

## **Been with Jesus** *Acts 4:1-17*

Michael Rogers told a story from over 200 years ago of a man in civilian clothes who rode past a small group of tired and battle-weary soldiers.

They were digging out what appeared to be an important defensive position, but their leader wasn't helping at all.

Their leader just shouted orders and threatened to punish the group if the work wasn't completed within the hour.

The stranger on horseback asked, "*Why aren't you helping?*"

Their leader said, "*I'm in charge! The men do as I tell them*". He added "*Help them yourself if you feel so strongly about it.*"

To the mean leader's surprise, the stranger got off his horse and helped the men until the job was finished.

Before he left, the stranger congratulated the men for their work and approached the confused leader.

The stranger said, "*You should notify top command next time your rank prevents you from supporting your men – and I will provide a more permanent solution*".

The humbled leader recognized the stranger as General George Washington and was taught a lesson he would never forget!

***1 Corinthians 15:33*** says, "***Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."*** NKJV

Please open your Bibles to *Acts 4* as we continue that study.

Last week we saw how the radical transformation of a crippled beggar was attractive to the people there that day and it provided an opportunity for the proclamation of the Gospel.

Peter reminded the crowd that the LORD was more than able to perform the miracle of healing, after all, there are thousands of testimonies in Israel's history about the LORD's miracles.

We also learned not to steal God's glory! Pointing people to yourself, instead of the LORD is blasphemy and idol worship!

We learned that we are made right with the LORD when we trust in Jesus' shed His blood, as He sacrificed His life for us.

The lame man went from a broken, needy person, to a child of God, leaping and praising the LORD in a moment's notice.

The LORD saved and transformed us for eternal life and a relationship with Him, but He also saved and transformed us so we would become a witness for Christ.

Today, we will see how the religious leaders were upset because of this miracle so when Peter gave a defense for what had taken place, they realized he had been with Jesus.

### **I. The religious leaders were mad.**

Read *Acts 4:1-6*

In *Acts 4*, we see the Priests, the Sadducees, the Rulers, elders, scribes, and others from the family of the High Priest.

Also present was the captain of the Temple, Annas the High Priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander.

James Montgomery Boice said, *“They were declaring: We have the power. If you are allowed to preach, as you have been preaching, it is because we have permitted you to do it.*

*“Anytime we want, we can arrest you and carry you off to jail.”*

These religious leaders were mainly upset for two reasons...

**1. Peter and John were preaching Jesus, as the Christ.**

Although these religious leaders had witnessed the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies by Jesus, they were more concerned with losing their positions than finding Messiah.

Peter was not arrested for teaching dangerous theology, or for an uprising, but for teaching Jesus as Messiah, God the Son.

There were around 7000 priests at this time, along with the High Priest and Chief Priest. The Sadducees were from wealthy families who controlled the office of the High Priest.

**2. Peter and John were teaching about Jesus’ resurrection.**

The Sanhedrin was council of religious leaders that was ruled by two groups, the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were aristocrats that were more concerned with politics than serving the LORD.

The Pharisees held to the belief that oral tradition had equal authority to the written Word of God, but the Sadducees only considered the written Word to be from God.

There was another difference with the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The Sadducees didn't believe in angels, miracles, or the **resurrection** from the dead. That's why they were sad, you see!

When **Paul** was being questioned in *Acts 23:6*, ***But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"***

*Acts 23:7 And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided.*

*Acts 23:8 For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection — and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. NKJV*

- It was the Sadducees who got angry over Jesus cleansing the temple and teaching on the resurrection.
- It was a Sadducee who illegally tried Jesus at night and then handed Him over to Pilate.
- And in our passage, it was the Sadducees who were upset at Peter for preaching Jesus' resurrection.

Notice the power and intimidation from their rulers, elders, and scribes, that were gathered at Jerusalem.

This was the same group who condemned Jesus to death, and they wanted Peter and John to know they had the power to arrest and stop them from preaching about Jesus.

So, the religious leaders grab these two men and keep them in custody until morning to interrogate them about Jesus being preached.

But notice in vs. 4, 5,000 more people believe and come to faith in Christ.

## II. Jesus is the rejected Cornerstone.

Read *Acts 4:7-12*

Notice, “*Who gave you the authority to preach about Jesus?*”

In religion, there is always a hierarchy of powers and authority, and within the Jewish faith, the Sanhedrin was the final authority for faith and practice.

Don't get me wrong, the LORD has placed certain people within the Body to be leaders, but we are all part of the Body of Christ.

***Colossians 3:11 there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. NKJV***

Notice *verse 8* tells us where Peter received his authority.

Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, so he was not **intimidated** by these religious leaders, but he had power and authority given through the Spirit, to proclaim the truth to the Sanhedrin.

***2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. NKJV***

The Sanhedrin was amazed by the power and courage the Apostles had gained from being with Jesus.

However offensive the truths might be to those who heard, the Apostles spoke the truth. The Apostles had been with Jesus for three years and watched Him, speak the truth in love, to others.

The Sanhedrin was also amazed by the change in character and conduct, seen within the Apostles' lives.

Peter used logic with these religious leaders and asked, "*Are we in trouble with you because we helped a person in need?*"

Remember what Jesus taught His disciples in *Matthew 10*.

***Matthew 10:17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.***

***Matthew 10:18 You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.***

***Matthew 10:19 But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak***

***Matthew 10:20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. NKJV***

Peter relied on the Holy Spirit to give him the **words** he needed to **speak** to these religious leaders.

Notice *vs.11* calls Jesus the **Cornerstone**. Jesus is known as the **Cornerstone** and the **Rock** throughout scripture.

*In Numbers 20:7 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,  
Numbers 20:8 "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron  
gather the congregation together. "Speak to the rock before  
their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water  
for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation  
and their animals."*

In *Exodus 17*, Moses was told to strike the **rock**, and the LORD promised it would produce water for the people. But in Numbers, Moses was told to speak to the **rock** to get water.

The LORD told Moses to speak to the **rock** the second time, and there was no need to hit it. But instead of speaking to the **rock**, Moses, in his anger, **struck** the **rock** a second time.

*1 Corinthians 10:1, Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,*

*1 Corinthians 10:2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,*

*1 Corinthians 10:3 all ate the same spiritual food,*

*1 Corinthians 10:4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. NKJV*

Moses misrepresented the picture of Christ. Go to the **Rock** for water, which is life, and He will meet you in your brokenness.

Jesus is our **Rock**, our shelter, our strong tower, and our firm foundation. If you place your trust in Him, you will be secure.

Peter told the religious leaders the resurrected Christ made the lame man whole, and Jesus is the **Cornerstone** they rejected.

There is a story of a Jewish recounting about building Solomon's Temple and the stones used to construct the Temple.

The stones were prepared at a quarry and delivered to the building site. Each stone was marked so the builders onsite could know where to place them according to the plans.

But at certain times, the builders could not match up the stones according to the plans so the builders would toss them aside.

And when the time came to place the **Cornerstone**, the most important anchor stone for the building, it could not be found.

The builders found out that the chief **Cornerstone** was thrown aside during construction.

(Here) Peter was giving these religious leaders a sobering visual about how they rejected Jesus as Messiah because Jesus is the chief Cornerstone that the builders **rejected**.

Peter said, *“You have rejected the foundational leader of the nation and your heritage, His name is Jesus, and by His name this miracle was performed.”*

Peter also said, *“**Nor is there any other name by which we can be saved**”*, because Jesus is the Rock of our Salvation!

### III. They learned from their Master.

Read *Acts 4:13-14*

Jim Rohn once said, *"You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with."*

The people we spend time with will influence us more than we realize. For proof, look at your closest friends and family.

*Do they lift you up and inspire you, or do they bring you down?*

Our social circle plays a vital role in our personal growth.

In our walk with Christ, *1 Corinthians 15:33* says, ***"Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." NKJV***

The Apostle Paul also said in *1 Corinthians 11:1*, ***"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. NKJV***

Notice the religious leaders *perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled.*

They say perception is reality, but that is not true in this case.

The religious leaders may have thought these men were *uneducated and untrained*, but Peter and John had been trained by the best; they were **trained** by Jesus Himself, for three years.

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, immediately began boldly and confidently speaking about the Cross and the Gospel.

This left the religious authorities perplexed.

Notice that the religious leaders did not try to disprove the miracle of this man being healed, nor did they try to disprove the **resurrection** of Christ, because it was undeniable.

Peter and John had the healed man with them, so *how can the religious leaders argue with the fact that he was healed?*

F.F. Bruce said, “*Had it seemed possible to refute them on this point, how readily would the Sanhedrin seized the opportunity!*”

“*Had they succeeded (refuting the Disciples), how quickly and completely the new movement would have **collapsed!***” (Bruce)

We realize what the source of the Disciples’ boldness and confidence was; their boldness was a direct result of the time they had spent with Jesus.

By the Disciples spending time with Jesus and watching His behavior, they became like Him.

For three years, Peter and John sat at His feet, followed Him, and served Jesus as He taught them and even served these men, praying for them, washing their feet, and **providing** for them.

Soon these two men were behaving like their example, Jesus.

*Are there any indications in our lives that show we have been spending time with Jesus?*

When the religious leaders heard these men and realized they had been with Jesus, they were unhappy because the Apostle’s behavior and boldness demonstrated the power of Jesus.

#### IV. Forbidden from sharing Christ.

Read *Acts 4:15-17*

The leaders remove the Disciples and *confer among themselves*.

After these religious leaders were hit with the facts and history of Jesus Christ by these uneducated men, they forbade the Disciples from **sharing** Christ any further.

This is proof that facts alone cannot convert anyone. I can share the undeniable truths of the Gospel with someone, and they can still refuse to believe.

Imagine being so hard-hearted against the LORD that you forbid any of the facts of real history from being shared. Don't confuse me with the facts, I have already made up my mind.

Facts alone cannot save a soul. *Hebrews 11* gives two things we must believe.

*Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. NKJV*

I wonder if some of these religious leaders ended up getting converted after hearing the testimony from Peter and John, as well as witnessing their behavior.

*Romans 10:9 if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

***Romans 10:10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. NKJV***

We have no idea how the LORD is working behind the scenes with the events that happen in our lives.

We are not responsible for the results of situations we find ourselves in, we are to simply respond and obey the LORD.

The LORD can use us greatly if we simply spend time with Jesus and do whatever He tells us to do.

Notice the religious leaders said, ***“We cannot deny it”***.

The Sanhedrin acknowledged that a miracle had taken place, but they refused to submit to the God who worked the miracle.

Refusing to submit or believe in God, is the inevitable outcome for some people when it comes to teaching about the things of Jesus. In the Gospels, we read that Jesus always had this effect.

Those who refused to receive Jesus could never dodge the truths and miracles of Jesus.

The very presence of Jesus always demanded a decision. They always had to do something about Jesus.

The authentic message of the Gospel of Christ always demands a decision and compels the hearer to make a decision.

If you refuse to believe the true Gospel message, you are by default against it, because there is no **middle** ground.

Jesus said in *Matthew 12:30*, ***He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.***

If someone has heard the true Gospel and does nothing about it, that is a decision as it becomes a passive rejection of the Good News of Christ. No one is going to escape without a decision.

## **V. Practical Application.**

Notice the religious leaders *perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled.*

There was something obviously different about Peter and John that showed they had been spending time with Jesus.

When we think of some of the biblical accounts of people having a one-on-one account with the Lord, there was always a dramatic change in them that will be recognized by others.

Isaiah, before the throne of God, was instantly ruined.

When Moses was shown the Shekinah glory of the LORD, his face was so bright that the children of Israel could not even look upon him any longer until Moses veiled his face.

If we are personally spending time in fellowship, prayer, and study with the LORD, there will be some characteristics in our lives that will indicate that as well. We will be changed.

***Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.***

***Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.***

Peter and John were uneducated, untrained, ordinary fishermen. They were not noble, rich, influential, or powerful. Yet God used them into the lives of millions with their teachings of Christ.

They made a difference in this world for the kingdom because they had spent time with Jesus and their lives were changed.

To experience this kind of change, we must know Jesus as Lord and Savior and then spend quality and quantity time with Him. The power of Christ causes change in people's lives!

If we have been spending quality time with Jesus, we will be **compassionate**.

Think back to the beginning with this lame man...Peter and John showed concern and compassion towards him.

Peter and John were heading for the Temple and a man was begging for money. They could have side-stepped him, after all, these two men were surely busy as leaders of the early church.

Many people who have influential positions today would walk right by this man. God-moments happen all the time and we need to keep our hearts soft for these moments.

If we have been spending quality time with Jesus, we will be courageous in our **witness**.

Here these religious leaders were trying to **change history** by telling these men to **stop sharing** Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

They didn't want the truth about Jesus, to spread any further, so they commanded Peter and John to stop preaching the Gospel.

But Peter and John had spent time with Jesus, so they witness!

If we are to stand for our faith in this world that is contrary to the LORD, we will need to spend time with Jesus as well.

If you study the lives of any of the heroes of the faith, they all have one thing in common, their courage came from spending time with the LORD.

If we have been spending quality time with Jesus, we will **become** like Him.

It was the boldness to share Christ that caused the religious leaders to recognize these men had been with Jesus.

If we have been spending quality time with Jesus, we will be **committed** to Him and His Gospel.

***Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. NKJV***

*Are there any indications in our lives that show we have been spending time with Jesus? Does your life proclaim the Gospel?*

If we have been spending time with Jesus, our lives will naturally proclaim the Gospel in many different ways.