

## NEXT STEP: STUDY &amp; SHARE

## READINGS

Acts 5:29-42

Psalm 23

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. (v1)*

1 Peter 2:19-25

John 10:1-10

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name & lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty & security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Savior & Lord, who lives & reigns with you & the Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. Amen.

## SERMON TEXT- Acts 5:29-42

<sup>29</sup>But Peter & the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. <sup>30</sup>The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. <sup>31</sup>God exalted him at his right hand as Leader & Savior that he might give repentance to Israel & forgiveness of sins. <sup>32</sup>And we are witnesses to these things, & so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him." <sup>33</sup>When they heard this, they were enraged & wanted to kill them. <sup>34</sup>But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, respected by all the people, stood up & ordered the men to be put outside for a short time. <sup>35</sup>Then he said to them, "Fellow Israelites, consider carefully what you propose to do to these men. <sup>36</sup>For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, & a number of men, about four hundred, joined him; but he was killed, & all who followed him were dispersed & disappeared. <sup>37</sup>After him Judas the Galilean rose up at the time of the census & got people to follow him; he also perished, & all who followed him were scattered. <sup>38</sup>So in the present case, I tell you, keep away from these men & let them alone; because if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; <sup>39</sup>but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them — in that case you may even be found fighting against God!" They were convinced by him, <sup>40</sup>and when they had called in the apostles, they had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, & let them go. <sup>41</sup>As they left the council, they rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name. <sup>42</sup>And every day in the temple & at home they did not cease to teach & proclaim Jesus as the Messiah.

## LISTENING TO . . .

**GOD-** *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

1. What does Jesus have to say about his followers & suffering? *See Matthew 10:16-22, 24:9-14; Mark 13:9-13; Luke 6:22-23, 21:12-17; John 15:18-25; Revelation 2:1--3:22*
2. What does St. Paul (& others) add? *See Romans 5:3-5, 8:17-18; 2 Corinthians 1:5-7, 11:16--12:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-14; 2 Timothy 2:3; 1 Peter 1:6-11, 2:19-23, 3:14-18, 4:1-19, 5:9-10; Hebrews 13:3, 12-13; (We could list plenty more; these will suffice.)*

**EACH OTHER-** *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. Humor site BabylonBee.com teases our American Christian comforts. Search *persecut* (no e) on the site for examples. Read several.
4. Sister site NotTheBee.com logs actual worldwide persecution and martyrdom. Read a few at [notthebee.com/category/persecution](http://notthebee.com/category/persecution)

**NEIGHBORS-** *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

5. It's been observed: if Jesus said his followers would suffer, & we're not suffering in our following, then we may be following him the wrong way. How does public suffering add authenticity to the Gospel message, that affluence & influence cannot? *See Luke 4:16-21; Acts 12:1-3*
6. How do St. Paul's (and others') words bring comfort to those who truly suffer for their faith? *See Romans 12:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:6; 1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 4:14*

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Fourth Sunday of Easter  
Series: Forged by the Spirit

04.30.23  
Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

Mission Never Stops

*God uses the world's persecution to make every church stronger*

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: As they left the council, they rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name. (v41)

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-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

Jesus says, I am the good shepherd.  
I know my own & my own know me. (*John 10:14*)

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