



Key References:

Acts 4:18–21 (ESV)

¹⁸ So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” ²¹ And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened.

Acts 5:27–29 (ESV)

²⁷ And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, ²⁸ saying, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” ²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.

Acts 7:59–60 (ESV)

⁵⁹ And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

John 15:20 (ESV)

²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

2 Timothy 3:12–13 (ESV)

¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³ while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

1 – UNSTOPPABLE URGENCY

Is there something in your life right now that you cannot help but tell people about? *Great tv show, book, new diet, exercise routine?*

Read Acts 4:18-21. In verse 20 they say “we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” and Mark said the early church was infected with an urgent message. **What gave the early church this sense of urgency and in ability to keep quite like they had been told? Read verse 19 again, what stands out to you here?**

Do you remember a specific season in your life when you couldn’t-be-quiet about the gospel? Why were you like that?

Read Acts 5:27-29. **Like them; how can we fill Nanaimo with Jesus’ teaching? If we did these things would it be possible to preach the gospel without opposition?**

2 – PERSECUTED BUT UNSTOPPABLE

Read John 15:20. **How does this truth apply to the 21st century Canadian church? If we are not being persecuted in some way what might this mean? How does 2 Timothy 3:12-13 expand on this?**

Read Acts 7:54-60. **What does Stephen say in response at his execution in v60? How should this text inform our attitude towards a culture that is at odds to our faith? Can you give examples? When believers are met with anger and rage what should the believer’s response be?**

3 – BEING PREPARED FOR WHAT MAY COME

Mark said: “*Although things are great now it may not be so easy for Christians here in Canada in the future.*” “*We’re in a blessed time, but when you read church history this last couple hundred years is rare compared to what most of our Christian brothers and sisters have gone through in the centuries before.*” **Out of this he asked the question; “are we ready for persecution that might come in our lifetime?” how would you answer? In what way could life get more difficult for believers in Canada?**

We see in Acts 4:28 that the early church knew that even the tragic things that had happened did so with God as sovereign king. **How does knowing that God is sovereign even during persecution help Christians get through it? How can we put our roots into knowing the sovereignty of God now before hard times come?**