

Scripture: **Acts 3:1-10**

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple for the time of prayer at three in the afternoon. <sup>2</sup> A man who was lame from birth was being carried there. He was placed each day at the temple gate called Beautiful, so that he could beg from those entering the temple. <sup>3</sup> When he saw Peter and John about to enter the temple, he asked for money. <sup>4</sup> Peter, along with John, looked straight at him and said, "Look at us." <sup>5</sup> So he turned to them, expecting to get something from them. <sup>6</sup> But Peter said, "I don't have silver or gold, but what I do have, I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!"

Peter and John preached the same message Peter preached at Pentecost. And 2000 people were added to their number—added to the church in this one event and at the preaching of the good news.

**This is an undeniable miracle is the catalyst that sets this whole scene and trial into motion.**

Acts 4:1-4: As a continuation of that story and that miracle, Peter and John are now accosted in the temple—Sermon interrupted—and they are thrown in a jail cell.

Acts 4:5-7: The next day all the rulers, elders, scribes assembled in Jerusalem to hear the case. This consisted of the rulers, Sadducees, and scribes.

**They preach boldly the same message Peter preached on Pentecost and that we've been preaching each week:** God has exalted Jesus of Nazareth as both Lord and Christ. There is no salvation apart from—no other name by which a man or woman may be saved from sin and the coming judgment.

## We pick up the story in Chapter 4:8. And we hear Peter preach...

### 1. An **Unexpected** Message Acts 4:8-12

<sup>8</sup> Then Peter was **filled with the Holy Spirit** and said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders: <sup>9</sup> If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a disabled man, by what means he was healed, <sup>10</sup> let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the **name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, whom you **crucified** and whom God **raised from the dead**—by him this man is standing here before you healthy. <sup>11</sup> This Jesus is **the stone rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone**. <sup>12</sup> There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.”

- **Peter filled with the Holy Spirit (4:8):** The disciples on the road to **Emmaus had burning hearts when Jesus taught them**. The Apostles and the apostolic community of disciples experienced the sign of flaming tongues on their heads. The burning sign has dissipated—**but the burning in their hearts remains**. They are bold, unapologetic and uncompromising in their proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus—filled with God's holy Spirit they do not recoil or retreat.
- **The Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth:** These three words capture his title—Jesus is the son of Joseph. Christ is his royal and divine title—truly God the Son; of Nazareth—raised in obscurity. Hailing from a place you would least expect the messiah.
- **Whom you crucified: The hammer and nails were not in the hands of Sadducees and Pharisees—but Jesus was put to death at the behest of the Jewish ruling council and all the people present at the trial before Pilate.** There is a vicarious guilt that we all experience when it comes to Jesus's death.  
**You see, Jesus did not just pay the penalty for some generic or abstract notion of sin. Jesus died for my sins.** Jesus hung on the cross because I am self-worshipping idolater. Jesus received the penalty—**He doesn't just die in behalf (or in the interests) of the human race—he died on behalf (in the place; representationally) of us.**
- **Whom God raised from the dead:** Those interrogating them are the Sadducees and priestly class. They don't believe in the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. Of course they're annoyed by this.

Rom 8:11 “And if the Spirit of him who **raised Jesus** from the dead lives **in you**, then he who raised Christ from the dead will also bring **your mortal bodies to life** through his Spirit who lives in you.”

- **This Jesus is the stone rejected by you builders who has become the cornerstone:** This message of this sinless man from Nazareth whom God appointed as Lord and Messiah—the Savior of humanity; crucified, risen, exalted to the right hand of the power of God—he is the cornerstone of God's new, holy temple.
  - **There is no other Cornerstone of our faith.** The doctrine of creation, and our view of either a young earth an old earth is not the cornerstone of our faith. **The doctrine of how the end-times is going to play out, what sequence events will**

unfold and take shape *is NOT the cornerstone of our faith*; your view of God's sovereign election, predestination is *NOT the cornerstone of our faith*. Jesus the messiah—crucified, resurrected and exalted to the throne of heaven—the God-man *he is the cornerstone of our faith*.

- Acts 3:13 “The God of their ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus—whom they denied and handed over to Pilate to be crucified. **No one could foresee that the Messiah would have to suffer for the sins** of his people and humanity and die a brutal death on the cross. The Jews affirmed the “Warrior King” (Isa 42; 59) passages but screened out the suffering servant of Yahweh (Isa 52:12-53 “despised” “stricken” “wounded” “bruised” “punished” “buried”; Zech 12:10 “pierced side”; Zech 13:7 “shepherd struck”; Psa 16:8-11; 22 “killed and raised”; Psa 118 “rejected”; Psa 69:25; 109 “betrayed”).

### Why did they screen out the suffering messiah passages in favor of the warrior king passages?

Because they saw their primary problem as a political one not a spiritual one.

God has to show them “the reason why you have a political problem is because you have a spiritual problem.”

And they gravitated toward those passages (which are there) that brought them the most comfort politically.

**This message Peter is boldly preaching wasn't expected by hardly anyone.**

**This unexpected, surprising message of a suffering & rising messiah for our sins is delivered by...**

**2. Unconventional Messengers (4:13)** “When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus.”

Not only is the message unexpected but it is delivered by unprofessionals. Tradesmen, craftsmen, tax collectors, and religious zealots.

- They were uneducated and untrained men: **Greek term *idiotēs*** and this means “not a guildsman; not associated with a profession, trade, or group” Paul uses this same term later on in 1, 2 Corinthians.
- 1 Corinthians 14:16 “Otherwise, if you praise with the spirit, how will the outsider (*idiotēs*; an outsider to the group) say “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? Here, the term “outsider” refers to someone who is not a member or part of the local fellowship. Here Paul prioritizes intelligibility above personal experience.  
1 Cor 14:23, 24 “If, therefore, the whole church assembles together and all are speaking in tongues and people who are outsiders (*idiotēs*) or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your minds?” Again, it has nothing to do with education but everything to do with affiliation.
- 2 Cor 11:5-6 “Now I consider myself in no way inferior to those ‘super-apostles.’<sup>6</sup> Even if I am untrained (*idiotēs*) in public speaking, I am certainly not untrained in knowledge.” Paul was one of the most educated people in the ancient world. But here, this word refers to the non-aficionado. One not trained in the Philosophical guilds where they learned skills of rhetoric and fine oratory.

**We note where they had gotten their training...**

- **4:13b: They were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus:** So what school did they go to? They went to Jesus of Nazareth Academy. That’s how they got their training. No they are not seminary graduates but they are biblically literate, theologically literate burning hearts.

**This is not an excuse to be ignorant of our faith and merely rely on a mystical gift. The apostles** were grounded in the teachings and model of Jesus. They were taught by Christ and filled with the Spirit of God—burning hearts proclaiming the life-transforming message of Jesus.

**The Lesson is that God sends ordinary folk, trained in Jesus of Nazareth academy—grounded in the Word;** theologically perceptive—and baptized, filled with the Spirit going into the marketplace of ideas with hearts burning to share the good news.

### The third thing they encounter is...

3. **Unyielding** Opposition (4:16-22) “And since they saw the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in opposition. <sup>15</sup> After they ordered them to leave the Sanhedrin, they conferred among themselves, <sup>16</sup> saying, ‘What should we do with these men? For an **obvious sign** has been done through them, **clear to everyone** living in Jerusalem, and **we cannot deny it.**”

The miracle was undeniable but they denied the message. They couldn't deny the miracle of a man who had been raised up as a lifelong paralytic. Now walking, running and praising God!

But they denied the miracle of the risen Christ who was affirmed by God through 1000's more miraculous signs than this. Who was vindicated by being raised from the dead bodily. **Sometimes no amount of evidence given to a person will convince them.**

At the same time the Disciples are being pressured to shut up preaching in this name thousands are being added to the church.

At the same time the heat is coming down the light is going out.

**You can arrest the man—but you can't arrest the gospel. You can bury the messenger, but you can't bury the message.**

### Let's look at the nature of this persecution:

<sup>17</sup> But so that this does not spread any further among the people (admission that this thing is spreading and getting out of their control; pressure to cease preaching comes when the good news is multiplying), **let's threaten them against speaking to anyone in this name again.** <sup>18</sup> So they called for them and **ordered them not to speak or teach at all** in the name of Jesus.

They have no legitimate legislation that says they cannot teach in Christ's name—so they resort to threats.

**Illus. Like Fifi—my neighbor's Pekingese dog. As a child, he terrified me.** After a couple summers I grew and the next time I saw my friends' dog, he came running behind me to nip at my heels and I thought “that's the smallest dog I've ever seen.” I was never bothered by him again.

**Intimidation and threats is what people do when they don't have much power over you.**

<sup>19</sup> “Peter and John answered them, ‘Whether it's right in the sight of God for us to listen to you rather than to God, you decide;

<sup>20</sup> for we are unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.’” **Now, the bar here is pretty high. The order is not to preach at all in the name of Jesus.** Civil disobedience is warranted when those who attempt to intimidate us command us to do what God has forbidden; or forbid us to do what God has commanded.

<sup>21</sup> After threatening them further, they released them. They found no way to punish them because the people were all giving glory to God over what had been done. <sup>22</sup> For this sign of healing had been performed on a man over forty years old. So their restraint is political. There are forces holding them back from doing what they really want to do—which is to eradicate this Jesus cult.

**No amount of pressure and intimidation can stop them...They have...**

#### 4. An **Unshakable** Faith (4:23-31)

**Begins with a prayer meeting.**

#### **They Acknowledge God's Sovereignty**

They reported this to the church and, "they lifted their voices together to God (**There is something so powerful about praying together**. There's really nothing like corporate prayer and worship) and said, '**Sovereign Lord**, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them (God who is the creator of all) <sup>25</sup> who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? <sup>26</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed' (Psalm 2; the key to understanding that passage is that the coming of the Lord—both his first and 2<sup>nd</sup> coming—is characterized by opposition of the nations) —<sup>27</sup> for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, <sup>28</sup> to do whatever your hand and your plan had **predestined to take place** (This word is *pro'oridzo* meaning to foreordain—to choose beforehand).

**Psalm 22 is divided into the raging of the nations and Yahweh's response—which is to send the Son to subdue the nations.**

Churches that are active in prayer—lifting our voices to God, deferring to God's sovereign plan, affirming his predestined outcomes—the effect of that is an unshakable faith.

#### **They Petition God to work through them.**

<sup>29</sup> And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants (only 4 people in the Bible are given the title "Servant of the Lord"; Moses, David, Isaiah, and Jesus) to continue to speak your word with all boldness, <sup>30</sup> while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." <sup>31</sup> And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

When we are shaken in the presence of God—to our core with awe and wonder—our faith will become unshakeable.

When the prayer of the saints shake the walls the faith of the saints becomes unshakeable.

## Application

1. **Surprise people with forgiveness.** The message of Jesus was shocking not only because he is God's Messiah (from Nazareth?) but because in him is the forgiveness of sins

2. **Start seeing yourself as qualified not as disqualified.** God doesn't need a seminarian to share his life-changing truth with those in our friendships circles. What he wants is ordinary folk who have been with Jesus—who have burning hearts to share the love and compassion and goodness of our God.

**Illus. Our panelists at the outreach seminar. I was so inspired by all of them.**

3. **Understand that opposition to the gospel is normal not abnormal.** So long as there are nations and people who rage against God's messiah—there will always be opposition until the Suffering Servant returns as the Warrior King to subdue the nations. When the lamb of God returns as the Lion of Judah to bring all powers and authorities under his control.

4. **Live free of the insecurity that comes with an insufficient view of God's Sovereignty.** Listen, embracing God's sovereign plan over history is not an excuse for pacifism or becoming inert. It's freeing. Choose to live free of the insecurity and anxiety that comes with thinking that everything is up to you—it's all on your shoulders. It's not.