

**The 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost ~ Sunday, June 28, 2026**

**“Marks of the Early Church ~ Faithful Under Pressure”**

**Psalm 27 Acts 5:27-42 John 15:18-16:4**

Based on these first four chapters, one might think that everything was going great, and that this new movement would continue to grow without \_\_\_\_\_. However, that’s not the picture we find in the Book of Acts.

The early church was never promised \_\_\_\_\_; it was promised \_\_\_\_\_.

“If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first.” (John 15:18)

The Christian life is filled with joy and blessing, but it’s also marked by trials, \_\_\_\_\_, and moments when following Him comes with a \_\_\_\_\_.

However, success also attracts \_\_\_\_\_, and Luke tell us that the religious leaders are threatened by the apostles’ message and growing influence. And so, they arrest them and command them once again to stop speaking in the name of Jesus. However, instead of shrinking back in fear, we’re told the apostles stood firm and remained \_\_\_\_\_.

**3 LESSONS ABOUT BEING FAITHFUL UNDER PRESSURE**

**#1: Being faithful under pressure means \_\_\_\_\_.**

“We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29)

There’s a holy \_\_\_\_\_ here. For Peter, obedience to Christ wasn’t one priority among many; it was the highest \_\_\_\_\_.

The apostles understood that Jesus had commanded them to be His \_\_\_\_\_.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:19)

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses...” (Acts 1:8)

Their ultimate \_\_\_\_\_ belonged to Christ.

Scripture consistently teaches us to honour and respect those in \_\_\_\_\_.

“Honour everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the emperor.” (1 Peter 2:17)

Christians aren’t called to be \_\_\_\_\_ people. We’re called to be good citizens, respectful neighbours, and people of \_\_\_\_\_. However, when earthly authorities demand what God forbids, or forbid what God commands, our \_\_\_\_\_ to Christ must come first because Jesus is Lord.

There are moments when faithfulness requires \_\_\_\_\_. There are times when believers must stand, not because they enjoy conflict, but because they love Christ more than they fear \_\_\_\_\_.

The pressure to remain \_\_\_\_\_ about our faith, to \_\_\_\_\_ biblical convictions, to go along with the spirit of the age, and to value acceptance more than faithfulness. We want to be liked, and we fear \_\_\_\_\_, being misunderstood, or standing out.

Courage isn’t something we manufacture; it’s something God \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord delights in taking ordinary, fearful people, like you and me, and making them \_\_\_\_\_. And faithfulness isn’t always dramatic, it’s often found in a thousand small acts of daily \_\_\_\_\_.

The applause of people is \_\_\_\_\_, public opinion changes, and the culture shifts. Even our own feelings rise and fall. However, Jesus remains the \_\_\_\_\_ yesterday, today, and forever. And so, it’s His \_\_\_\_\_ that matters the most.

**#2: Being faithful under pressure means \_\_\_\_\_.**

“..they were enraged and wanted to kill them.” (Acts 5:33)

Peter’s bold words hadn’t calmed the situation, but actually made it \_\_\_\_\_.

“If this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!” (Acts 5:38-39)

Gamaliel probably didn’t realize how \_\_\_\_\_ his words were. The church belongs to \_\_\_\_\_, and what God establishes, no one can ultimately \_\_\_\_\_.

The council can threaten and even the flog the apostles, but they can’t \_\_\_\_\_ What God has begun. The future of the Church doesn’t depend on human strength, but on God’s \_\_\_\_\_ power.

“You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.” (Genesis 50:20)

“We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. “ (Romans 8:28)

However, what appeared to be Satan's greatest victory became God's greatest \_\_\_\_\_—what men intended for evil, God used for \_\_\_\_\_.

Our lives can often feel like the \_\_\_\_\_ of a tapestry. We see disappointments, unanswered prayers, sickness, loss, and circumstances we don't \_\_\_\_\_.

“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.” (Isaiah 55:8)

Faith doesn't mean understanding everything; it means \_\_\_\_\_ the One who does.

This truth matters because many of the pressures we face aren't persecution from hostile authorities, but more \_\_\_\_\_.

However, Acts 5 reminds us that God is always at \_\_\_\_\_, even when we can't see it.

The apostles couldn't understand everything that was happening, nor did they know how the story would unfold. However, they knew who \_\_\_\_\_ the story. And that's enough because faith doesn't rest on understanding every detail; it rests on the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

“I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away.” (John 15:1)

Jesus doesn't promise trouble-free life; He promises that trouble won't have the last \_\_\_\_\_.

And so, our hope doesn't rest in favourable \_\_\_\_\_, but in the God who \_\_\_\_\_ over all circumstances. And because He reigns, we don't need to panic, despair, or live in fear about the \_\_\_\_\_, but can \_\_\_\_\_ in God's sovereign purposes, even in times of opposition and uncertainty.

**#3: Being faithful under pressure means \_\_\_\_\_.**  
“As they left the council, they rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonour for the sake of Christ.” (Acts 5:41)

This isn't \_\_\_\_\_. Left to ourselves, we seek comfort, avoid conflict, and prefer acceptance over rejection. Yet, the same Spirit who empowered the apostles enabled them to remain \_\_\_\_\_ under pressure. Not because they enjoyed pain or were pretending everything was fine, but because they understood something \_\_\_\_\_.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:10)

They apostles had suffered because they \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus. And if their Lord had endured rejection, they considered it an \_\_\_\_\_ to share, however imperfectly, in His sufferings.

“Rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed.” (1 Peter 4:13)

“And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.” (Acts 5:42)

Suffering didn't silence them; it \_\_\_\_\_ their resolve.

“For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.” (2 Corinthians 4:17)

Like Paul, their eyes were fixed not on temporary difficulties, but on \_\_\_\_\_ realities.

The pressure doesn't have to be \_\_\_\_\_—it can simply be the daily challenge of remaining \_\_\_\_\_.

Faithfulness isn't measured by spectacular accomplishments, but by \_\_\_\_\_. The Christian life isn't a hundred-yard dash to the finish line; it's a marathon. And the call of Christ isn't merely to begin well, but to \_\_\_\_\_ well.

“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.” (Hebrews 12:2-3)

“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10)

Two thousand years later, the Lord calls us to do the same—not with bitterness, fear, or anger, but with quiet \_\_\_\_\_, humble courage, and steadfast joy. For Christ is risen. Christ is reigning. And Christ is \_\_\_\_\_.

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“Take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

“Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Master.” (Matthew 25:23)