

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 369
Series: The Primal Church - Acts Chapters 1-8
Verses: Acts 5:17-21a
Topic: The Gospel Cannot Be Locked Up!
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Acts 5:17-21 LITV And rising up, the high priest and all those with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees, were filled with zeal, (18) and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in public custody. (19) But an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison during the night, and leading them out, he said, (20) Go! And standing in the temple, speak to the people all the words of this Life. (21) And hearing, they went into the temple about dawn and taught.

Peter gets let out of jail by angels – twice here with the Sanhedrin in chapter 5, and later under Herod in chapter 12. Peter spoke the “words of Life” and even the angels wanted Peter to keep preaching! The gospel cannot be locked up if God wants it to be proclaimed!

There is a time when preaching is urgent, when a great spiritual movement is going on and we MUST preach! (At other times I hardly preach at all – as with my three and a half years in the Philippines. The need there was to train and equip the preachers – not for me to do the preaching myself.) Here the urgency is so great that God sends angels so Peter can go into the midst of the temple at dawn and preach the gospel!

There is also a touch of humor in today’s passage. The Sanhedrin put Peter in jail and there he is preaching, in the temple, back on their turf again. The doors are locked, but he is out and the gospel is being proclaimed.

But the main point is this: The gospel cannot be locked up if God wants it to be proclaimed!

God will get His Word out. He will send a messenger, if not you, then someone else, if not the wise, then the foolish, if not the strong, then the weak will be sent - and will be made strong.

The gospel has an extraordinary ability to escape confinement – and the Internet is helping that process! I minister in many more countries than I could physically visit. By the way feel free to reproduce these devotionals for non-profit ministry purposes. May the gospel move freely!

The Devil may take away your ministry budget, but God will supply through another means, the Devil may stand you with floodwaters so you cannot reach the convention you were supposed to preach at – but God will raise up another opportunity, right where you are. In 1994 I was “stick” for ministry opportunities so I

started Eternity Online Magazine on the Internet and had over one million readers per month by 1997! Satan imprisons – but God releases.

Satan may bind you up in one way, but God will release you in another! You may be an invalid, imprisoned by arthritis, but God can release you to pray and to be an intercessor and give strength to the works of God. All the strength in my ministry comes from the prayers of the saints!

You may not be able to be in “full-time ministry” because of a disabled child that requires special care. But the disabled community needs “chaplains” that understand the pain and weariness and frustration and discrimination. Could that be where you are to minister?

There are special restrictions on the gospel in places like Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam and Tibet. These are the so-called “closed countries” – and there are many more of them. There many of God’s preachers are jailed, or tortured or killed. But the gospel is not jailed – radio broadcasters send in their signals, the Internet reaches other places, people smuggle in Bibles and so on and so forth. China is a closed country that has experienced a great revival.

Why is God so concerned that the gospel be preached? Because it is the “word of Life”. It brings eternal life to spiritually dead people. It is not just another religious opinion – it is spiritual power and grace. It is the power of God unto salvation. (Romans 1:16)

If God is so concerned about the proclamation of the gospel that He would send angels to unlock Peter – how much more does he want to unlock your power to proclaim His Word? Proclamation is a priority for God, and should also be a priority for us.

God will give you a certain message for a certain place at a particular time. “Now, In the temple...the words of Life.” You have to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in this. It is best to know how God wants His gospel proclaimed. But even if you don’t, or aren’t sure – proclaim it anyway.

Where are the most needy places in the world for the gospel to be proclaimed?

1. India, Indonesia and China.
2. Muslim nations
3. The urban slums of the developing world in which 1.5 billion people dwell.

How can we proclaim it there? By Internet, Christian radio, the Jesus film, personal witness, development work, medical missions and so forth. Hopefully a combination of the above.

I have projects in these places (mainly evangelistic Internet cafes). If you are interested in supporting them or helping out just email me on johned@aibi.ph

Blessings,

John Edmiston

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