

3rd Sunday of Easter, Year “C”: May 4th, 2025.

Christ is alive!

The reality of the resurrection.

John chapter 21 (our Sunday Gospel) gives us clear details that Jesus Christ is risen from death – Christ is Alive! The risen Lord was not a vision, or a figment of someone’s imagination, not an appearance of ghost, or a spirit; it was Jesus who conquered sin and death, he rose triumphantly from death back into life. Now what are some of the effects the risen Lord on his friends, and believers?

First reading: Acts 5: 27-34.

“The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.” Peter and the other apostles replied: “***We must obey God rather than human beings!*** The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. ***We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.***” When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while” (Acts 5: 27-34. New International Version).

The Acts of the Apostles, Chapter Five:

The Apostles worked many signs and wonders, the number of believers went up, small fellowship groups were formed, and the Apostles began to heal many sick people. “Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. Miraculously angel got them released and sent back to the Temple to continue to preach about Jesus Christ.”

In this chapter, we see three great impacts of the risen Lord on the Disciples:

After Jesus' resurrection, He appeared to more than 500 other disciples over 40 days. As these followers saw the risen Jesus, their cowardice, doubt, and fear gave way to courage and faith. No longer frightened, they were prepared to face death. Because if Jesus' tomb were empty, theirs would be as well.

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The risen Jesus had a profound and transformative effect on the disciples. His resurrection gave them a renewed sense of faith, hope, and boldness, leading them to become powerful witnesses for Christ. They experienced joy, a newfound understanding of scripture, and a stronger unity as a community.

Here's a more detailed look at the impact:

1. Renewed Faith and Hope: The disciples, who were initially devastated by Jesus's death, were filled with joy and hope upon seeing him resurrected. Their faith was strengthened as they witnessed the empty tomb and the appearances of the risen Jesus. This renewed faith gave them the courage to face persecution and preach the gospel, even to the point of martyrdom.

2. Increased Boldness and Fearlessness: *“We must obey God rather than human beings!”* The resurrection erased their fear of death and persecution, as they realized that Jesus had conquered death. They became bold preachers of the gospel, fearlessly proclaiming Jesus's identity and his resurrection. *“We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”* They were no longer ashamed of their past doubts or failures, but instead used their experiences to share the transformative power of Christ.

3. A Mission to Share the Gospel: *“Feed my lambs - Tend my sheep - Feed my sheep - Follow me.”* Jesus commissioned the disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, sharing the good news of his resurrection and offering salvation. They understood that their mission was to proclaim the gospel to the world, spreading the hope and peace that they had found in Christ. This mission fueled their courage and commitment to follow Jesus, even in the face of adversity.

Acts of the Apostles chapter five:

The apostles knew their priorities. While we try to live in peace with everyone, conflicts with the world and its authorities are sometimes inevitable for Christians. In some situations, we won't be able to obey both God and human authority. At those times, we must obey God and trust His Word as the ultimate truth. The Words of Christ remain encouraging: “Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. (Luke 6:22, New International Version).

Rabbi Gamaliel was an elder, a first-century Jewish rabbi, and a leader in the Jewish Sanhedrin. We acknowledge him as one with a moderate stance toward the apostles. Thus, he had a profound effect on the early church. It was under the tutelage of Rabbi Gamaliel that Paul

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developed an expert knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. Paul's educational and professional credentials allowed him to preach in the synagogues wherever he traveled, and his grasp of Old Testament history and law aided his presentation of Jesus Christ as the One who had fulfilled the Law.

The first biblical reference to Rabbi Gamaliel is found in chapter five. The scene is a meeting of the Sanhedrin, where John and Peter are standing trial. After having warned the apostles to cease preaching in the name of Jesus, the Jewish council becomes infuriated when Simon Peter defiantly replies, "We must obey God rather than human beings!" (Acts 5: 29). Peter had no intention of ceasing to proclaim the gospel, regardless of the possible repercussions. Peter's defiance enrages the council, who begin to seek the death of the apostles, into the fray steps Gamaliel.

Rabbi Gamaliel became a tool in the hands of the Holy Spirit. First, he orders the apostles to be removed from the room. Gamaliel then encourages the council to be cautious in dealing with Jesus' followers: "In the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God." The Sanhedrin is persuaded by Gamaliel's words (verse 40). That the council acquiesced to his advice speaks to the influence that Gamaliel possessed.

After warning the apostles to cease preaching in the name of Jesus, the Jewish council becomes infuriated when Simon Peter defiantly replies, "We must obey God rather than human beings!" ***Peter and John had no intention of ceasing to proclaim the gospel, regardless of the possible repercussions. Let us be courageous to share our faith with others, no matter the cost.*** We may not be beaten or thrown into jail, but we may be ridiculed, ostracized, or slandered. To what extent are we willing to suffer for the sake of sharing the Good News of Christ with others?

God bless you.

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