

**WOULD YOU BE CONVICTED?**  
April 11, 2010 Easter 2  
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The following sermon is a storytelling sermon. I have taken on the role of Peter in Acts Chapter 5. Peter is just returning home after his second arrest for preaching the gospel.

Woman: Peter, what happened to you. You've been beaten.

Peter: More like whipped, but it's ok I'll recover. At least this time I stayed true to our master.

Woman: Well let me get some water and a cloth to wash off your back. The blood has soaked through your clothes. Then you can tell me about it.

Peter: Thanks that would help.

(She gets a towel and bowl. He takes off his outer robe and she starts to wipe his back.)

Woman *as she starts to wipe off his back*: So Peter tell me what happened.

Peter: *He winces in pain*. Ouch that hurts, be careful!

(*As Peter talks the woman sits down and listens*)

This time it started about three days ago. Several of us, James, John and myself were on Solomon's Portico at the temple. Oh the people who came. There were so many of them. Many were sick and wanted to be healed. They believed that even getting close enough to be covered by our shadow was all they needed.

We told them everything about what has happened. I started with that early morning. You remember it was when you and the other women came running back from the tomb and said, that you had seen angels who told you that he was not there, that he had risen. Just like he had taught us. I thought you were absolutely delusional and had to go see for myself and it was just as you had said.

Then there was that evening when he appeared to all of us in the room. Well almost all of us. Poor Thomas was away. I still don't know for sure where he was. I think it was that moment when Jesus breathed on us and said, "Receive my Spirit." That is when it all changed for me. I finally got it. I finally understood. Thomas had to wait for another visit until he truly believed. I think somehow we are different.

What amazes me is these people at the Temple believe us. They truly believe us and most have never met Jesus. Sometimes I find this hard to believe even now.

We knew it was a risk to teach right there on the front steps of the Temple, but we had to tell the people the truth about what has happened, what is happening. Well the temple guards came and arrested us. They took us to the prison and locked the doors behind us. But that night an angel appeared and the doors opened. The angel told us to leave the prison and that we were to go stand in the temple and tell all the people the whole message about this life.

So the next morning we were right back there at Solomon's Portico and the people continued to come and listen. I guess there must have been quite an uproar when someone told the authorities that we were not in prison. I understand that when they checked the prison all the doors were locked and the guards in place. Nobody could explain how we got out. But we knew that God had sent his angels to release us.

Well what else could we do but go back to teaching and proclaiming. At least that is what I told them when they arrested us a second time. The Spirit has compelled us to teach and we had to obey. We must obey God and not men. Well I can tell you they didn't like that one bit.

I must say the talk started to get nasty and for awhile I thought they were going to kill us.

Gamaliel finally stood up and said, "Fellow Israelites, be careful what you do to these men. Not long ago Theudas made something of a splash, claiming to be somebody, and got about four hundred men to join him. He was killed, his followers dispersed, and nothing came of it. A little later, at the time of the census, Judas the Galilean appeared and acquired a following. He also fizzled out and the people following him were scattered to the four winds. "So I am telling you: Hands off these men! Let them alone. If this program or this work is merely human, it will fall apart, but if it is of God, there is nothing you can do about it—and you better not be found fighting against God!"

Well that convinced them so instead they just whipped us, told us not to preach anymore and sent us away. We were so happy first of all that they didn't kill us, but that we felt we had passed the test. I thought back to that awful night when Jesus was arrested. I said I would be faithful and he told me I would betray him before the cock crowed twice. I said he was wrong, but he was right. I, we, all betrayed him, but not this time! This time we all stayed true and had been found worthy to carry the good news to all people. I've seen the risen Lord. His Spirit is upon me.

Look, there are people coming to the door. They must want to know about Jesus. I don't care what the authorities say, I must preach to them.

*Peter stands and addresses the crowd:* So are you here to become followers of my Lord, Jesus Christ? Many think we are crazy, just another group of delirious people. Followers of

an idle tail, but we are not. We have witnessed the greatest act that God has ever done for us.

Jesus teaches that we are to care for each other, to love each other as he loved us. That has so many ramifications. Some of you have come today to be healed of whatever ails you in body or spirit. The people who have been coming to us are from all walks of life just like you, but they all want to change. Many are seeking a deeper connection with God. Others come for a more just and righteous world. We, through our faith in Jesus, offer you all of that and so much more. So what about you? What do you seek?

I warn you though, I am learning this is not an easy life, but the rewards are far greater than any discomfort now. We can make such a difference in our broken world, but each of you must be brave enough to step up and say, I am a follower of Christ and proud to say so. Many will look at you like you are crazy and maybe we all are. Some say we are fools, well I say we are fools for Christ and that is just fine.

Do know though that you will be challenged maybe mocked or scorned by those who do not believe. That is the way of the world. After all, the temple authorities crucified Jesus as well as imprisoned and whipped us.

(Looking at the crowd). I know many of you. I have seen you before. So how have you been doing? Have you been faithful? Have you learned anything from me? If you were arrested and charged with being a follower of Christ as I have been, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Are you willing to stand firm and follow the Jesus that I know? I hope and pray that you are.

Now I need your help, we need your help. James, John and myself cannot do this alone. I need more disciples who will make more disciples. Will you help us? Come join us and follow Jesus. We have much to do.