

NORTH MAIN SERMON JUNE 7, 2026

The Apostles Heal Many Acts 5: 12-29

¹² The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. ¹³ No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. ¹⁵ As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. ¹⁶ Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed.

The Apostles Persecuted

¹⁷ Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 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 all about this new life."

²¹ At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

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." ²⁴ On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were at a loss, wondering what this might lead to.

²⁵ Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people." 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.

²⁷ The apostles were brought in and made to 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. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.”

²⁹ Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings!

THE WORD OF GOD.....

The Book of Acts is a powerful biblical narrative of courage, divine authority, and unshakeable faith. It centers on the Apostles’ refusal to stop preaching the gospel despite strict orders and arrest by religious authorities, culminating in Peter’s famous declaration: *“We must obey God rather than human beings!*

In this Scripture reading, it is highlighting the apostles’ joy in suffering for their faith. When we talk of suffering by Christian perspective, we emphasize its value as a testament to one’s faithfulness and alignment with historical believers who faced persecution. It underscores the importance of rejoicing in suffering, as a reflection of being deemed worthy to suffer for Christ’s name. “What kind of suffering do the biblical writers consider at greatest length and most repeatedly?” then the answer is, “It is suffering for Jesus’ sake. The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. On the east side of the wall of Herod’s Temple in Jerusalem, just inside the walls of the courtyard, there is this row of magnificent covered columns known as Solomon’s (Colonnade) or Solomon’s porch. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon’s Colonnade. No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. If we go back to “From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” Do we think they knew exactly what he meant in those words.. When you and I say that Jesus is the Messiah, inevitably we can’t forget that the Messiah of whom we speak went to the cross and died and was the substitute sacrifice. We can’t ever forget that. Today we sometimes use expressions

like, “We’ve all got our crosses to bear” to refer to fairly innocuous sufferings: But no one suffered like Jesus including the disciples. But Jesus says, “Unless you take up your cross and follow me, you can’t be my disciple.” To take up your cross in the ancient world means that sentence has been passed, and you’re forced to carry the cross member itself, the horizontal bar on your shoulder out to the place of execution where you’re stripped naked and nailed or tied to the cross member, which is then hoisted up on the vertical. There you die in agony and shame. To take up your cross means you are dead, except for the dying. There’s no hope. You’re done.

Jesus says, after talking about the way he is going to the cross, “Unless you take up your cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.” This is not what you call seeker-sensitive. No matter what the threat, Apostles came teaching and performing many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. The early disciples also performed signs and miracles as proof that Jesus was who he said he was. And in spite of the crucifixion, regardless of the fear of persecution, crowds of both men and women came from towns and villages near Jerusalem. They brought the sick and the demon possessed to Peter and the Apostles and more and more people believed and were brought to the Lord. Many people who came to the temple wanted to learn more about the law and teachings about the prophets. Many people came bringing their sick friends and wanted the apostles to heal them. Some brought the demon possessed. They brought those who were trapped by evil trappings. They were addicted, the uncontrollable, the crazed by bad habits. They came because they were hoping to receive something that would make their life better. One afternoon Peter and John were walking to the Temple to take part in the three o’clock prayer service. As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money. Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, “Look at us!” The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting a gift. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. In the fullness of time, Christians came to understand that to live with Jesus, to live under Jesus’ authority, is in some deep sense of being responsible for going out into the world and be his voice on earth. When

someone asks you, “Why Jesus? Why should I become a Christian?” Why should I come to this church? What will you tell them? That beggar that Peter and John healed could answer that. He left with more than he ever asked for. Many people today want to see a sign, something similar, a flash of lightning, miracle, or they are at least drawn to a church because of its beautiful building. Or they are drawn to a pastor who is world renowned. Or at least to a church where they know you have good missions and outreach. As members of this church you have the ability to communicate into the community confidence in your missions. People listen to you and want to hear about your church and all the things you are doing. They do not want to just hear from the pastor or even just from the people who do the missions. If we all had our way every time we called to Heaven, God would just send down a miracle or a sign for us. What we need to believe is that while we are waiting God is still working all along! He hears each prayer we pray. God works different than us sometimes. He uses “Many Miraculous Signs and Wonders as he did with the apostles in our Scripture reading today. This is the word of God. Today we celebrate another miracle of God, Holy Communion.

Please turn to the insert in your bulletin..

HOLY COMMUNION ---- Still in the spirit of Pentecost, Holy Trinity Sunday and Peace with Justice, we celebrate today Holy Communion uniting us with Christ's new life and God's family. Communion today is a powerful reminder that through Holy Communion, we are incorporated into Christ's ministry and mission, nourished by His body and blood, and called to live as God's beloved children in the world, looking forward to the journey of faith. It is a holy day today as we partake in the Holy Communion as our continued nourishment and growth as we live into all Christ calls us to be.

Through the sharing of the bread and the cup, we have been knit together into one Communion in the mystical body of Jesus Christ our Lord. May God grant us grace to follow in His footsteps in fellowship with others within our Church and our Community and to follow the commandment to love one another. Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sins and seek to grow into his likeness and live in peace with one another. The Lord's table is open to

everyone. Therefore, let us draw near with faith, make our humble confession, and prepare to receive this Holy Sacrament.

CONFESSION AND PARDON (In Unison)

Merciful God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden. We do not presume to come to this your table, trusting in our own goodness, but in your unfailing mercies. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have broken your law, we have not loved our neighbors. We have not done your will. We are not worthy that you should receive us. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

LEADER: Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; that is proof of God's love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

PEOPLE: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

ALL: GLORY TO GOD.

The Table of our Lord is set.. the Sacraments have been blessed..all are welcome here to this table.. lift up your hearts and give thanks to the Lord..

PRAYER: (In Unison) Most bountiful God, we give you thanks for the world you have created, for the gift of life, and for giving yourself to us in Jesus Christ, whose holy life, suffering and death, and glorious resurrection have delivered us from the captivity of slavery and sin. We give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. You have nourished us with the spiritual food of the body and blood of your Son and united us with Christ and one another. Send us into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen