvation. Peter personally knew God’s forgiveness & restoration. And, he said, “so is the Holy Spirit” witness to these things. And God has given His Spirit to “those who obey Him” – that obedience is the obedience of faith. Christ died, He was raised, He is Lord & Savior, there is forgiveness & new life (a turning around) in His name, & the gift of the Holy Spirit w/in is for all who believe. Note that Peter said to the council that this gift was for Israel – inferring that it was even for them, the council – they could believe & be

saved! The gospel we have to share is the words of Life in Christ. III) **The gospel may be opposed but it can't be stopped**. Gamaliel's sage advice is that "if this is of God, you can't stop it & you don't want to oppose God." Certainly, the gospel is opposed throughout the world. There are countries where it's illegal to share the gospel or convert anyone, punishable by fine or imprisonment. People may well get mad if we share the gospel w/them. Read something this week which made sense & shows the irony of opposition to the gospel: "Just imagine getting upset at someone for claiming the God you don't believe in, said in a book you don't read, that unless you repent of the sin you don't care about, you will go to a place you don't think exists." The other side of that is what Penn Jillette is quoted as saying; "If you believe that there's a heaven and hell and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life or whatever, and you think that it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward...How much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize?" "How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that? If I believed beyond a shadow of a doubt that a truck was coming at you and you didn't believe it, and that truck was bearing down on you, there's a certain point where I tackle you. And this is more important than that." In Matthew 24:14 Jesus said that "this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world" before He comes again. The gospel will go forth – can't be stopped. We need to be part of its going forth – sharing w/those around us. The Christ/Messiah is Jesus. Let the whole world know. IV) **The gospel is God's plan to save all who believe**. Paul said in Romans 1:16, "***For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew 1<sup>st</sup> & also to the Greek.***" "Whosoever will to the Lord may come." You/I have a story to tell to the nations" & our neighbors, "that will turn their hearts to the right" – to God who saves. In a world of increasing bad news, we have good news to share. May we carry the love of God & the truth of the gospel to give away as we are going. Let us be the church on mission.

