

BEATING BACK THE BULLIES!

Acts 5:17-18

INTRODUCTION: A bully is a blustering browbeating person; especially: one habitually cruel to others who are weaker. Today bullying in public schools is getting a lot of attention and now we have cyber-bullying, where bullies use digital means to browbeat people into submission. Do you remember the first bully in your life?

I. GOD'S WORD AND BULLYING!

What does God's Word say about bullying? There are many stories given in the Bible of bullying but one story sums up this whole idea of fear of bullies and how we should respond to them. The early apostles did not respond to the bullies very well after Jesus' crucifixion but after the Holy Spirit was given things changed for them: Acts 1:8-9.

II. A BULLIES MOTIVATION!

There are three motivations for bullies: Acts 5:13-18. 1. A bully attacks because he is threatened. Any time you stand up to a bully they are threatened! When a bully begins to lose his power over others they are threatened: Acts 13:45; Matthew 27:17-18. A bully always attacks to protect his power base. 2. A bully attacks because his message is weak! John 5:28-29. 3. A bully attacks because his agenda is exposed! Acts 5:27-29. When we do a work for God, it exposes the works of darkness. Bullies don't like to be exposed for their very real self serving agenda!

III. GOD'S SOLUTIONS FOR BULLIES!

God's three solutions for bullies: 1 know that the Lord has a purpose to your persecution: Acts 5:17-25. Whenever we are persecuted God will use it for His glory: Genesis 50:19-21. 2. Let the Lord fight your battles. Romans 12:17-21. 3. Realize Who it is you serve (God and not man). Acts 5:26-32: now Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit's power; this is no longer Peter's courage but the very courage of God! 4. Watch God work in incredible ways in your own life. Acts 5:33-40. 5. It is a privilege to suffer for Christ. Philippians 1:27-30; Acts 5:41-42; Matthew 5:10-12. The apostles just kept on going for God's glory. Bullies only win when we stop doing what our Lord has called us to do! To deal properly with bullies we need to find our identity in Christ and not in the affirmation of the powerful. Here is what Christ thinks of you: 1. You are chosen by Him: Ephesians 1:4. 2. You are adopted into God's family: Ephesians 1:5. 3. You are accepted by God just as you are: Ephesians 1:6. 4. You are loved unconditionally by God: Romans 8:38-39. 5. You are a child of God: 1 John 3:1. 6. You are uniquely created and fashioned by God: Psalm 139:13-16. 7. You were bought at a price: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. God wants you to forgive your bullies: Colossians 3:13. We need to pray for them: Matthew 5:44-45. 2 Timothy 1:6-8.