

**INTRO**

- If you could be a professional athlete in any sport what would it be and why?

**READ**

Acts 4:1-22

**REFLECT & RESPOND**

After a great start to early church life, Acts 4 marks a turn towards opposition, hostility and persecution towards the church. For our discussion today, we focus on the relationship between facing opposition and following Jesus.

*Qu: Read John 15:20. If we are to follow Jesus, what does this verse tell us to expect?*

**Opposition and Context**

Opposition varies depending on the context. Here in Canada, we enjoy the freedom of religion, but our culture is increasingly indifferent or intolerant of historical christian beliefs.

*Qu: have you experienced opposition specifically because of your faith? Tell us about it.*

**Opposition and Growth**

For the early church, intense opposition occurred alongside continued growth and favour (v4, 21). When it comes to opposition to faith, we should be concerned if we experience either *no* opposition or *only* opposition. Jesus both attracted & repelled people throughout his ministry.

*Qu: why are the extremes of no opposition or only opposition problematic? What might they indicate?*

**Opposition and Civil Disobedience**

Read v18-20. Biblical Civil Disobedience is the intentional refusal to obey certain laws in a non-violent way, motivated by obedience to God over obedience to man. This is a legitimate course of

action in certain cases and our brothers & sisters in restricted nations will attest to its high cost.

*Qu: Do you believe our government's restrictions on churches gathering in-person during the pandemic warrants biblical civil disobedience? Why or why not?*

**Opposition and Our Response**

In summary, as we faithfully follow and practice the way of Jesus in our culture, we can expect levels of opposition to our beliefs, values and practices. In fact, opposition can be a healthy sign of your faithfulness to Jesus. So, how should we treat those who ridicule, oppose or persecute us because of it?

*Qu: what does a christ-like response to those who may oppose or persecute you look like?*

**RESPOND & PRAY**

- Pray for one another to continue to bear fruit as we remain faithful to follow Jesus
- Pray for those who are experiencing opposition or persecution for their faith