

The Church on the Move: Ultimate Allegiance

Acts 5:17-42 || Pastor Paul Hahn || 17 July 2022

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: What class from high school was your favorite? What do you remember most from it?

Worship: [Psalm 89-1-9](#) (*Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation?*)

Sermon Summary for [Acts 5:17-42](#) (*Read aloud before reading the sermon summary.*)

So much in our daily lives demands our time, our attention, even our devotion and allegiance. Family, work, school, the communities and organizations we are a part of: each has its place and its value. But far too often we don't give much thought to how our actions (and our calendars) reveal how we prioritize one above another. Most of these loyalties are good, but to be a Christian is to have a greater, deeper allegiance to Christ. Doing so undergirds these other priorities and gives them fuller meaning and purpose. But it also means that our walk with Jesus must supersede them. Because to be a Christian is to have our ultimate allegiance given to God.

Ultimate allegiance to Jesus means there will be conflict for us // Putting Jesus first cost the apostles, and we should expect the same. This story in Acts 5 was preceded by crowds moving toward the Good News. The Holy Spirit – working through the disciples – had performed many miracles; people were being physically and spiritually healed. Multitudes were witnessing physical manifestations of the renewed Kingdom coming to creation. So of course, the powerful resisted, grew jealous, and ultimately fought back against this threat to their dominion. This will be true for us as we seek to love and serve our Lord and His Kingdom. And we need to learn to respond as the apostles did: First, by normalizing the conflicts. If we are in Christ, it's not going to sit well with others – in large part because it will convict them of their own lives. So we need to expect this. Second, we can rejoice that we have been counted worthy to suffer dishonor (in this world) for the sake of the name of our Savior.

Ultimate allegiance to Jesus flows from His life to our lives // God loved us first; Jesus first showed us the way. Then, the disciples were called to go to the temple to teach about this new life (v20). As NT Wright wrote:

A force of Life had broken through the normally absolute barrier of death, and had burst into the present world of decay and corruption as a new principle, a new possibility, a new power. And it was this Life, which was carrying the apostles along with it, like a strong wind driving sailing boats out across a wild sea.

This is living in and for Christ. All of us bear the weight of Jesus hanging on a cross. But it is God who used it to bless and heal the world. So yes, His blood is on us, but not to condemn; our Lord came to redeem ([John 3:17](#)). He leads us into a new way of living, gifting us with repentance to turn from paths of death and emptiness toward those of life and fullness. Jesus moves us from timidity to boldness, so we might live out the privilege of sharing the Good News. And for this reason, may we beg God for more real, deep, life-changing experiences of Him.

Ultimate allegiance to Jesus brings surprising deliverances // Just as there will be conflict when we give our ultimate allegiance to the Lord, there will also be surprising deliverances – both through people as well as directly from God. They may even take us all the way through the valley of the shadow of death, with resurrection on the other side. But deliverance will come. We can give our ultimate allegiance to Jesus, knowing that he has already passed through death *for us* – that He makes tables for us there, to anoint us and bless us. He uses trials to perfect us into His likeness. He is present; He can be trusted. And we can keep sharing His life, rejoicing when we are counted worthy to suffer for it.

Discussion Questions *(You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)*

Ultimate allegiance to Jesus means there will be conflict for us

- What motivated the Sanhedrin to take such harsh action against the disciples? (See [5:17, 28](#))
- What priorities crowd your life – whether consciously or not – to have your time and attention
 - Have you spent much time reflecting on these priorities, or do you find that a lot of the time “life just happens”? Would you consider yourself busy? Stressed?
 - How does your faith and life as a follower of Christ align with all of this?
- Do you have a story where you have met with conflict because of your faith? What was the cost?
 - How do we make sure that such conflict arises as a consequence of our following Christ, rather than us seeking out conflict as if it were a badge of honor to be claimed?

Ultimate allegiance to Jesus flows from His life to our lives

- Confident in God’s sovereignty, how do the apostles respond to all that has been done to them ([5:41–42](#))?
- What does Spirit-empowered ministry look like today? How have you seen the Holy Spirit move in your life, in the church, or through other ministries you’ve been a part of?
- What does it mean for our ultimate allegiance to Christ to flow from His life to our own?
 - What does it look like to have this the wrong way around – to act as if our ultimate allegiance to Christ is our own doing, flowing from our will or our effort?
- What are ways we can encourage one another to be people of life, preaching and living the Gospel?

Ultimate allegiance to Jesus brings surprising deliverances

- Have you ever experienced a surprising deliverance where God has brought you out of a troubling situation? If not, do you have a story of someone you know who has had such an experience?
 - What does it mean to receive surprising deliverance? What does it mean when – in the midst of hardship or conflict – we do not receive deliverance?
- How has God taught you to trust Him during your journey of faith?
 - Have you ever rejoiced in your suffering? Have you seen hardship as sharing in the life of Jesus?
- The Pharisee Gamaliel speaks to the council recommending how to deal with the disciples ([Acts 5:35-39](#)). How could his words be seen as a thematic description of the entire book of Acts?

Prayer

This week’s Prayer Guide for personal or group use is [HERE](#).

Engage & Experience: Prayer & Gratitude

The **Pray for Me** Campaign creates a web of intergenerational relationships and equips adult believers to pass on their faith to the next generation. Will you join us in becoming a Prayer Champion for our young people at PCC? For more information on becoming a prayer champion OR to have your child(ren) prayed for and to sign-up click [HERE](#). Consider signing up as a CG to pray for and invest in the children and families of PCC. This is the last week to Sign-up for the Pray for Me Campaign