

Acts 4:1-31 | Boldly Standing up for the Faith |

1/10/16

- Peter and John were doing the work that Christ had called them to do | Acts 3:1-16
 - The apostles were called by God to continue where Jesus Christ had left off.
 - They were to be a witness for Christ, to continue to share the Gospel and through the power of the Holy Spirit they would even perform miracles like that of Jesus.
 - These miracles though were not of themselves or their own power but because they called up on the name of Jesus Christ.
 - They took this duty that Jesus had called them to and they proceeded to carry it out with boldness even in the face of persecution.
 - This power was the Holy Spirit
 - Acts 1:8
 - “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem...”
 - **Read Acts 3:1-16**
- Peter and John were arrested for obeying Jesus | Acts 4:1-4
 - **Read Acts 4:1-4**
 - The Jewish leaders (Sadducees) were still very much against Jesus Christ and His followers.
 - This was made evident by the fact that they arrested Peter and John because they were proclaiming the resurrected Christ.
 - The Sadducees denied the resurrection and therefore Christ
 - The Sadducees had a few identifying traits one of which was that they denied the resurrection, but also denied angels and spirits (Acts 23:8)
 - They were deeply annoyed or provoked because of Peter and John because they thought that they were done with the whole Jesus problem.
 - They had him crucified, buried and in their minds dead.
 - **However here we have His followers who are now healing people in public and declaring it in the name of Jesus Christ. It was like Jesus was still there! (Because He was in Spirit).**
 - Not only were they arrested because of speaking about the resurrected Jesus but because they had caused such an uproar by healing the lame man.
 - This act had gained widespread attention just as it had when Jesus did it when He was there.
 - Even though they were imprisoned many had come to know Christ through the miracles and their witnessing as now they numbers to about 5000.
- Peter and John boldly stand up for their faith | Acts 4:5-21
 - Peter and John the following day are now brought before the council to be questioned.
 - By what power have you done this? | Acts 4:5-7
 - **Read Acts 4:5-7**
 - Directly after they were gathered together the first question that is proposed to them is that they asked how it was possible that they were able to heal this lame man.
 - This man whom they had healed was also present so the proof was quite real.
 - They knew that this act of healing had been done so they inquire as to how.
 - Peter tells them that the power comes from Jesus Christ | Acts 4:8-11
 - **Read Acts 4:8-11**

- Peter now must give a response to their question knowing full well that it won't go well for him when he tells them the truth.
- He is well aware of their dislike of Jesus Christ.
- But Peter being filled with the Holy Spirit proceeds to give them the truth of Christ.
 - The good deed that they performed which was to heal the lame man was done by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene.
 - The Jewish leaders were so against Jesus that they overlook the wonderful healing that took place and look upon it as a "bad" thing.
 - It was by the name of Jesus (not their own abilities) that healed that man.
- Peter then proceeds to tell them that not only was the healing done by Jesus but he speaks to the greater purpose of Jesus beyond healing of the body.
 - Peter speaks to salvation that it is through Jesus Christ and no one else. That Jesus is the only way to receive it.
- **We as Christians must also boldly tell others the truth of Christ even if we know they do not want to hear it.**
 - **I was able to do XYZ because of Christ.**
 - **We must not be afraid to say that our blessings are because of "luck" or "circumstances" instead of giving the glory to God.**
- The boldness of Peter, John and of the Christian | Acts 4:13
 - **Read Acts 4:13**
 - Peter and John showed great boldness to proclaim Christ to the Jewish leaders.
 - This did not go unnoticed either as they were amazed and astonished.
 - For common uneducated men to so boldly proclaim the truth that they held even though they could be jailed longer or even killed.
 - This boldness was because of the Holy Spirit, God gave them the ability to stand up to the Jewish leaders and proclaim Christ.
 - Peter and John were bold when they healed the lame man by the Holy Spirit.
 - Not only were they bold when proclaiming the truth of Christ to the Jewish leaders but they showed boldness when they healed the lame man.
 - The healing of the lame man was an opportunity that was ordained by God, it was God's desires for it to be done.
 - But Peter and John were not expecting this man to be there, but they being filled with the Spirit were always ready to act on any opportunity that God gave them to show His glory.
 - They showed boldness to always look and do God's work and not their own.
 - Boldness of the Christian
 - This boldness that Peter and John had because of the Holy Spirit is not unique to only apostles, but it is freely given by God to all Christians.
 - We too can be filled with the Spirit and can proclaim the truth that is within us even in the face of opposition or persecution.
 - Luke 12:11-12
 - "Whenever they bring you before synagogues and rulers and authorities, don't worry about how you should defend yourselves or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what must be said."
 - **We do not have to be biblical scholars to be able to speak boldly about Christ!**

- Christians must always be ready to proclaim Christ and to give a reason for the hope that is in us even in the face of opposition.
 - 1 Peter 3:15
 - “but honor the Messiah as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.”
 - We must not be ashamed to proclaim the hope that we have within us, but instead we must be ready to tell others about Christ.
 - If we ask God for this same boldness, He will give it to us.
 - Acts 4:29-31
 - This boldness removes fear
 - Philippians 1:14
 - “Most of the brothers in the Lord have gained confidence from my imprisonment and dare even more to speak the message fearlessly”
- Christians must boldly do the work that God has called us to.
 - To do what God has called us to do can in many occasions take boldness because what He has called us to do is difficult and scary.
 - But if we ask God to strengthen us and to keep our eyes open, then when the opportunity arises we can boldly do what God desires.
- **What situations today would put a Christian in a position where they would need to have boldness to proclaim Christ?**
- **What are the fears that the Christian would face in those circumstances?**
- **What can the Christian do to be ready to give a defense for the hope that is within them?**
- The Jewish leader’s response to the boldness of the apostles | Acts 4:14-18
 - ***Read Acts 4:14-18***
 - So after hearing the bold response of Peter and John and then seeing the physical proof of the lame man they simply had nothing to say.
 - The undeniable proof of the healing and the reasons given by the apostles was impossible to deny.
 - **They spoke the truth and there was nothing that they could say to refute it.**
 - Even though they acknowledged the irrefutable proof of the healing they still would not “believe” in Christ and sought to silence the apostles.
 - It’s quite amazing that even though the evidence was overwhelming and they acknowledge the miracle performed by Christ through the apostles that they still sought to silence them.
 - They still sought to deny Christ.
 - **Do you think that there are those in the world today that even given irrefutable proof of Christ that they would still deny Him?**
- Peter and John put God before man | Acts 4:19-22
 - ***Read Acts 4:19-22***
 - Peter and John made it clear that while the Jewish leaders held some worldly power and influence over them, that God was above them all.
 - They knew that they were commanded by God to proclaim His name into all the world and to be obedient to Him.
 - They made it clear that they would do this even if it meant persecution by the world.
 - Christians must always put God before man

- Christians living in a society that continually moves away from God must still ultimately fear and obey Him before man.
 - Matthew 10:28
 - “Don’t fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
- This does not mean that we are not to obey the government or our local laws as the Bible tells us we are to obey government authority.
 - 1 Peter 2:13
 - “Submit to every human authority because of the Lord, whether to the Emperor as the supreme authority or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good.”
- But when the government or man’s law command us to disobey God, that is when we must put our foot down.
 - If our earthly rulers command us to sin, then that is an occasion where we must obey the supreme authority which is God.
 - God court is the highest and the only one that ultimately matters.
- Christians must not put what is acceptable to man over what is acceptable to God.
 - It must also be said that even when our society, government and laws say that something is OK that if it causes us to disobey God or to sin then we MUST refrain from it.
- **Do you see living out the Christian life getting harder as society appears to be moving away from God?**