

# Acts 4:1-22

## Peter's Sermon in Custody

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# Arrested!

*As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, 2 being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening.*

- *Captain of the temple guard* – Chief of Police for the Temple
  - Very high position
  - Appointed by the Levites
- *The Sadducees*
  - See Luke 20:27 (or Matthew 22:23)
  - This sect dominated the Sanhedrin during this period<sup>1</sup>
- The apostles' preaching had reached the highest environs of Jewish authority

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<sup>1</sup>from Merryman

## 5k believers

*4 But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.*

- *The message* – what was this message?
  - God raised Christ from the dead
  - There is power in the name of this risen Christ
- Sidebar: how was this an affront to the Sanhedrin's authority?
- *Those who heard the message believed*
  - *the message* – this word is *logos*
  - *believed* – no mention of baptism
- *the number ... five thousand* – the total believers in Jerusalem was now about 5,000 men

## The squeaky wheel

*5 On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; 6 and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. 7 When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, “By what power, or in what name, have you done this?”*

- *Rulers and elders and scribes* – quite the austere assemblage
  - *Annas* – See Luke 3:2, John 18:13,24
  - *Caiaphas* – See John 11:49-52
  - *John and Alexander* – ????
  - *all who were of high-priestly descent* – serious Hebraic firepower
- *They began to inquire* – “Who told you guys you could do this?”<sup>2</sup>
  - Required under Mosaic law – Deuteronomy 13:1-5

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<sup>2</sup>My paraphrase

# The Filling by the Spirit

*8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them,*

- Luke 21:12-15 – God will give them words to speak
- Acts 1:8 – Holy Spirit's empowering is so that they might be witnesses
- *Filled with the Holy Spirit*
  - Indicates control by the Spirit
  - We'll cover more about this in the next lesson
- *Filling of the spirit* leads directly to speaking
  - Same as in Acts 2:4
  - Is this consistent throughout the book of Acts?

## Healing through Christ's name

*“Rulers and elders of the people, 9 if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health.*

- *If* = since
- *A benefit done to a sick man* – see Mark 3:1-6
- *By the name of Jesus Christ*
  - *the Nazarene* – refers to a specific person
  - *whom you crucified* – they literally were the ones
  - *whom God raised from the dead* – brazen proclamation of truth
- *this man stands here before you in good health* – we'll come back to this

## Salvation through Christ's name

*11 He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief corner stone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”*

- Psalm 118:22 – *The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone.*
  - What was the role of the Jewish leaders?
  - What had been their focus?
- Hebraic repetition:
  - *Salvation in no one else* – lit. *the salvation*
    - This can apply both Messianic-ly and personally
  - *[Salvation through] no other name under heaven* – reemphasizes the name of Jesus

# Speechless

*13 Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply.*

- The facts of the case
  - Common and uneducated men speaking great spiritual truths
    - Similar response Jesus (see Matthew 7:28-29; Mark 1:22; Luke 20:19-26; John 7:15)
    - They remembered they had been with Jesus
  - The man, who had been lame, was standing right there before them
    - Notice they not once contest the fact of the healing
- The defense rests, your honor

## A plan comes together

*15 But when they had ordered them to leave the Council, they began to confer with one another, 16 saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name."*

- What doesn't happen here?
  - There is no rejoicing in God's mighty works
  - There is no rejoicing in the great benefit done this man
  - There is ostensibly no heeding of the apostles' words
- What does happen?
  - They conspire to keep the event quiet
  - What could have been their motive?
- How did Luke know about their conference?

## Keep it on the Q.T.

*18 And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.*

- *They commanded them not to speak or teach*
  - They had limited authority politically
  - They had vast authority culturally
  - They are establishing a legal precedent
- *In the name of Jesus*
  - The truth about Jesus was a threat to their doctrinal position
- They can see the evidence, but they set it aside
  - The resurrection of Jesus
  - The healing of a lame man
- What will it take to convince those who will not be convinced?

# Irresistible loquaciousness

*19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; 20 for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”*

- *Whether it is right ... to give heed to you rather than to God*
  - Peter places the leaders' authority in contrast with Gods
  - When should a Christian engage in civil disobedience?
  - Who is our ultimate authority?
- *We cannot stop speaking* – alt. we are not able to not speak
  - Because of the power of the truth they are speaking
  - Because of the power of the Holy Spirit that speaks through them

## When God Dips His Love in my Heart

*When God dips His pen of love in my heart  
And writes my soul a message, He wants me to know  
His Spirit, all divine, fills this sinful soul of mine  
When God Dips His Love In My Heart.*

*Well, I said I wouldn't tell it to a livin' soul  
How He brought salvation, when He made me whole  
But I found I couldn't hide such love as Jesus did impart  
'Cause it makes me laugh and it makes me cry  
Sets my sinful soul on fire  
When God Dips His Love In My Heart.*

## But for the people

*21 When they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which to punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened; 22 for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.*

- *When they had threatened them further*
  - They still fail to recognize the power of God in all this
  - Who are the ones threatened here?
- *They let them go*
  - They had *no basis on which to punish them*
  - The people *were all glorifying God*
    - Whereas with the crucifixion, the people were behind them
- *The man was more than forty years old*
  - So this was an incontrovertible event
- Nevertheless, the persecution of the church had begun