

## Acts of Jesus – part 15

We're going to begin with an activity that should exercise us if we allow it to. It's going to require your participation...turn with me to: [Jn. 3:16](#) I ask you to stand and read this.

--Do we believe this --- is this still true? ... if it is and if we do, then this carries some strong implications for us.

--If this is still true and still just as applicable today as it was in the time of Jesus, then our situation and our obligation haven't changed either.

--Of course, tongue in cheek, this message hasn't changed nor will ever as long as God withholds His hand from judging this world

--But we may be inclined to think that though it hasn't changed, our situation and obligations have...it simply isn't true.

### 1. As we study of the book of Acts and we are going to see that the situation and obligation of the church then is the same for us today.

Four factors were present in the early Church that will always be present when the Church is operating as She should.

1. The Factor of **Power** -- The message of [Jn. 3:16](#) is the summation of the message of the entire Bible, and, since that is so, then simple logic would tell us that God is backing His entire message with His entire power.

--He has no other projects!!

--Listen to the account of the early church: [Acts 4:33](#)

--Reminiscent of [Matt. 28:19-20](#)

Billy Graham Crusade. It was at Shea Stadium in New York. The airplanes from La Guardia Airport flew over the stadium, dozens by the hour. On the opening night of training, the Reverend Billy Graham started talking with us from the podium as the engines roared overhead. He paused, glanced up and quietly said, "**We'll have to do something about this noise. This just won't do.**" He bowed his head and said a simple prayer to the effect: "Lord, we ask you to shift the wind and send these planes in another direction. Thank You. Amen." Well, we were believers, but this was a tall order. We weren't sure what, if anything, to expect. But God did it—he answered our prayers in a wondrous way! The morning newspaper reported that the winds had changed during the night, and the airplanes over Shea Stadium had to be routed another way. For several days thereafter, thousands of people came to Christ under this anointed leader's preaching. At the conclusion of the crusade, the winds reverted to their normal flow, and the airplanes returned to their normal flight patterns.

--Power is still a factor because God has no other projects!

--He is fully backing the project of telling the world that there is a Savior with His power.

2. The second factor that was present then and is present now is the Factor of Opposition.

--[Acts 5:17-18](#)

--Wherever the gospel goes it accomplishes several things: it invites people, attracts people, redeems people, and it enrages people.

--God's primary project is backing those who are getting the word out about His Son; Satan's primary project is stopping that project.

--[Acts 5:28](#) – Satan doesn't care what you believe as long as you keep your mouth shut!

--But we must speak because whoever believes will not perish but will have everlasting life.

3. The third factor is the Factor of Freedom: [Acts 5:19-20](#)

--There is total freedom for those who would speak the gospel.

--Why? Because of the One Who holds the door open: [Rev. 3:8](#)

--Not up to us to keep the door for the gospel open...it is up to Him!

--**V. 28b**, What an indictment to be accused of when you stand before the Judge of all the earth but it's **not just doctrine**

--**V.20b** it's the message of life! we give them, and nothing can stop that message.

4. A fourth and final factor that was present in the early Church and will always be present when the Church is doing what she should

#### **Factor of Rejoicing.**

--**VV. 40-41**

--"Worthy to suffer Shame" -- Contradiction in terms but that is what we are, is it not?

Human and yet righteous

Among the dead and yet alive

Among the lost and yet found

Among the enemies of God and yet children of God

--The way we live ought to be a similar contradiction --mistreated, maligned, and **yet rejoicing**

On a balmy October afternoon in 1982, Badger Stadium in Madison, Wisconsin, was packed. More than 60,000 die-hard University of Wisconsin supporters were watching their football team take on the Michigan State Spartans. It soon became obvious that MSU had the better team. What seemed odd, however, as the score became more lopsided, were the bursts of applause and shouts of joy from the Wisconsin fans. How could they cheer when their team was losing? It turns out that seventy miles away the Milwaukee Brewers were beating the St. Louis Cardinals in game three of the 1982 World Series. Many of the fans in the stands were listening to portable radios--and responding to something other than their immediate circumstances.

Paul encourages us to fix our eyes not on what is seen but what is unseen  
(2 Corinthians 4:18).

--When we do, we can rejoice even in hardships because we see Christ's larger victory.