

Acts 4:1-22 | And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ² greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴ But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

⁵ On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, ⁶ with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹ if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰ 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, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. ¹¹ This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵ But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, ¹⁶ saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” ¹⁸ So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” ²¹ And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. ²² For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

Acts 4:1-22 | First Opposition

Peter and John on their way into the temple healed a paralyzed man in the name of Jesus. The crowd gathered around them amazed. But Peter is quick to turn the crowd's attention away from themselves and to the source of the power who is Jesus. The one they had killed but who God raised from the dead. Jesus' ministry of healing continued to demonstrate the power of Christ to forgive sins. Repent, turn to Jesus, and your sins will be blotted out and times of refreshing will come. But the advancement of the gospel is always met with resistance. The prince of the power of the air does not relinquish his territory willingly.

1. Growth and Resistance

Acts 4:1-2 | And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ² greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

The sadducees see the crowd and hear the preaching of Christ's resurrection and become greatly annoyed. You see they had dealt with this Jesus problem, why is it still rearing its head. And more annoying than it being talked about is it being received en masse by the gathered crowd. It is evening, now so the sadducees arrest Peter and John to bring the present teaching to an end, and will deal with them in the morning. But despite the arrest, the number grows to 5,000. Growth and resistance are coincident.

2. Clear Gospel

Acts 4:5-6 | On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, ⁶ with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family.

Annas had previously held the office of high priest and Caiaphus was the sitting high priest, and son-in-law of Annas. The important thing to see here is that this is not merely the same office who had sentenced Jesus to death, it is the very same men. Imagine the courage of Peter and John, they had full understanding that these men were responsible for the murder of Jesus and would likely not shrink back from murdering those who proclaimed him as Lord. There question is about the evidence.

Acts 4:7 | And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?"

The text later tells us that the man who was healed is in the room with Peter and John. The text doesn't say he was arrested so it is likely that he simply came to the trial the next day. He walked in and stood there. That's who the question is about, the man is the evidence. They cannot deny that he had been healed. The question is really an opportunity to deny that the man was healed in the name of Jesus. In one sense its a dare. Are you going to say 'Jesus did this' in this room? The central point of contention in the room is Jesus.

Acts 4:8-9 | Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹ if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed,

When the apostles are filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts it results in their proclaiming the name of Jesus. This is the most typical result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter

addresses them with the authority that is due to them in their station. Rulers of the people and elders.

But he lays out clearly the reality of what they are under trial for. It is considering a good deed done to a crippled man. The questioners of course want to put the pressure on their point of leverage. They have already condemned Jesus, they had the crowds chant for the crucifixion of Jesus, the narrative of Jesus as a condemned blasphemer had been established. But the boldness of the witness of Peter is simply speaking simple truths out loud. What were talking about is a good deed done to a crippled man. That is the “this” were talking about. And the corresponding power to “this” is how he was healed. But this appropriate framing is not the ends of obfuscating the name of Jesus but to the ends of clarifying it.

Acts 4:10 | 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, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well.

Having framed the topic, which is the power by which a man was healed, he lays out a sharp contradiction with the ruling body. The man is standing before you well by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. This is the man that this ruling body crucified, and whom God raised from the dead.

You must see the sharpness of the framing. Peter is saying, that they are standing opposed to the healing of the man, they are remaining opposed to Jesus of Nazareth, and therefore they are opposed to God who raised Jesus from the dead. He doesn't want them to miss how foundational of an argument he is making, and therefore he will make sure that they are talking about foundations.

Acts 4:11-12 | This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Jesus is the cornerstone of the new temple, which is the church. The temple is of course the place of salvation because it is the place of sacrifice. Jesus is the true sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins and therefore is the only name given among men by which we must be saved. All of the pressure in the room is to resist the proclamation of the name of Jesus. But there is no other name. This is the bedrock claim of reality.

3. Threatening

Acts 4:13-14 | Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ But seeing the man

who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition.

Here is the result of Peter's courage to speak simple truths out loud. The room is astonished. They had a construct which informed who ought to be listened to and who shouldn't. They had credentials and pathways of verification. They had a means of creating and maintaining an expert class and of making sure they were the ones that put people on trial. But it was the boldness of Peter and John that astonished them.

But where did such boldness come from? Well look, the man was healed. The man who couldn't move was standing in the room. But its more than that isn't it? The man who these men had killed was alive. Peter had fled from these very men before. But something had changed. Jesus was alive. Peter had a new foundation, Jesus Christ. And the men are pinned because they couldn't deny the man was healed.

Acts 4:18-20 | So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."

The council had no argument, so they result to commands of silence. But Peter will not allow for a command of silence. Because there is an authority above the council whom he must listen to. How could they not speak in the name of Jesus? First is the command of silence and then the command to silence is attended with a threat.

Acts 4:21-22 | And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. ²² For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

This is the order. A command to silence, and then a threat. As the story goes on you will see this escalates from threats to beatings, and from beatings to the martyrdom of Stephen. Here is the question. Will you stand on Jesus Christ as your foundation? Or will you accept an alternative foundation in place of Jesus Christ? This is your option.

The foundational claim of our liberal society is that religious claims should be relegated to the private space of values and public claims are to be made based upon facts. Well here's the problem. The fact is Jesus rose from the dead. The fact is, the man who was healed was 40 years old and he was healed in Jesus name. The fact is, Jesus is Lord.

Our current legislative session is promoting the legalization of prostitution in Colorado. That is to say the legalization of prostitution of your daughters. Why is that wrong? It's a private act right? Well what's your foundation?