



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 19 Pt. 3 Recipe for Evangelistic Zeal - Joy**  
**By Pastor Jody May 02/05/2023**

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**Acts 5:33-42 ESV**

<sup>33</sup> When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. <sup>34</sup> But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. <sup>35</sup> And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. <sup>36</sup> For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. <sup>37</sup> After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. <sup>38</sup> So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; <sup>39</sup> but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!” So they took his advice, <sup>40</sup> and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. <sup>41</sup> Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. <sup>42</sup> And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

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This is week 3 of a Recipe for Evangelistic Zeal let me recite the recipe so far up to this point:

- Step One – separate the chaff from the wheat by being **Holy**.
- Step Two – mix ingredients thoroughly with persistent **Obedience**.
- Step Three – Roll it Out, bake it, and distribute it with **Joy**.

You know if we want to, we could change that term Evangelistic Zeal into the modern vernacular and call it **Influence** (part appeal and part compulsion).

**[INTRODUCTION]**

Over the last few years, especially with the rise of the COVID pandemic which caused **(MDS) Mass Disillusionment Syndrome** (where large masses of people were made to feel unsafe by those in power in order to get them compliant) the result of that world-wide phenomenon was that people sought out



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something to make them feel good through on-line media since they couldn't leave their house. This gave even more popularity to what we call *Social Media Influencers*, people who make a living by making videos and getting paid for how many 'likes' they get.

In that, I got to be honest with you, there are a few subscriptions I picked up over the last couple of years of influencers that I like to watch, especially to help me combat MDS. I had a couple of religious subscriptions, a couple of Miami Dolphin channels, some wrestling gurus, a couple of prepper/gun/security channels and of course Sheena Melwani whose Indian Father cracks me up by cracking jokes on his daughter.

But then I checked on what are the top 20 influences for YouTube and TikTok and I hate to report, I am not following one of those people, would you believe that!? I mean I am missing out on things like star weight loss habits, bed-time nursery rhymes, BallyWood music videos, and so forth, and out of all those things people decided to subscribe to over the last 3 years not one of them have long lasting value or have anything to offer people on how to help them find **Eternal Life**.

I bring that up to say that the world is **primed**, they are ready because **everyone is suffering from MDS Mass Disillusionment Syndrome**. **Culture is making millions of people poor in spirit**, it is making them feel like they don't have much of a future, that they should just let others push them around, tell them what to do:

- accept that non-binary identification as the only way to be – lie.
- accept a diet of soy and processed food products that cause a concoction of medical problems is how we should eat – lie.
- accept that the powerful and elite want to remove economic independence of the individual to help you – lie.
- accept that climate change is due to Carbon emissions not natural processes – lie.
- accept that no part of your life should be private and separate from state eyes in order to manipulate, I mean help you – lie.
- accept that not all lives are equal, and the unborn, old, and mentally stable should surrender their rights to life and liberty – lie.



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**Here's what's happening to the rest of the world** - Culture runs and establishes Social Media Influencers in such a way that we are made to think that everything is ok, to numb our minds, as our spirit is sucked out of our lives. C.S. Lewis put it to us this way in **Screw Tape Letters (1942)**, as a little devil was inquiring what would be the strategy to lure people away from God of which the senior ranking Devil responded *we will make so much **noise** in their lives as to drown out the voice of God.*

What the devil has learned over years that if he is not busy trying to influence culture then God's True Church is. There is a price though he has to pay when he pushes so hard, because now that he has gotten some people restless with the way they are being fed lies, it is starting to **make them look for Truth!** Let's take one second and look at how the church gained **INFLUENCE** in the first century as the poor in Spirit were flocking to the church.

**Acts 2:41**, "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls." That's influence. **2:43** "And awe (fear) came upon every soul." That's influence. **2:47**, "Having favor with all the people." That's influence. **Acts 3:10**, after the healing of the lame man, "they were filled with wonder and amazement." that's influence. **3:11** as that man clung to Peter and John, "all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's." That's Influence and it's spreading quicker than if they had the internet!

**4:4**, "But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand." The INFLUENCE was so great that the HS was affecting people so that they believed. Influence!

**5:11**, "And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things." Influence. **5:13-14**, "None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. <sup>14</sup> And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women." Influence.

The early church had influenced the world more than any sickness has ever done to any culture before. It was spreading quicker than the plague and was more contagious than the common cold. And now the church had taken over



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the media in all aspects, it was on the tips of the tongues in everyone's mouth in Jerusalem. John MacArthur - *"The issue in that day was not politics. The issue was not economics. The issue was not sports. The issue was Christianity."*<sup>1</sup>

And the culmination of this influence comes in the comment of the leaders in seeing all of this, at the end of chapter 5:28 is, "yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching." This thing has become the issue. That's influence, and this is what the Poor in Spirit have been attracted to, the fact that Jesus is their good shepherd, (John 10 which you read this week) and offered a very appealing alternative to being bullied by false propagandists.

- He offers us identity not based on sex but based on how He sees us as His sheep – truth.
- He offers a diet that will out sustain any physical food we could ever eat – truth.
- He offers a King that is in control of every financial institution there is – truth.
- He offers you not control over the weather, but trust in the one who controls it – truth.
- He offers transparency into His life, wanting you to know Him, while at the same time He already knows everything about you – truth.
- He offers us the reality that all life is sacred because He is the one that gives all life worth – truth.

We thank God though because He loves us enough not to allow His children not to perish under temporary and abusive and lying leadership at the hands of the world's influencers, but He sends His image in His Son to offer **Eternal Life**, a TRUE perspective on how life works which can sustain us.

### John 3:16 ESV

<sup>16</sup>"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have **eternal life**.

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<sup>1</sup>John MacArthur, Sermon, *The Early Church Pattern for Evangelism, Part 3*, October 29, 1972, <http://www.gracetoyou.org>.



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The poor in Spirit in Acts 5 had found the one that made them rich in Spirit, and now the world was losing its' power to have influence over them. **The Gospel is the Declaration of Separation from the World, and it INFLUENCES**, and it makes the same offer to all men, at all times, until He returns, freedom in Christ Alone, that's the **TRUTH!** Jesus said:

**John 14:6 ESV**

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the **truth**, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Today we are looking at this last ingredient in Evangelistic Zeal or **INFLUENCE**, and it's a **Joy** that is produced by the Truth of the Gospel.

<sup>41</sup>Then they left the presence of the council, **rejoicing** that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

Everything they had been through in chapter 5 culminated in their **REJOICING**; the public accusations, the arrests, the questionings, the imprisonments, the death threats, and the beatings, all of that brought about **rejoicing**. Rejoicing because **the Truth found in Jesus**, His Gospel, had born true because what they found in Jesus took their minds off what the world offered. It had made the Apostles strong, that's what got them through their dark hours, and that was what **INFLUENCED** them.

Right now, one more time we go back to this scene to see the fight to keep the Truth, not to hide it, not to shrink back from its' declaration and how it makes the church become the biggest influencer of all time!

**1. The Truth of the Gospel comes with the Conviction of the Holy Spirit.**  
(v.33)

<sup>33</sup>When they heard this, they were **enraged** and wanted to **kill** them.

Conviction opens the eyes of the blind to see, which we call Saving Grace or in most cases the conviction helps the lost see the ugliness of their actions and



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the goodness of God, which they hate. Jesus taught us that He (HS) opens our eyes to three different things:

**John 16:8-11 ESV**

<sup>8</sup>And when he comes, he will **convict** (ἐλέγχω (*elenchō*): expose) the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup>concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup>concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; <sup>11</sup>concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

In this story the Sadducees have had enough, and they just want to end it. They had seen this with Jesus, they had gotten tired of Him robbing them of their social prominence, and their jealousy made them make the deal with Judas to get their hands on Him. The conviction though they were experiencing was of **SIN**, they saw that Jesus had something they could not have, that Jesus was operating out of a power they could not get, and the Truth of the Gospel was that Jesus was answering the Poor in Spirit with real answers which threatened their way of life. He was becoming **THE Biggest Influencer**.

The Sanhedrin had gotten use to being the '**do-boys**' of the Roman Empire. They had gotten use to how it was, that their theological interpretation of scripture could give no real answers for life. It was just that God liked you better than others if one was born into prominence and if you stayed there, it meant that you were most likely favored by God. The solution to keep you in prominence was to keep the masses under control of the government, don't get them upset with the status quo, don't lose the influence amongst the people, or you would lose your blessings (like the *World Economic Forum* ☺).

But now they were experiencing the conviction of the HS and seeing Jesus for who He was, **they were exposed**. The truth was all too hard to handle for them, for if they surrendered to this movement, then they would lose their power, this conviction of Truth caused them to reject the Gospel, damming them to their future and the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.



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We have to keep in mind that the Gospel will convict everyone it goes out to, but rarely does it make the world happy to hear it. As a matter of fact, most the world does not want to hear it, for it convicts them of sin.

Today, perhaps you're a little timid about sharing the Truth of the Gospel, for fear of getting people mad at you. That is a fear that has been no different for over two thousand years, and back then though it had real consequences. Perhaps it may be you don't know where to start with the Truth, let me offer you the phrase that got him and the Apostles in hot water:

**Acts 5:29 ESV** - "We must obey God rather than men."

Just think about all the places that takes you, abortion, gender identification, unlawful taxation, government overreach, any abuse of power and if we all start here, we will never not have something to talk about. BUT if you are not reading God's Word, and spending time with those who do 1<sup>st</sup> then you will not know how to go about it. Let me encourage you friend now is not the day to be swayed for if you do not stand on God's Word you will eventually be swayed by this world. It is not too late, let's stand together for God's Truth.

Now, this brings us to the second thing to see about the Truth of the Gospel, we will get help from unlikely sources.

**2. The Truth of the Gospel will always go forward and can't be stopped by unregenerate Influencers.**

<sup>34</sup> But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while.

He was the greatest teacher of his day. He was the grandson of Hillel. They were two great rabbis. Any Jew will tell you the two great rabbis, Hillel and Shammai – those two rabbis founded the two branches of Phariseism, one a little more conservative than the other. Hillel was the little more liberal wing; he was the grandson of Hillel. His heritage was good. He was a sharp guy.





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The old writings tell us that he had great learning. He was noble. He studied Greek literature. He was culturally so far advanced from the other rabbis, they weren't even in the same ballpark with him. He was called the beauty of the law. He died 18 years before the sack of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. And in the Mishnah it says, quote, "*Since Rabban Gamaliel the Elder died, there has been no more reverence for the law, and purity and abstinence died out at the same time.*" So, he was a very dominating guy. They felt, when he died, everything went with him.

Interestingly enough, in [Acts 22:3](#), it says that the apostle Paul studied at his feet. So, Paul had the best teacher of Judaism that was alive at that time, and maybe one of the greatest that ever lived.<sup>2</sup>

Gamaliel, make no mistake, is not a Gospel centered person for he sees Salvation by one's works BUT people don't know they need the Gospel without the teaching of the law. Gamaliel serves a function in the birth of the church. We will get to that later when we get to Paul's introduction. In this case he applies his wisdom to the situation at hand.

<sup>35</sup> And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. <sup>36</sup> For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. <sup>37</sup> After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. <sup>38</sup> So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; <sup>39</sup> but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!" So they took his advice,

Here's the principle that the wise man is betting all his chips on. **Whatever succeeds is of God and whatever doesn't, won't.** Just leave it alone. Now if that were a true principle then what about all the cults and false teachers over the years that have had tremendous success at leading people astray? No, that's the trouble of Hyper-Calvinism, "*don't worry be happy*".

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.





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If Gamaliel was so wise, he should have opened his OT and said let's research it, let's look at the prophecies, let's see once and for all if this is the Christ, and then apply all our resources to His cause!

**GOSPEL TRUTH** - The joy of the Truth of the Gospel is unregenerate men, whether by their anger or by their misunderstanding, cannot stop the spread of the Influence of the Gospel, BUT by their own fallenness will promote the spreading of its' influence.

Now look, that's the main point from this section, you can't stop BECAUSE God decides to move through fallen men, but here's the challenge for us. Now that you know how He works, you are now culpable when you don't worry about how you can join in on the fun!

As we read Acts one of the byproducts of this practice is that as a church it is **removing our ability to say it was too hard, I didn't know what to do, and I am afraid**. We are not the frozen chosen, but we are the MEUs - *MOBILE ELECT UNITS*. We make decisions on God's Word, and we step into the world and get a piece of it!

We are taking back what is God's, and we can rest in the Truth that even the world's best influencer's choices will be used against them and for God's glory. That brings us to our last point.

**3. The Truth of the Gospel comes with a Price and a Reward. (vs. 40-42).**

<sup>40</sup>and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

Alright, here comes the heavy dose of reality, you trust God, you have been Holy, you have been obedient, and now when the fire gets turned up, you are expecting to get out of trouble BUT God has different plans.

Deuteronomy 25 tells about it (this beating). It's a sad thing. The Mishna says that the guy would take the hands of the person and strap them to



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two posts like this. He would strip his shirt off. A stone was set behind the man or in front of the man, on which the guy stood. And he had to swing with all his might, the Mishna said. He wrapped the leather around his hand. Two big, long, wide, broad pieces of leather from the navel to the ground – that long – and they gave him one-third of the stripes on the front, and two-thirds on the back. And he did it to every one of those believers there.<sup>3</sup>

**They didn't get away without paying with a pound of flesh.** Brothers and sisters this is the Truth, to stand for the Truth of the Gospel, to gain Influence in this world it will cost you something. Before we get disheartened though let's see how it impacted these men.

<sup>41</sup>Then they left the presence of the council, **rejoicing** (χαίρω (*chairō*) – a state of gladness or well-being) **that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.**

Whether they left on their own power or not I do not know, but what I do know is how they left, they were **well pleased**. I am sure they were glad it was over, but the reason they were glad is that they took it for the Lord! Their gladness was connected to their suffering, because of what it meant. They had influenced others as Jesus had, they too had been weighed and for the first time they felt they were no longer unworthy but worthy.

They left that day from the wisest of all Pharisees, left the whole weight and Council of Israel, beaten and bloodied, **VICTORIOUS** with their new stripes! And that's how it works in our lives folks:

**Luke 9:23 ESV**

**"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."**

It is through our struggles, it is through our crosses, that we gain our stripes, and those stripes define us, they tell us we are worthy. If it were not for the opportunities to suffer for the cause of Christ, we would never develop into the

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



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Influencer that God is calling us to be, and we would miss a life full of meaning and purpose. If you will accept that, here's what we can accomplish together.

<sup>42</sup>And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

God took all that persecution, of which it would get worse, he took all the negative press, he took the scandal of court rooms setting, and He changed the world.

The first time His Son Jesus did it all by Himself perfectly, that was the Gospel of Luke.

The second time, He uses His new people the church, it's the book of Acts, and it's a story that you and I are all a part of!

**[CHALLENGE + APPLICATION]**

Family if you are looking for a religion that delivers you cushiness, no stress, and earthly riches then you do not want Christianity. But if you want purpose, to live for something bigger than yourself, to have a life that your suffering has meaning, then Christianity is the only place you will find it.

I pray we all will become the type of people like our Lord that when the moment comes, we step up to the plate and deliver. Because in the moments when we bear our cross publicly is when we will have the **MOST INFLUENCE**. When you get that chance rejoice loved one, for God will not let you fail, it is His promise to glorify His Son through us! Let's pray together for that.



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**[PRAYER]**

**[COMMUNION]**

**[BENEDICTION]**

Go in the name of the Father, that calls us to the path of resistance so we would get the opportunity to stand for Him.

Go in the name of the Son, that endured the full weight of God's wrath, so we would never have to endure that cross.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that stands with us on our day of public persecution, and who will help us rejoice in it to gain Influence in this world.