

## Real Challenges In The Early Church

### The Challenge Of Sin

Tremendous growth in the church.

Acts 2:41 Three thousand

Acts 4:4 Five thousand

Acts 6:7 *"Number of disciples increased greatly."*

Acts 9:31 *"So the church throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied."*

Acts 11:24 *"... and much people was added unto the Lord."*

### The Challenge Of Sin

Acts 5:1-11 First recorded sin in the church.

1. Peter exposed their sin and they both died.
2. Acts 5:11 *"And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things."*

### The Challenge Of Sin

1 Corinthians 5:1-7 Even a small amount of leaven would contaminate the whole lump.

1. Note: verses 3-4 By the authority of Christ, the guilty was to be disciplined.
2. Keep the church morally pure.  
Ephesus. Revelation 2:2  
Thyatira. Revelation 2:20  
Sardis. Revelation 3:4

### The Challenge From Authorities

Authority of the Jews. (Acts 4:5-6)

Court put on trial ... *"Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard."* (Acts 4:19-20; cf. 1 Peter 4:14-16)

### The Challenge From Authorities

Authority of the Jews. (Acts 5:1-7ff)

1. *"We must obey God rather than men ..."* (Acts 5:29)
2. Note: (Acts 5:41-42)
3. Stephen stoned. (Acts 7)

## The Challenge From Authorities

### Authority of the Jews. (Acts 9:1 ff)

- *"But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord ..."*

## The Challenge From Authorities

### Authority of Herod. Acts 12:1-2

1. Death of James.
2. Arrest of Peter.

## The Challenge From Authorities

### Authority of the Magistrates in Philippi. (Acts 16:22ff)

1. Paul and Silas arrested, beaten, and imprisoned. (Acts 16:22ff)
2. Returned to Lydia's house. (Acts 16:35ff)

- ▶ Luke 21:16-17 *"But ye shall be delivered up even by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and (some) of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake."*

- ▶ Philippians 1:29-30 *"because to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf: having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me."*

- ▶ 1 Thessalonians 3:4 *"For verily, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to suffer affliction; even as it came to pass, and ye know."*

- ▶ 2 Timothy 1:8 *"Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God"*

- ▶ 2 Timothy 3:12 *"Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."*
- ▶ Luke 22:33-34 *"And he said unto him, Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."*
- ▶ 1 Peter 4:16 *"but if (a man suffer) as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name."*

- ▶ Acts 21:13 *"Then Paul answered, What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."*

## Application And Conclusion

- ▶ God wants people to confront sin.
- ▶ Discipline must be practiced to protect the church and save the soul of the one in sin.
- ▶ *"We must obey God rather than men."*
- ▶ When we feel isolated, even paralyzed, remember we are not alone. *"Yet will I leave (me) seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal"* (1 Kings 19:18)