

Focus: KINGDOM OPPOSITION begins. Those opposed to Christ’s Kingdom will seek to silence His followers; but we must obey God, rather than men.

Introduction: We know it’s coming.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer – from prison in 1937 *The Cost of Discipleship*

I. Opposition Begins - It’s Not Fair! Don’t expect it to be.

A. Annoyed/exasperated/disturbed. The Sadducees were the materialistic rationalists of the day.

B. Arrested – Why?

C. Charges?? It is a deadly trap! Attribute the miracle to anyone other than Jehovah/Yahweh and they can be executed for blasphemy. (Deut.13:1-5)

II. The *Real* Battle is Engaged – It’s not about a beggar.

A. Power for Spiritual Warfare

1. Filled with the Spirit! v.8

a. *pleroo* family of words is used. (Luke 4:1; Acts 6:3; Eph.5:18)
Refers to exhibiting/showing the fruit of the Spirit in a life that is under the Lordship/control of the Spirit.

b. *pimplemi* family (e.g. Luke 1:41,67; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17)
Refers to a special pouring out (or influx- pouring in) of ability and power in the service of the kingdom.

2. Relying on the Spirit. Luke 21:14

3. Peter’s Defense? Or is it Offense?

- The Main Point?? Jesus is risen from the dead! v.10

- Draws on Psalm 118:22 - The stone the “builders” (rulers of Israel) rejected has become the capstone. v.11

- “In no one else” “In no other name” v.12

Example: On the tomb of John Knox: “Here lies the man who never feared the face of clay.”

B. The Opposition is Silenced

1. By uneducated, untrained men (John 7:15)

2. Recognized – They had been with Jesus.

3. Can’t deny the miracle –

4. Can’t refute the main argument – Jesus is risen!

5. They have no answer to make

C. The Apostles’ Power??? **“They had been with Jesus”**

D. The Opposition is Exposed

1. Apostles dismissed from room. What do we do with them???
2. Threatened with serious consequences if they persist. May not speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus!
3. Flat – and fatal – rejection of the savior! They are attacking the Son of God, Jesus, the righteous one, in whose name alone is forgiveness, salvation, eternal life.

III. Into the Fray!

A. Then? Who would they obey?

1. The Leaders? Power to enforce the law? Yes.
 - To bind the conscience? Not here!
 - To abandon conscience is a dangerous path indeed. “For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.” Romans 14:23
 - They are commanded to obey. But, can they be forced to follow? Certainly not. They must still choose. (Matthew 10:33)
2. God! “We must speak!” v.19,20
John Wesley: “Give me a hundred men who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I will shake the world. I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; and such alone will overthrow the kingdom of Satan and build up the kingdom of God on earth.

B. Result? The believers are strengthened. The apostles are released the next day. The arrests were false. Jesus rescued his servants!

C. Now? Opposition continues to this day

1. Don't be surprised at Opposition!
2. Remember:
 - It's never “fair”
 - It's rarely “accurate” (always distorted). Exodus International App for iPhone.
 - It is not about you – but about Him!
3. It comes in many forms
 - direct persecution – violent opposition – places like Indonesia, Sudan, China
 - Silence the believers, don't let them speak in public. Example: RUF at Brown University - Allow every club imaginable (as perverse as possible) but exclude Christians because they are not tolerant.
 - a watered down message of “love”
 - Take away the exclusive claims
 - Push for relativism in religion and faith
4. Where do you need to take a stand?