



Daily Reflections

April 8, 2016

Scripture

Acts 5:34-42

A Pharisee in the Sanhedrin named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, respected by all the people, stood up, ordered the Apostles to be put outside for a short time, and said to the Sanhedrin, "Fellow children of Israel, be careful what you are about to do to these men. Some time ago, Theudas appeared, claiming to be someone important, and about four hundred men joined him, but he was killed, and all those who were loyal to him were disbanded and came to nothing. After him came Judas the Galilean at the time of the census. He also drew people after him, but he too perished and all who were loyal to him were scattered. So now I tell you, have nothing to do with these men, and let them go. For if this endeavor or this activity is of human origin,

it will destroy itself.

But if it comes from God, you will not be able to destroy them; you may even find yourselves fighting against God."

They were persuaded by him.

After recalling the Apostles, they had them flogged, ordered them to stop speaking in the name of Jesus, and dismissed them.

So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name.

And all day long, both at the temple and in their homes, they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the Christ, Jesus.

Our Scripture Reflection

What a wise and just man Rabbi Gamaliel was. Rather than take part in the mob with their lies and vicious statements about the disciples, Gamaliel seeks the truth. "But if it comes from God, you will not be able to destroy it," he proclaims faithfully and fearlessly. Gamaliel manifests the great virtues of prudence, temperance, and fortitude.

Food for your Journey

Jewish rabbis tell a poignant story that drives home the point of Proverbs 18:21. As the story goes (and five versions of this appear in Greek literature), Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel one day asked his servant to go to buy some good food for him in the market. When the servant returned home, he presented the rabbi with a tongue.

The next day, the rabbi told the servant to go to the market to buy some bad food. Again, the servant returned with a tongue.

When the rabbi asked the servant why he returned with a tongue both times, the servant made this astute observation: "Good comes from it and bad comes from it. When the tongue is good, there is nothing better, and when it is bad, there is nothing worse."

- William R. Baker, *Sticks & Stones: The Discipleship of Our Speech*

Prayer from the Heart

Precious Lord, in a world filled with lies, confusion, exaggeration, and confusion, help me to humbly and courageously speak the truth. Through my words and actions, may I give courageous witness to Your Presence in my life. Amen.

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