

Acts / Authority; Exclusivity of Christ; Persecution; Witness; Boldness / Acts 4:1–22

The risen King cannot be silenced because his authority is greater than every earthly authority, his resurrection cannot be denied, and his witnesses have been commanded to speak.

The King Cannot Be Silenced

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Introduction

Awakening Church, over these past several weeks in Acts, Luke has been showing us the continuing work of our risen and ascended King. Do you remember how he opened this book?

Acts 1:1 “In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach,”

That first book was the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus began to do and teach. In Acts we are reading the second book, where Jesus continues to do and teach.

In Acts chapter 1, we stood with the disciples on the Mount of Olives and watched as Jesus ascended into heaven. The crucified and risen Savior took his seat at the right hand of the Father, reigning as the promised King.

In Acts chapter 2, we watched that enthroned King pour out his promised Holy Spirit upon his church. Peter stood and preached Christ crucified, risen, and exalted. And through that preaching, 3,000 souls were added to the church.

Then in Acts chapter 3, Luke brought us to the temple gate. We watched as the risen King displayed his restoring power through his apostles. A man who had never walked before stood up, walked, leaped, and praised God. And when the crowd gathered in wonder, Peter turned their eyes away from himself and toward Jesus Christ, the Author of life, who God raised from the dead.

Now this morning, Luke carries us forward.

The crowd has heard the preaching. The healed man is still standing as living evidence of Christ’s power. The message of the risen King has been proclaimed openly in Jerusalem.

And today, as we open our Bibles to Acts chapter 4, we will see that the King cannot be silenced.

Sermon Text: Acts 4:1-22

Call: “*The grass withers and the flower fades,*”

Response: “*But the word of the Lord endures forever.*”

1. The Arrest (v1-4)

1.1 The Resurrection and the Resistance (v1-2)

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, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.”

Now in **verse 1** remember where we are, Peter and John have not left the temple. The healed man is still standing nearby. The crowd has gathered. Peter has explained that this man was not healed by apostolic power or personal piety. He has preached Jesus Christ. He has told the people that they rejected the Holy and Righteous One. They killed the Author of life. But God raised him from the dead.

And Luke tells us that while Peter and John are still speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees come upon them.

This is the first open resistance that Luke records against the apostles public proclamation of Christ. And notice that these men are not annoyed just because Peter has gathered a crowd. They’re not frustrated just because a healing has taken place in the temple.

Verse 2 tells us exactly why they are disturbed. The apostles are teaching the people and

proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

There are at least three reasons we can see in this passage that this message is intolerable to them.

First, doctrine. The Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead. But Peter and John are proclaiming that resurrection is not just a distant hope. It's broken into history in Jesus Christ. He is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. His resurrection is the beginning and guarantee of the resurrection of all who belong to him.

Second, authority. Peter and John are ordinary men, but they are teaching openly in the temple and gathering the attention of the people. So the issue isn't only, what are they saying, It's also, who gave them the right to say it? That's the question the council will ask in a few verses...

Third, indictment. The resurrection means their judgment of Jesus was false and God's judgment was right.

They said, "Crucify him."

God raised him.

They tried to silence Jesus by putting him to death. Now, his apostles are standing in the temple, in the very city where he was condemned, proclaiming that the grave is empty.

And this is why the resurrection provokes resistance in a world that won't bow to the risen Jesus. The resurrection is not a harmless religious idea. It declares that Jesus Christ is alive. It declares that God has vindicated the one who sinful men rejected. It declares that every human authority is answerable to him.

So, Peter and John are not in trouble because they have done anything evil. They're in trouble because they're proclaiming the risen Christ.

And if this Christ who was crucified has been raised and exalted to the Father's right hand, then he is the reigning King. And if he is King, no earthly authority is ultimate, and the King cannot be silenced.

Now we move into verse 3, where the resistance moves from their anger into action.

1.2 The Custody and the Conversions (v3-4)

Acts 4:3–4 “And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.”

In **verse 3**, the authorities arrest them and put them in custody until the next day. Think about that contrast. Just a few minutes ago, Peter is standing before a crowd and proclaiming the risen Christ. Now he and John are sitting in a cell.

If we were measuring the success of this mission by outward circumstances, this would look like failure. The apostles have been arrested, and the preaching is over, but Luke does not leave us in verse 3.

Verse 4 begins with that wonderful word, “But.”

The rulers can arrest the preachers, but they can’t arrest the word. That word had already entered the hearts of the hearers and Luke tells us that the number of believing men now came to about 5,000. The church that began with about three thousand at Pentecost has now grown to include about five thousand men. So in total, the Christian community by this point was likely much larger than 5,000 people.

The arrest came too late... The rulers wanted to stop the message from spreading, but the word had already done its work. Christ had already gathered more of his people.

Awakening Church, we need to see what Luke is showing us here. Opposition is not proof that Christ’s mission is failing.

Peter and John are arrested precisely because they are faithfully proclaiming the risen Christ. Jesus told his apostles to expect this. The servant is not greater than his master. They opposed Christ, and they will oppose those who speak in his name (John 15:18-20).

This doesn’t mean that every faithful sermon will result in thousands of conversions. Luke isn’t giving us a formula for church growth. But he is showing us that no ruler, or prison, or threat, and certainly no human authority can stop Christ from saving his people through the

preaching of his word.

So we don't measure Christ's faithfulness by the ease of our circumstances. Never assume that hardship means the King has left you. Peter and John are in custody, but Christ is still reigning and the King cannot be silenced.

And because the arrest has not silenced the message, the rulers gather the highest religious authorities in Jerusalem to question the apostles.

2. The Question (v5-7)

2.1 The Rulers and the Council (v5-6)

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

In **verse 5** the sun comes up the next morning, and Luke sets an intimidating scene. He gathers the whole weight of Jerusalem's religious authority into one room. He tells us that the rulers, elders, and scribes gathered together. And in **verse 6** Luke does not just give us their official job titles. He begins naming the powerful men in the room. He names Annas, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and all who were of the high priestly family.

This is the same ruling establishment that had condemned Jesus. The leadership who thought they had dealt with the problem of Jesus are now gathered again because his name is being proclaimed openly in Jerusalem.

So on one side of this room stands all the religious power Jerusalem can assemble.

And who stands on the other side?

Two Galilean fishermen.

They had no rabbinic credentials, no political connections, no army, and no money.

If we judged this scene by outward appearance, this would be the most lopsided situation imaginable. And as these rulers looked on at Peter and John, the question of the hour is about to be asked.

Where does true authority actually reside?

Does it belong to the men who sat on the high courts of Jerusalem? Or does it belong to the risen King who sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven?

I can almost imagine I'm there with them, then in verse 7, this council leans forward and asks their question.

2.2 The Power and the Name (v7)

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?””

Verse 7 tells us they want to know the source. By what power was this man healed? In whose name, under whose authority, have Peter and John done this? Awakening Church, look at what's happening here.

The council thinks they are conducting a hostile interrogation. But without realizing it, they have just handed Peter the greatest gospel softball question imaginable.

What power? What name?

Peter could not have asked for a better opportunity to speak about Jesus Christ.

Now, most of us will never stand in a room like this. Peter and John are apostles standing before the highest religious court in Jerusalem after an undeniable apostolic sign. But we will have opportunities to speak about Christ. Someone may ask why you believe what you believe. Why your family lives differently. Why you still have hope in suffering. Why you refuse to bow to the idols of the age.

The circumstances will be different, and the questions will be different. But those questions

can become opportunities to point people to Jesus Christ.

And Awakening Church, this is where I want to put some steel into your spine.

When the opportunity comes to speak of Christ, do not hide him behind a vague answer.

This same Peter later writes in 1 Peter 3:15 “but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,”

I want us to be bold Christians, but Christian boldness is not rudeness. It’s not being obnoxious or trying to humiliate someone in an argument.

Christian boldness knows who Christ is and refuses to be ashamed of his name. So, you do not have to know the answer to every question. You do not have to be the smartest person in the room. But as a Christian, you should know the name of the One who saved you.

Here, the council asked about the power, and they asked about the name.

And as we move on, Peter is going to point them directly to Jesus Christ.

3. The Answer (v8-12)

3.1 The Spirit and the Healing (v8-9)

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

This is Simon Peter in **verse 8**! Just a few weeks earlier in a high priest's courtyard, this same man was so terrified of being associated with Jesus that he cowered before a servant girl and swore with an oath that he didn't even know him.

Now, look at him.

He is standing before the highest judicial council in the land, looking those same high priests dead in the eye without flinching.

What changed?

Peter didn't attend a seminar on public speaking or build up his confidence. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit!

This is the direct fulfillment of what Jesus promised in Luke 12:11–12 “And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.””

Jesus promised in Luke 21:15 that he would give his apostles a mouth and a wisdom that none of their adversaries could withstand or contradict.

The council thought they had the power advantage, but in that room stood Peter, a man filled with the third person of the Trinity.

And we get to look at the wisdom the Spirit gives Peter in **verse 9** because Peter begins by exposing the absolute absurdity of this trial.

He starts by saying... If we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man...

Peter is basically saying, Wait a minute... Let's make sure we are clear on what's happening here. Are we on trial for a crime? Did we rob someone? Did we start a riot? No, we're on trial for a good deed done to a crippled beggar!

A man who had been lame from birth is standing right beside them with working legs, and the supreme court of Israel has convened a session to put the apostles on trial!

Peter completely exposes the ridiculousness of their being arrested and questioned.

But that's not all Peter is doing, notice the word Peter uses at the end of verse 9 when he says, by what means this man has been healed...

The word translated “healed” comes from the same word Peter will use later in verse 12 for being saved. Here, in verse 9, the word describes this man’s physical healing. But Peter is

about to use that same word to speak about eternal salvation.

So, Peter hears their question about how this man's physical legs were rescued and restored, and he is already setting up a glorious gospel bridge. He is about to take their question about a physical healing and turn it toward eternal salvation.

The physical miracle was a living, breathing sermon illustration of the gospel. The rulers ask how one crippled man was made well. Peter is about to tell them how any guilty sinner can be saved, and he's going to tell them its all found in one name.

3.2 The Rejection and the Cornerstone (v10-11)

Acts 4:10–11 “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. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.”

In **verse 10** Peter answers their question directly with what I like to call being punched right in the face with the truth! You want to know the power? You want to know the name?

It's Jesus Christ of Nazareth!

And Peter, just to remove every shred of doubt or confusion, makes sure they understand exactly which Jesus he means because he added, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.

Awakening Church, look at the line in the sand Peter draws here.

On one side stands the verdict of sinful men... Away with him, Crucify him.

On the other side stands the eternal verdict of God... Death could not hold him!

And look at the courtroom floor, the healed man is standing right there beside them, living, undeniable proof of which verdict prevailed!

Then in **verse 11**, Peter delivers a devastating theological blow.

He quotes Psalm 118:22 “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

These religious rulers are the builders Peter is speaking about. They were entrusted with the law of God and the spiritual leadership of Israel. But when the promised Messiah came, they rejected him.

They examined Jesus. They judged him unfit. They condemned him and handed him over to death.

But their rejection didn’t determine Christ’s place. The stone they rejected has become the cornerstone.

So, through all of this, man can plot, man can scheme, and man can reject the Son of God. But man's rejection can’t stop the sovereign purpose of God. The stone discarded by the world is the very foundation of our eternal hope.

And as Peter moves on, he shows us that this cornerstone is not just a Savior. He’s the only Savior.

3.3 The Name and the Salvation (v12)

Acts 4:12 “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.””

So, Peter began with the physical healing of one man. This crippled man is standing before the council with working legs. But now Peter takes the council way beyond the healing of one man. The question is no longer simply, how was this crippled man made well?

The question becomes, how can any guilty sinner be saved? And Peter gives the only answer.

Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Awakening Church, I want to look carefully at how completely Peter wraps salvation around Jesus Christ in this verse.

First, salvation is found in a Person.

Peter says, there is salvation in no one else.

Salvation is not ultimately a system to understand, a denomination to be a part of, or a standard of goodness we have to reach, because salvation is found in a person. It is found in Jesus Christ himself.

And Peter makes sure we understand that it is found in this person alone.

“There is no other name under heaven.”

Jesus is not one Savior among many. He is not the best option for people who happen to prefer Christianity. He is not one path among several paths that eventually lead to God.

There is no other name.

And then notice where this Savior came from... Peter says this name has been given among men.

Man did not climb his way up to God and discover a way of salvation. God gave the Savior. God provided the name. God has given sinful men the only one who can save them.

And then Peter makes it personal. By which we must be saved.

Don't miss that pronoun. Peter doesn't say, by which you must be saved. He says, we.

Peter puts himself in the same place as the rulers standing in front of him. The apostle together with the high priest. We all stand before a holy God as sinners who need what only Jesus Christ possesses.

And then finally, Peter says we MUST be saved.

We don't just need a little advice. We don't simply need to become better versions of

ourselves. We need our sins forgiven. We need to be reconciled to God. We need to be rescued from the judgment we deserve.

We need salvation.

And that salvation is found in Jesus Christ because Jesus alone has done what sinners could never do for themselves.

Jesus alone lived the righteous life that we have failed to live.

Jesus alone bore the wrath our sins deserve.

Jesus alone rose from the dead victorious over sin and death.

Jesus alone is the rejected stone whom God has made the cornerstone.

Awakening Church, this isn't arrogance. This is mercy.

Don't let the world force you onto neutral ground when Peter gives us none.

Someone may say, "You only believe that because you were born in America. If you were born in China or India, you would probably believe something different."

Maybe so, where we are born influences what we're taught. But geography doesn't determine what's true.

Or someone may say, "So you're saying you're right and billions of other people are wrong?"

No. I'm telling you what Peter says. There is salvation in no one else.

The question isn't whether I'm smarter than everyone else or whether Christianity is my preferred religion. The question is whether Jesus Christ really died and really rose from the dead. Because if Christ is risen, we don't get to put him on a shelf beside every other religious option and call them equal.

There is no neutral ground here.

And if there really is only one Savior for guilty sinners, telling people his name isn't arrogance.

It's mercy.

If there were another Savior, Peter would tell them. If sinners could stand before God by their own goodness, religion, sincerity, or effort, Peter would tell them.

But there is no other name.

Do we see how completely Peter wraps salvation around Jesus Christ?

Salvation is in no one else.

There is no other name.

God has given that name among men.

And every one of us must be saved through him.

Take Christ away, and there is no salvation left.

But give me Christ, and you have given me the only Savior God has given under heaven among men.

And now Luke shows us what happens when Peter proclaims that name before the men who tried to silence it.

4. The Threat (v13-22)

4.1 The Boldness and the Evidence (v13-14)

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. But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition.”

First in **verse 13**, they saw the boldness of Peter and John. Sometimes I think we confuse boldness for being loud or obnoxious. That word boldness doesn’t mean that at all. It means they had open, plain spoken courage. These two spoke with fearless and forthright speech.

They know exactly who these rulers are. But they speak the truth of Christ clearly, directly, and without flinching.

The second thing the council sees is one of the most beautiful lines in scripture. They recognized that they had been with Jesus. These men had walked with Jesus during his earthly ministry, they had heard him teach, they had watched him face these same authorities. And now they are speaking with the same fearlessness because they belong to the same King.

Awakening Church, do you ever read a verse in the bible and your heart cries out, God, make this true of me? This is one of those verses for me.

I want this for my own life. I want this for our elders. I want this for every single one of you sitting in this room. I want our neighbors, our coworkers, our spouses, and our children to look at how we live, how we love, how we handle suffering, and how we speak, how we FIGHT sin, and I want them to think, that man, that woman, has been with Jesus.

Then Luke gives us another detail in **verse 14**, the healed man is standing beside them. The council can question Peter’s credentials and it can dislike Peter’s theology. But it can’t deny the man standing in front of it. This man had been lame from birth. He had spent more than 40 years unable to walk and everybody knew him. Now he stands beside the apostles with working legs.

So, what's the result of all this? The council was astonished, and it had nothing to say in opposition.

The boldness of the witnesses and the evidence of the miracle are both standing right in front of them. They can’t deny what Christ has done, and they can’t explain away the men proclaiming it.

The council has no answer. The King cannot be silenced.

Now look at what happens when the council orders the room cleared...

4.2 The Council and the Command (v15-18)

Acts 4:15–18 “But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, 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. 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.” So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.”

They send Peter, John, and the healed man out of the room in **verse 15**. They need to confer privately because they have no answer to give publicly.

And look at what they say behind closed doors in **verse 16**, a notable sign has been performed through them. Nobody in that room questions whether the miracle was real. They don't say, maybe it was a trick or maybe this man was faking it. They openly admit that a notable, supernatural sign has taken place right in front of the entire city, and they state plainly that they can't deny it.

But here is the tragedy of unbelief, their problem is not a lack of evidence, their problem is what the evidence means. Their problem is what the evidence demands they believe about Jesus.

The healed man stands as powerful confirmation of the apostles testimony that the risen Christ is working through them. It shouts that Jesus Christ of Nazareth has been raised from the dead and reigns with authority. And rather than bowing before the truth standing in front of them, the council begins looking for a way to keep anyone else from hearing it, they want to silence the King.

In **verse 17** we get their plan, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name, and in **verse 18** they bring them back in and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

Awakening Church, this passage exposes the deepest root of unbelief. This council shows us that the ultimate problem goes deeper than intellect. The ultimate problem is moral. Paul writes in Romans 1:18, that fallen man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness.

These rulers didn't need more data. They had a living miracle standing in the room. Their problem was not that the truth was unclear. Their problem was what the truth demanded. If Jesus is alive, they would have to repent of their rejection of him, surrender their pride, and acknowledge that their authority stands beneath his.

We see this still today, although some questions and confusion are real, scripture does not allow us to treat unbelief as spiritually neutral. This council shows us that reality clearly. The healed man is standing right there. They admit they can't deny the sign, but the truth threatens their pride and control. So they don't bow before Christ. They try to silence his name.

The Sanhedrin used legal force to coerce silence. Our circumstances are usually different, the modern world uses apathy, distraction, or social pressure. Different methods, but the same underlying desire to keep the King silent.

And before we point our fingers at the Sanhedrin, we should examine ourselves. Are there places where we are tempted to do something similar?

God's word confronts a sin we love, so we avoid the passage. A sermon presses too closely on your conscience, so you find another teacher who will tell you what you want to hear.

We may never go so far as to command an apostle to stop preaching, but our sinful hearts can still want the voice of Scripture turned down when it threatens something we don't want to surrender. That's the collision taking place in this room.

The council has authority.

But Jesus has greater authority.

The council's authority has directly collided with the authority of the risen King. The council has given its command, don't speak, don't teach, don't use the name of Jesus. And Peter and John have to decide which authority they will obey.

4.3 The Witnesses and the Release (v19-22)

Acts 4:19–22 “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, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” 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. For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.”

Look at how Peter and John respond to this council in **verse 19**. They look the rulers right in the eyes and say, Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge.

Peter and John are standing in a long line of faithful saints throughout redemptive history.

- We see this with the Hebrew midwives who feared God and defied Pharaoh's decree to save innocent baby boys in Exodus 1.
- We see this with Rahab who hid the covenant spies from the king of Jericho in Joshua 2.
- And we see this with Daniel who continued to pray to God despite the king's royal decree in Daniel 6.

Scripture gives us this pattern again and again. God’s people need to know that no earthly magistrate has the right to command them to disobey God. Earthly rulers possess real derived authority, but not ultimate authority. This doesn’t mean that Christians can disobey authority whenever we dislike a law or find obedience inconvenient. But when human authority commands what God forbids, or forbids what God commands, we must obey God rather than men.

So, in **verse 20** they continue with their “counter offer”... we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard. They walked with Jesus, they saw his miracles, they watched him die on a Roman cross, and they saw him alive three days later! They have received his royal commission to go and proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth, and no threat from a human court has the power to silence the risen King!

Then we look at what happens in **verse 21**, the council threatens them further and lets them go, finding no way to punish them because of the people.

I love this. All the people are praising God for what has happened. The public work of God has restrained these rulers from doing what they want to do. This doesn't mean that a godly people will make persecution impossible. We know this because the apostles will face persecution again. But it does show us that what a people loves, praises, and condemns can restrain what wicked rulers are able to do. This text gives us a small picture of what happens when the gospel has public consequences. When a people begins to recognize and praise the work of God, rulers can't act as though those people don't exist.

The gospel doesn't just change private hearts. It creates a people who love what God loves, praise what God has done, and increasingly refuse to celebrate what God condemns. And that kind of public righteousness can have an effect, even for the restraining of evil in a society.

Luke ends the entire exchange in **verse 22** with a reminder of where it started. The man was more than forty years old. So, this was not a temporary injury... This man had spent decades unable to walk. Everyone knew his former condition, and now everyone could see his present condition.

The longer his history of helplessness, the more undeniable the miracle became. We don't know why God allows every particular season of suffering to last as long as it does. But we know that not one second of it is outside his sovereign purpose!

Those forty years of helplessness became the undeniable stage on which the power and glory of King Jesus would shine for all the city to see.

5. Application And Call To Christ

Awakening Church, stand in that council room one last time before we come to the Table

together for the Lord's Supper.

They tried to silence Jesus by killing him... God raised him.

They tried to silence his witnesses by threatening them... the witnesses kept speaking.

They tried to silence his name... but here we are, two thousand years later, still gathered in his name.

The King cannot be silenced.

But maybe the question for us is this. Have you been trying to silence him?

Maybe not openly. But when his word confronts the sin you love, do you submit, or do you look for a way around it? What do you love more than obedience to Christ?

Your comfort?

Your reputation?

The approval of other people?

Awakening Church, bring all that to the foot of the cross. He is risen, he is reigning, and in him is salvation.

And if you are not in Christ, come to him.

There is salvation in no one else.

Jesus Christ lived the righteous life you have failed to live.

He bore the wrath your sins deserve.

He rose from the dead.

You need a Savior.

Turn from your sin and trust in Christ.

And Christian, do not hide his name. Maybe one of the places we need to hear that the most is not the street corner or the public square.

Maybe it's our homes.

Because some of the most tragic silence happens where no one is even threatening us.

No council has gathered.

No one has commanded us to stop speaking.

No one is going to arrest us.

But how easily the name of Jesus can disappear from the quiet moments before bed, from the dinner table, from the small hours of the morning.

How often are we silent when nobody has even asked us to be?

Brothers and sisters, fill your homes with the name of Jesus.

Speak of him in your marriages. Speak of him to your children. Read his word. Pray together. Sing of Christ. Let the name the world wants silenced be the sweetest and most familiar name in your home.

And then let that name overflow from our homes into our days, our weeks, our workplaces, our neighborhoods, and our lives.

Remember what we saw in verse 21. The rulers wanted to punish the apostles, but all around them was a people praising God for what he had done.

Awakening Church, by God's grace, let's labor to produce that kind of people.

Let's raise children, in our homes and in this church, who know the works of God and praise him for them. Let's build homes where Christ is spoken of so naturally and so often that our children grow up knowing there is no such thing as a world where Jesus is irrelevant. Let's be

a church that loves what God loves, praises what God has done, and is not ashamed to do it publicly.

In just a moment we are going to come to the Lord's Table. And even here the church does what the world can't stop.

We proclaim Christ.

Paul says that as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

So let the world convene its councils.

Let the world command its silence.

The King is alive! And the King cannot be silenced!

All glory be to Christ our King.

6. Questions For Study

Please be encouraged to use these questions for reflection throughout the week and Awakening discipleship group discussions.

1. The council didn't deny the healing, but it still refused to bow before Christ. We saw that unbelief is fundamentally a moral problem instead of just an intellectual one. In what ways do you try to silence the voice of the King in your own conscience when his word directly confronts a sin, habit, or lifestyle choice that you cherish? How do you fight this?
2. Peter showed that the resurrection means God's verdict overrules man's verdict. How does Christ's resurrection shape the way you view opposition, suffering, setbacks, and

apparent failure in your Christian life? Where are you tempted to measure Christ's faithfulness by the ease of your circumstances?

3. Our text was clear that salvation is found in no one else but Jesus Christ. Why is this claim not arrogance but instead mercy? How should the exclusivity of Christ produce both conviction and compassion in the way we speak with unbelieving family members, coworkers, neighbors, and friends?
4. The council recognized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. When pressure comes in your marriage, home, workplace, or relationships, what naturally spills out of you? What would need to change for others to see clearer evidence that you belong to the risen King?"
5. Peter and John honored the council's real authority, but refused its command because it contradicted Christ's command. How are we supposed to distinguish faithful submission to earthly authorities from necessary obedience to God rather than men? What lesser authorities, loves, comforts, fears, or desires are most likely to compete with your obedience to Christ?

Questions for small children during family devotion:

Please be encouraged to use these questions in family devotion throughout the week, especially for young minds learning about Christ.

1. Why were Peter and John arrested?
Parent guided answer: They were arrested because they were telling people that Jesus had risen from the dead. The rulers didn't want people to hear about Jesus.
2. How many ways are there for our sins to be forgiven and for us to go to heaven?
Parent guided answer: There is only one way! The bible tells us that there is no other name under heaven that can save us except Jesus. We can't save ourselves by being good. Only Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose from the grave to save us when we trust in him.
3. Were the rulers able to silence Peter and John?

Parent guided answer: No. They killed Jesus, but God raised him from the dead. They threatened Peter and John, but Peter and John kept telling people about Jesus. King Jesus cannot be silenced.

4. Why were Peter and John so brave when the rulers told them to stop talking about Jesus?

Parent guided answer: Peter and John were brave because they were filled with the Holy Spirit. When the rulers told them to disobey God, Peter and John knew that we must always obey God first.

5. What should we do when we have an opportunity to talk about Jesus?

Parent guided answer: We should not be ashamed of Jesus. We should speak about him with kindness, wisdom, and love. We can tell others that Jesus is the risen King and the only Savior.