

What if the name of Jesus carries far more weight than we have ever truly grasped? In this deeply searching exploration of Acts 4, we are invited to reconsider something we may think we already know. Peter and John, ordinary and unschooled men, stand before the most powerful religious authorities of their day and speak with a boldness that leaves their accusers speechless. The source of that boldness is not their education or their status. It is a name. But not just any name. Drawing a stunning line from Philippians 2 through the Greek translation of the Old Testament, we discover that the name above every name, the name before which every knee will bow, carries the meaning that Jesus Christ is Yahweh, the great I Am of the Old Testament. The angel who appeared to Joseph did not say God would use this child to save people from their sins. He said the child himself, whose very name means Yahweh saves, would do it. This is not a small theological footnote. It is the cornerstone of everything. And it raises a question that cuts right to the heart of where each of us stands: we may believe in God in a general sense, but do we believe in this God, the one who came in the flesh, was crucified, and rose again? Because according to Acts 4, there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.

Title: The Name Above All Names and the Fullness of the Spirit

Sermon Summary: In this message from Acts 4, worship director John explores two central themes impressed upon him by Jesus: the profound meaning of Jesus' name and what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Drawing from the account of Peter and John standing before the Sanhedrin after healing a lame man, the sermon unpacks the staggering truth that the name of Jesus is rooted in the Hebrew name Yeshua, meaning "Yahweh saves," revealing that Jesus Christ is Yahweh God in the flesh. The sermon then turns to the question of Spirit-filled living, arguing that being filled with the Holy Spirit is not a formula but a posture of surrender and presence before God. Just as Peter spoke with miraculous boldness before the religious rulers, believers today are invited to empty themselves of self-reliance and remain in Christ so that the Spirit may overflow through them. The sermon closes with a call to salvation, baptism, and a communal commitment to pursue the fullness of the Holy Spirit together.

Key Points:

- The name of Jesus is rooted in the Hebrew Yeshua, meaning "Yahweh saves," revealing that Jesus Christ is Yahweh God incarnate
- The Greek word Kyrios, translated as "Lord" in Philippians 2, is the same word used to translate Yahweh in the Greek Old Testament, making the confession "Jesus Christ is Lord" equivalent to declaring "Jesus Christ is Yahweh"
- You cannot claim to believe in the God of the Bible while rejecting Jesus, because Jesus and the Father are one
- Salvation is found in no one else and in no other name, as declared in Acts 4:12
- Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not a formula but a miraculous act of the Spirit that occurs when a believer is emptied of self and surrendered to God

- The pattern throughout Acts shows that being filled with the Spirit is consistently followed by bold proclamation of God's Word
- Being present, being surrendered, and being with God's people are the three key postures that prepare a believer to be filled with the Spirit
- Sin is fundamentally a choice to operate separately from God rather than remaining in Him
- The early church in Acts 4 did not pray for protection from threats but for boldness to continue speaking God's Word, reflecting complete surrender to God's will
- The Holy Spirit speaks only what He receives from Jesus, meaning the Spirit-filled believer speaks the words of Christ in the moment they are needed

Stories:

- The healing of the lame man at the temple gate in Acts 3 serves as the backdrop for the entire sermon, as this miracle prompted the confrontation between Peter and John and the Sanhedrin in Acts 4
- Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi, where he declared Jesus to be the Messiah and Son of the living God, is referenced to illustrate the significance of recognizing who Jesus truly is, and Jesus' response that the gates of Hades would not overcome His church
- The Pharisees accusing Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebul in Matthew 12 is cited as a parallel to the Sanhedrin questioning Peter and John about the source of their power and authority
- The Apostle John's vision of the risen Christ on the island of Patmos from Revelation 1 is used to affirm that Jesus is exactly who He claimed to be
- A water and bottle illustration was used during the sermon to demonstrate the concept of being full of self versus being submerged in and filled by the presence of God
- The tradition of Peter being crucified upside down at the end of his life is mentioned as a testament to the cost and depth of his declaration that Jesus is Lord
- The speaker shares his own personal story of growing up in a tradition that did not believe in the ongoing miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit and how God led him on a journey that brought him to lead worship in a church that embraces the present-day work of the Spirit

Here is a list of all scripture references mentioned or alluded to in the sermon:

Acts 2 (general reference to the 120 disciples and Pentecost events)

Acts 3, 4 (general reference to the healing of the lame man), John 15:4-5

John 15:22-24, John 16:1-2, John 16:13-15

Matthew 1:21, Matthew 10:1, 7-8, Matthew 12:24-28

Mark 16:15-20, Philippians 2:5-11, Isaiah 45:22-23, Revelation 1:14-17, Romans 10:9

Deuteronomy 6:5

Matthew 16:13-18 (Peter's confession and Jesus naming him the rock)

Matthew 22:37-38 (the greatest commandment, love the Lord your God)

John 15-17 (general reference to these three chapters as context)

John 21:25 (John's closing statement about the works of Jesus filling the world with books)
Exodus 20:2-3 (the first commandment)
Acts 2:41 (3,000 added in one day)
Acts 2:47 (the Lord adding daily to their number)

John shares that understanding Jesus as Yahweh moved something from his head to a deeper place in his heart -- what is the difference between knowing a truth intellectually and truly experiencing it at a heart level, and how has that shift happened for you in your own faith journey?

Peter and John prayed not for protection from threats but for boldness to keep speaking -- what does this reveal about their priorities, and how does it challenge the way you typically respond when your faith puts you at risk?

John describes being filled with the Spirit as requiring you to first be emptied of yourself, much like the water bottle illustration -- what are the things in your life that most often keep you full of yourself and resistant to that emptying?

The religious leaders witnessed the healed man standing right in front of them and still chose to reject Jesus -- what does this tell us about the difference between seeing evidence and truly surrendering to belief, and where might you be doing the same?

John points out that the Sadducees rejected the resurrection while the Pharisees accepted it, yet both groups ultimately rejected Jesus -- how can theological knowledge or religious practice become a barrier to genuine encounter with God?

Acts 4 describes the early church as being of one heart and mind, with members selling possessions to meet each other's needs -- what would it look like practically for a modern church community to live that way, and what would it cost you personally?

John draws a connection between sin and separation from God rather than framing it primarily as a list of prohibited behaviors -- how does thinking about sin as chosen separation rather than rule-breaking change the way you approach repentance and relationship with God?

Jesus told His disciples in John 16 that the Spirit would only speak what He hears from Jesus -- what does it mean for your prayer life and decision-making to believe that the Holy Spirit is actively communicating the will of Jesus to you in real time?

John reflects on growing up in a tradition that did not believe the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were still active today, and yet he now leads a Spirit-filled congregation -- how open are you to having your theological assumptions reshaped by personal encounter with God, and what would that require of you?

The name Jesus means Yahweh saves, and Philippians 2 declares that every tongue will confess Jesus Christ is Lord, the same word used to translate Yahweh in the Greek Old Testament -- how does understanding the full weight of who Jesus is change the way you approach praying, speaking, or acting in His name?