



“Open Church – Open Bible

Min. Marossa Davis

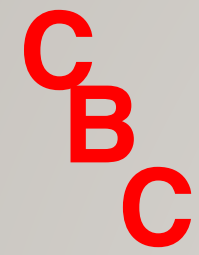


Sunday Church School

AUGUST 22, 2021

“ Peter and John Preach with Boldness ”

Acts 4: 6-21



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Acts 4: 6-21 (KJV)

v. 6. “And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

v. 7. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

v. 8. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

v. 9. If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

v. 10. Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.”



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Acts 4: 6-21 (KJV)

v. 11. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

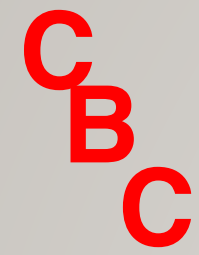
v. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

v. 13. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

v. 14. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

v. 15. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

v. 16. saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in



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Acts 4: 6-21 (KJV)

v. 16b. Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.

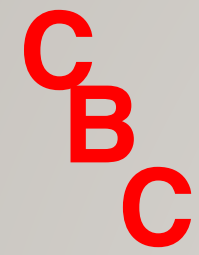
v. 17. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

v.18. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

v. 19. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

v. 20. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

v. 21. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.”



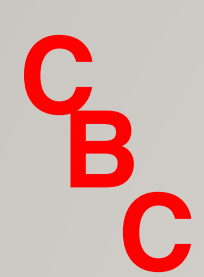
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God’s desire is for every believer to speak boldly of his or her faith in Jesus Christ. Paul asked in Ephesians 6:20 for believers to pray that he might speak boldly as he ought to speak. To speak with freedom and confidence.

Peter and John exhibited boldness when they were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin for preaching the resurrection of Jesus, with many coming to faith in Him because of their courage (Acts 4: 1-5).

They had just finished healing a man, lame from his birth who was at the temple. He was able to walk for the first time ever. This should have been a **cause of celebration** among the religious elite, but instead, they resented the fact that Peter and John attributed this healing to Jesus Christ (Acts 3: 16). Jesus had been crucified just a short time before this happened, but His disciples were proclaiming that He had been **raised from the dead**. Their message brought them into conflict with the Sanhedrin.



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TODAY’S AIM

FACTS: to illustrate that Satan opposes God’s people when God is at work through them.

PRINCIPLE: to remember that although the world may come against us for serving Christ, the Lord will always protect us.

APPLICATION: to learn to trust the Lord to hold us up when the enemy threatens and attacks.

LESSON OUTLINE

I. STERN INTERROGATION

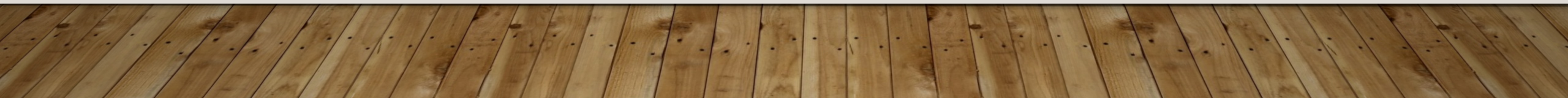
ACTS 4:6-7

II. BOLD PROCLAMATION

ACTS 4: 8-12

III. FRANTIC DAMAGE CONTROL

ACTS 4: 13-21





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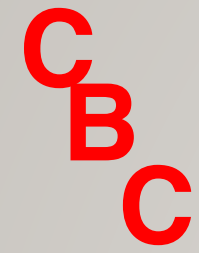
I. STERN INTERROGATION

ACTS 4:6-7

Our story for this week actually begins one chapter earlier in chapter 3 of Acts. It was only a short time after Pentecost and the Church was growing. One afternoon, Peter and John went to the temple for the afternoon prayer service (“ the ninth hour” in v. 1 being approximately 3:00 pm., where they encounter a man lame from birth begging at the gate called Beautiful (v. 2) . Instead of a few coins, Peter gave the man what he really needed: wholeness. Commanding him in the name of Jesus to stand up and walk, Peter was used by God to demonstrate to all those present the divine power and glory of Jesus’ name.

If Peter had let things rest with simply healing the man, everything might have proceeded quietly and that would have been the end of the incident. But God had bigger plans in store. Immediately sensing the

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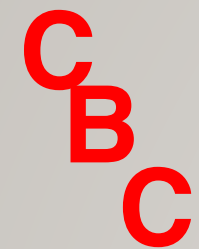


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the opportunity, Peter preached an impromptu message there in the Temple courts in which he strongly presented the essential truths about Jesus: His divine identity and power; His suffering and His resurrection from the dead (vs.12-18). Peter ended by passionately calling on his hearers to **repent** and to turn to Christ for the cleansing of their sins (vs. 19-26).

While Peter was still speaking, the chief priests, captain of the temple guard, and some Sadducees showed up (4:1), greatly agitated that he presumed to instruct the people about the One they thought they had eliminated. They arrested the two apostles then and there and, since evening was approaching, had them held in jail till morning (v. 3).

The authorities coercive action ,however , could not undo the impact of Peter’s words on the gathered multitude. Acts 4:4 reports that many believed, bringing the total number of believers in Christ to about 5,000 men-



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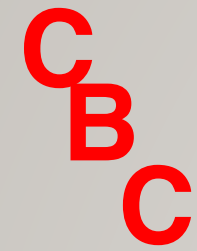
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and much more than that with the women and children counted.

The next morning, the Jewish council, or Sanhedrin, assembled- the rulers, elders, and scribes (v. 5) . Our lesson text opens with the “ big guns “ brought in against the Apostles : the high priest Annas , along with a number of his relatives- Caiphas, John, and Alexander, plus many not named. It was an assembly of the powerful and was no doubt meant to intimidate. All these prominent names gathered (everybody who was anybody) to deal with two upstart fishermen from Galilee who were now causing an uncomfortable stir.

Once the disciples were brought in, the authorities wasted no time in small talk. They wanted to know on whose authority or by what name Peter and John had done all this? (v.7). By “this” they were referring specifically to

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the healing of the lame man, but they may have had in mind Peter’s sermon and it’s dramatic effect on the people. The leaders were not happy with the way things were going, and they made their displeasure clear in the wording of their question.

II. BOLD PROCLAMATION

ACTS 4:8-12

If the council hoped that the interrogation might **intimidate** the apostles, they were quickly disappointed. Peter took the opportunity as the opportunity he needed to further proclaim Christ in this public arena. It is important to note however, that Peter’s boldness did not come from himself. The author, Luke, carefully notes that he was filled with the Holy Spirit; everything that follows rested on that vital reality.

Respectfully addressing his questioners as the leaders and elders of the nation. Peter first noted the irony that he and John were being interrogated



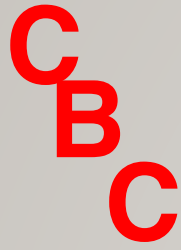
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because of **an act of kindness** shown to someone who was cripple. But the leader’s question served as the **open invitation** for Peter to say what he most wanted to say all along. He was going to make it known unto them and “ to all the people of Israel “ (v. 10). It was almost as if he was saying “ You asked for it, so here it is!”

Peter, the man who, not that long ago, had denied knowing Christ, did not mince words now. The man who was lame had been made whole “ by the name of **Jesus Christ of Nazareth.**” It was on **His authority alone** that Peter had acted and by His power that the man was healed. That statement alone would have been sufficient to rile the council members, but Peter added more. He pointedly reminded them that they had crucified this Jesus, but that God had raised Him from the dead.

Jesus’ resurrection was certainly the last thing these leaders wanted to



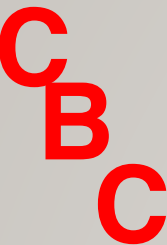
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hear, for it undid all that they had hoped to accomplish in having Him crucified. They had sent Jesus to the cross with the aim of silencing His teachings and ending His influence on the people, which they regarded as dangerous. Now this influence, and the following it inspired, was stirring to life before their eyes with frightening and disturbing power. They worked in vain to keep a lid on it.

The authorities might have felt that they had enough already, but Peter was not finished. He proceeded to give them a lesson in the proper interpretation of their own Scriptures. Citing Psalms 118:22, Peter identified Jesus as the stone that the builders rejected. What they rejected, however, had already become the chief cornerstone of the building- and this by God’s intervention (v. 23). It was a hard truth for the leaders to face.

What must have made it especially troubling for them was that this was not just the first time they had been confronted by this teaching. In a contentious exchange with the chief priests and Pharisees, Jesus had quoted



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the passage at greater length and made clear that his opponents were about to stumble over the rejected stone and be crushed by it. (Matt. 21: 42-44). The kingdom would be taken away from them and given to others. They had understood his rebuke then (v. 45), so Peter’s words now must have brought the unwelcome memory rolling back full force.

But the apostle still was not finished. The religious leaders conceivably might concede Peter’s point and grant that Jesus was an important teacher, a source of enlightenment, and hope for many, **but not for them.** If the common people wanted to look to the Galileans for healing and comfort, so be it; the authorities might not be able to prevent it. But the Rabbi from Nazareth was not someone they were going to look to for spiritual insight, **much less follow** as did the disciples. The Jewish leaders did not believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, and the Sadducees did not even believe in a resurrection. Peter and John were so confident in sharing the truth

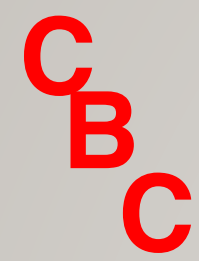
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of the Gospel that they witnessed to the very people who caused Jesus’ crucifixion.

To prevent any such hedging, and more importantly, to clearly define the spiritual stakes for everyone, Peter made a declaration of undiluted exclusivity: “ Neither is there salvation in any other,” (Acts 4:12). If the religious leaders - if anybody- rejected or ignored Jesus, they would be on the outside, removed from God’s favor, blessing, and peace. Eternal life would be far from them.

To men who considered themselves the judges of spiritual life and blessing, this was a challenge as great as any Jesus had personally confronted during His ministry. But Peter still has more to say. Building on his declaration, he explained that God had not given mankind any other name by which they could be saved. Only the name of Jesus, the authority of God’s Anointed One, could bring the spiritual life and wholeness that every person



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on earth needs, including those presuming to sit in judgment over Peter and John.

In just a few short sentences, Peter had moved from answering *by what name* he had healed a lame man to proclaiming *the only name* by which his interrogators could find salvation for themselves. He turned his questioners’ challenge into a challenge of his own with eternal implications.

III. FRANTIC DAMAGE CONTROL

ACTS 4: 13-21

The religious leaders were not prepared to take seriously the claims of Christ, much less seek salvation from Him. But they nevertheless were amazed by what they had just heard. No doubt expecting these two “unlearned and ignorant” Galileans to be suitably awed by the impressive assembly of elders and officials, they instead took note of the **boldness** displayed by Peter and John and “marveled” (v. 13). The eminent leaders were the ones in awe.

The immediately recognized (took knowledge of) Peter and John as men



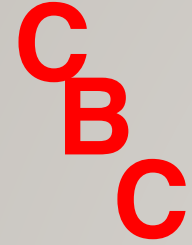
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who had been with Jesus. That association was now a badge of honor to the apostles, but it was a source of consternation for the authorities.

A further problem for the leaders was the presence of the healed beggar right before them. All Jerusalem knew this man from his years of sitting at the temple gate. Everyone knew he had been lame from his birth, and here he was, standing tall and strong. The authorities could say nothing in contradiction. They could not claim the healing was a hoax; it was too obvious. They could not say another person had been substituted; the lame man was too well known. So, as v. 14 reports, they had nothing to say.

The leaders had no option but to send Peter and John out of the chamber ; they needed time to confer privately among themselves. They had a dilemma “ What shall we do to these men?” They were in a quandary because they knew the apostles had performed an exceptional miracle, one that by now ever in Jerusalem knew about.



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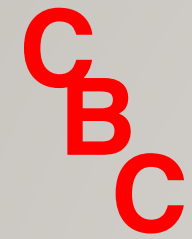
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On the other hand, they did not want news of the incident to spread, especially since it would carry and promote the name of Jesus. With their options limited, they came up with the only plan they could think of. They would warn the apostles in the strongest terms not to speak to anyone in the name of Jesus from that time forward. After the speech they had just heard from Peter, this may have struck even them as a laughably empty threat.

Not having any better plan, the council called Peter and John back in and ordered them not to speak or teaching the name of Jesus. They could believe in Him if they wanted, but they were to keep it to themselves.

Not surprisingly, Peter and John could not agree to the Council’s demands. Peter phrased the issue as a question for his questioners to weigh: “ Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye” (v.19).

To emphasize that point, Peter added, “ We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard (v. 20). They had been witnesses to the most



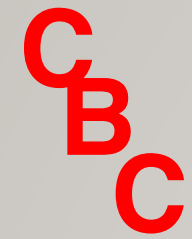
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momentous event in human history since the Fall, and to **expect them to keep quiet about it** was beyond any rational consideration. Prophets had vainly tried to bottle up God’s Word in the past (cf. Jer. 20:9); it was not going to work with the news of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the promise of new life in Him. Preventing a sunrise would have been easier.

In verse 21, the Council had no good answer to Peter’s challenge and they knew it. The best they could come up with was to threaten them once more about speaking in the name of Jesus and then let them go. They could not resort to meaningful punishment for fear of starting a riot; they knew that people everywhere in the city were praising God for the spectacular healing of the lame man.

It was the same problem the leaders had encountered with Jesus (cf. Matt 26:4-5), and it must have frustrated them greatly. The sad tragedy, however, is that it did not spur them to examine their own hearts and seek Jesus for themselves.



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In conclusion, the message that salvation is only found in Jesus continues to be an unpopular one today. One of the main tenants of pluralism is the idea that there are many paths to God and that all religions and world views are equally valid. This clearly goes against Peter’s sermon in Acts 4, where he boldly proclaimed that salvation is only to be found in Jesus Christ. We must hold fast to the truth that only Jesus can save us; only He is “ the way and the truth and the life” (**John 14:6**).

We can be assured that the working of the Holy Spirit in us will produce **boldness** for us to be able to effectively present the Gospel of Christ.

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Practical Points

1. Christian leaders must value God’s plans more than their positions and agendas (Acts 4: 6-7).
2. We must learn to rely on the Holy Spirit and speak boldly for God at every opportunity (vs. 8-11).
3. To compromise salvation through Jesus alone is to abandon the Gospel of Christ (v. 12).
4. God uses ordinary people who believe His word and yield to His power (vs. 13-14).
5. In spite of all the evidence, many will persist in resisting and rejecting the truth of Jesus (vs. 15-18).
6. We must be determined never to let threats silence our witness for Christ (vs. 19-21)

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1. How do people today respond to Christians who teach that salvation comes by faith in Christ alone?
2. What popular beliefs and philosophies contest the Christian teaching that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ alone?
3. Why were the religious leaders so intent on silencing the apostles?

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