

e. ²⁹ Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than men! [Is that also your attitude? Do you understand that God is holy, while men are unholy; therefore, God’s ways are always best – even when they seem unreasonable! Then Peter explained:] ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead--whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. ³² We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.” [It’s not that people obey first; then receive the Holy Spirit! Instead:

- i. The first action is by GOD, who gives the gift of faith (passive faith)!
- ii. That faith unites a person to Jesus, which also brings forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit!
- iii. Then, from †that union with Jesus, †that joy of forgiveness, and †that indwelling of the Spirit flows a desire to do whatever God’s Word says!]

Conclusion: Is that YOUR desire? *I hope so!* But even with that desire, *we have all fallen short of doing whatever the Word says?* Therefore, †let us repent (*stop, change, turn*) and †let us know we have God’s full forgiveness in Christ; then (*from our passive faith, with much gratitude, and with the Holy Spirit*) †let us try to do whatever the Word says! And all God’s people said: *Amen!*

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The Biblical Relationship between Faith and Works – Part 5

Passive Faith Saves!

(Passive Faith is God’s gift of faith, which unites a person to Jesus!)

Active Faith Serves – By Trying to Do Whatever the Word Says!

Based on Acts 4:1-31; 5:17-32 NIV

11th Sunday after Pentecost, 10th Sunday after Trinity – 2010

Sunday August 8 at 9:00 † Monday August 9 at 7:00

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, today – *similar to last week* – we are focusing on our active faith!

- Last week saw both *Elijah* and *a widow in Zarephath* take *unreasonable yet extraordinary* action! *Those actions came from their saving faith (passive faith)!*
- Today we see similar *unreasonable yet extraordinary* action from the apostles – *action that flowed from their saving relationship with Jesus Christ!*

May this sermon inspire each one of us to *live courageous Christian lives!*

1. **Acts Chapter 4:1-31 – The Apostles’ Actions Flowed from Their Faith:** Here is a *summary* of what happened to the apostles in Acts chapter 4:
 - a. They were teaching the people about Jesus!
 - b. They were arrested.
 - c. They were commanded to stop teaching about Jesus.
 - d. They were further threatened.

- e. They were released.
- f. They prayed for *even greater boldness to speak God's Word!*

If their actions flowed from *reason*, they would have stopped teaching about Jesus – *for fear of arrest, beating, or worse!* But, instead, *from their relationship with Jesus (passive faith) flowed unreasonable yet radical action (active faith)!*

2. **Acts Chapter 5:17-32, The Apostles' Actions Flowed**

from Their Faith: We now pickup on another example of active faith, beginning in Acts 5:17:

- a. ¹⁷ Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. [But why? *Because so many people were being drawn to the apostles, rather than to them!* Therefore:] ¹⁸ They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. ¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. ²⁰ “Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people the full message of this new life.” [They could have said – *and reasonably should have said: “We had better stop talking about Jesus or else!”* BUT:] ²¹ At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. [But why? *Their lives had been transformed; they had been delivered from death to life, from hell to heaven; therefore, their active faith was moving them to do whatever the Word said!*]

- b. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin--the full assembly of the elders of Israel--and sent to the jail for the apostles. ²² But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, ²³ “We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” [Let us never forget: *With God all things are possible!* (Matt. 19:26) Then:] ²⁴ On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were puzzled, wondering what would come of this.
- c. ²⁵ Then someone came and said, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people.” [Thus the apostles were showing evidence of their passive faith – of their saving relationship with Jesus!] ²⁶ At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.
- d. ²⁷ Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. ²⁸ “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. [In other words, *the name of Jesus!*] “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood.” [But weren't they guilty? It was those Jewish leaders took Jesus to Pilate AND applied much pressure upon him – until Pilate finally gave in and ordered Jesus to be taken away and crucified! The Jewish leaders were sinners, *but so are we!* Therefore, *Jesus did everything to save us all!* Then:]