

“Righteous Resistance”

Acts 4:13-22

Acts: The Unstoppable Gospel

Introduction: What would an extraordinary God want to do with an ordinary person like me?

Psalm 37:23-24 – “The steps of a man are established by the LORD, and He delights in his way. ²⁴When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.”

Two weeks ago we looked at (Acts 4:1-12):

- As Peter and John are speaking about Jesus, the religious leaders arrest them (Acts 4:1-4).
- And even though Peter and John are in jail, five thousand were saved (Acts 4:4).
- Peter addresses these leaders with confidence (Acts 4:5-7) because of Jesus’ promise in...
- Luke 12:11-12 – “When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; ¹²for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”
- Peter turns the tables on their accusation (Acts 4:9-10).
- Jesus Christ is the stone the builders rejected. The Chief Cornerstone. (Acts 4:11)
- And He is the Savior (Acts 4:12).

Today we’re looking at Acts 4:13-22 in a sermon titled “Righteous Resistance.”

Acts 4:13 – “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.”

Notice the three verbs in that verse. “Observed”... “understood” ...and “recognize”...

- 1) They observed**
- 2) They understood**
- 3) They recognize**

1 John 2:12-13 – “I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name’s sake. ¹³I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.”

Four things the council does in response to Peter and John’s actions...

1. The council has a problem (vv.13-14)

Acts 4:13b-14 – “They recognize them as having been with Jesus. ¹⁴And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply.”

2. The council confers with one another (vv.15-17)

Acts 4:15-17 – “But when they had ordered them to leave the Council, they began to confer with one another, ¹⁶saying, ‘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. ¹⁷But 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.’”

3. The council decides to let the thing die a natural death (vv.18)

Acts 4:18 – “And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.”

4. The council fails (vv.19-22)

Acts 4:19-20 – “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.’”

1 Peter 2:13-14 – “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.”

Romans 13:1 – “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.”

Three biblical examples for standing against authority the right way...

- 1. These objectors had a message from God**
- 2. These objectors had convictions that touched every area of their lives**
- 3. Jesus is the ultimate example of unjust suffering...and we must follow Him**

Acts 4:21-22 – “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.”

Four observations about the Sanhedrin...

- 1. The threats of the Sanhedrin were ineffective**
- 2. The Sanhedrin had no way to deny this miracle**
- 3. The Sanhedrin acted out of political caution rather than justice**
- 4. The Sanhedrin couldn’t stop the spreading of the gospel**

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:

1. If people were to look at your life, would they be able to tell you have “been with Jesus”?
2. Where in your life do you need the kind of boldness that Peter and John displayed?
3. How can you balance being obedient to God and respectful to earthly authorities?
4. What is something you have “seen and heard” that you can share with unbelievers?
5. How can you spend more intentional time “with Jesus” in your daily routine?