

Read: Acts 5:12,17-32

You just can't help it!

Acts 5:26-32

Then the captain went with the officers and brought the apostles in without force, because they were afraid that the people might stone them. After they brought them in, they had them stand before the Sanhedrin. The high priest asked them, "Did we not give you strict orders not to teach in this name? Look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you are determined to bring this man's blood down on us!"

But Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you arrested and killed by hanging him on a cross. God exalted him to his right hand as Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A family was coming back from vacation when they got into a little fender bender. Everyone was okay. No one was hurt. But they all decided not to tell the grandparents because they didn't want the grandparents to worry. The next day when they arrived home, they called the grandparents to let them know that they were home safe and sound. When it was the youngest boy's chance to talk to Grandma and Grandpa, the first thing out of his mouth was, "Grammy and Papa, we were in a car accident!" The little boy just couldn't help it! And out of his mouth came the truth!

Peter and the apostles were in a similar situation. They were told not to tell anyone the truth. They were told to remain silent about all the time they had spent with Jesus and how they never saw him sin once. They were to "zip their lips" about the perfect Jesus being willingly crucified on the cross to take away the sins of the whole world. And they were absolutely not to mention anything ever about Jesus rising from the dead and appearing to over five hundred people.

But everywhere they went, they talked about Jesus. They just couldn't help it! They saw Jesus' miracles. They ate with the five thousand fed. They watched as the paralyzed man was lowered through the roof and walked out carrying his own mat. They heard Jesus' promises, "Because I live, you also will live." They watched everything Jesus did and stood in awe of his word. They just couldn't stop talking about him no matter what!

As we think about the incredible Bible events that we hear in church, that we learn in Sunday School, that our parents tell us about, we just can't stop thinking about them. What do these truths mean for us? Every sin washed away! Death conquered! Heaven secured forever! Go and share these truths. If someone wants you to stop, tell them, "I just can't help it!"

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Do you know what a secret is? Why is the message of Jesus *not* a secret?
- Next time you are talking on the phone with a family member, tell them “Jesus loves you.” Practice it right now. Pretend that you are on the phone and say, “Jesus loves you.”

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What’s something that you just couldn’t wait to get home from school to tell your parents about? How is the message of forgiveness through Jesus similar to that?
- When you think about all the miracles that Jesus did, what is the one that is the most impressive to you? Wait until bed tonight to tell your parents which one you thought of!

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Imagine you got a text message right now from your close friend. She won front row tickets to the biggest concert of the year, and she wants you to go with her. How long would it take you to tell your family? Now think about the even better news that Jesus has won for you—eternity in a perfect place called heaven. What do you want to do with that news?
- Have you ever shared something that you weren’t supposed to? Maybe you “replied all” on an email... or texted the wrong person. How did you feel? What’s the one message that you never have to worry about sharing with the wrong person?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for sending your Holy Spirit to bring us these incredible truths in your Holy Scriptures. Continue to work through them to make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen.