

“But one member, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, who was an expert in religious law and respected by all the people, stood up.... “So my advice is, leave these men alone. Let them go. If they are planning and doing these things merely on their own, it will soon be overthrown. But if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God!” Acts 5:34, 38-39 NLT

lectio // Acts 5:33-42

Proverbs says, there is wisdom in the counsel of many, but that’s only when the “many” are pursuing wisdom and unity, otherwise, their just knucklehead mobs. Groups of people are fickle, mobs are emotional and prone to violence because of our ability to jump so quickly to the worst representation of humanity. We too often “think” with what secular psychs call our “lizard” brain. The amygdala, brain stem part of our brain that keeps us breathing and heart beating - survival kind of stuff. They say it only responds to fight or flight faster than we can get a decent thought up to our frontal lobe, to make a proper decision. I don’t exactly believe my brain stem formed out of a lizard (no thanks Darwin), but I do believe God gave us this amazing organ unlike anything else in living creatures on the planet. As we see here, the “high counsel” of religious leaders were definitely acting like predator lizards with the apostles. They could only be ENRAGED and see DEAD RED when it came to their religious beliefs and their controlling systems of keeping the power. One non-lizard thinking man stood up. Maybe it only takes one respected leader to calm the violent lizards of humanity? I can think of a few throughout history. Gamaliel’s point remains as the basis for decisions in church discipline still today. If it is from God, you will not be able to stop them AND you may just be fighting AGAINST God himself. Case in point, most of the reformations and revivals could have used a Gamaliel moment, don’t you think?

oratio

Dad,

Please help us, help me to calm the “lizard warrior” part of my God-given brain, long enough to see if I am fighting for you or against you. Saul thought it was fighting FOR you, but he wasn’t. These “high council” guys thought they were fighting for you, but they weren’t either. Let that NOT be me, nor anyone that serves with me. Pretty please?

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root