



## **MEN OF COURAGE**

**“It’s All In the NAME”**

*Acts 4:1-12*

September 6, 2015

### **The Persecution Over the Name Vs 1-3**

*John 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 16:13; James 1:2–3*

Difficulty is the Soil From Which True Faith Blossoms

### **The Profession of the Name Vs 4**

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*Matthew 10:17-20; Mark 13:11; Luke 21:12-15; John 15:18-16:4*

### **The Power & Proclamation of the Name Vs 8b-11**

*Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 21:42; Luke 17:20; 1 Peter 2:6-8*

### **The Priority & Problem of the Name Vs 12**

*John 10:7-9; John 3:16; 14:6; 2 Corinthians 2:14–17; Philippians 2:9–11*

Jesus is the Only Way of Salvation.

## **MEN OF COURAGE**

“It’s All in the Name”

*Acts 4:1-12*

September 6, 2015 A.M. Service

We start a new section today of Acts and we have focused on the early days of the Church and the launch of the Church, and the mission control and their leaving earth and now this morning we turn our attention to how the Lord works through specific individuals in the life of the Church and how they displayed incredible courage as they relied on the Holy Spirit to embolden them.

We think about the incredible courage of those men who went into space and getting into a ship that was attached to a rocket! They went places that people had never been before and no sure they would survive and there were people who died in the space days.

We see some connections to help us think about these men of courage starting with Peter and John today.

**ILLUS: It’s all in who you know and whose name you drop!**

We now turn our eyes to see something that had no yet happened to the church and that was conflict – people in the culture were saying hold on, this isn’t what we want to hear, this isn’t the message we want proclaimed and all over a name!! The question rolling around the room this morning is do you want to be a person of courage? Most of us would say yes, but what does that mean. We will take a look! Courage requires confrontation before you see it! We want courage but we don’t want the confrontation in our lives – but that simply cannot happen!

**The Persecution Over the Name Vs 1-3**

**John 15:18-20**

Whenever God blesses, Satan shows up to oppose the work and silence the witness; and often he uses religious people to do his work. The same crowd that opposed the ministry of Jesus Christ also opposed the work of the Apostles, and they will oppose our ministry today. Expect it - but don't let it stop you! The important thing is not that we are comfortable, but that the name of the Lord is glorified through the preaching of the Gospel.

It says that while they were speaking, they came upon them, not just lightly but with force, with swiftness.

**Who** – the Sadducees, captain of the guard, and the priests Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots all made up what is called the Sanhedrin – the Jewish Supreme Court if you will. The focus here is on the Sadducees because they instigated this – captain of the guard and the high priest were all Sanhedrin so they were the most dominant. Sadducees – They were the smallest but most powerful, mostly aristocratic, wealthy landowners. They were compromisers with the Romans but most conservative rejecting the oral traditions of the Pharisees and considered only the written Torah of the Pentateuch as valid. They also denied the resurrection of the dead nor any future rewards or punishment, angels and the spirit world.

**Why?**

Who were these untrained disciples to be teaching people? Who authorized them to teach anybody?

Most importantly they were proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead whom they had labeled as a blasphemer!

And this talk of Messiah was a sign that things would change, and they wanted nothing to change because that would upset their power, their control and their authority. They had no problems dealing with the Romans because it left them in power and with great wealth. They were willing to accommodate them and tolerate them even though they didn't like them. They wanted nothing to upset the apple cart, yet here these disciples were upsetting it big time! Let's keep everything just like it is. They wanted to avoid confrontation with the Romans at all cost! So their response to them was more political than theological. They wanted to nip this in the bud before it got out of control and the Romans got involved.

**Great question to ask ourselves – what is our Church like?** Is it more like what the Sanhedrin wanted or is it more like the Christ Followers and the early church? One was protective and defensive and one was powerful and dynamic. One believed it was appointed to preserve the past, keep the peace and maintain the status quo, the other

believed it was called to communicate the love of God, witness the miraculous intervention of his power and to live in the resources of His persistent presence. One was maintained for preservation and the other was maintained by prayer. One was based on what God had given long before the other on what God was doing right then. One was symbolized by boredom and blandness, the other by great boldness. I do believe we have a deep desire to not keep the things the way they are because they are comfortable or convenient but instead we desire for the Lord to continue to do a transforming work in us and though we will never change the message, we sometimes have to change the way in which we present the message so people will listen and understand and comprehend it and ultimately respond to it.

**Notice the thread, in Jesus is woven throughout the book of Acts and that is really what upsets them more than anything.** Here they are again dealing with the Jesus and they hoped they were done with Him, even after His resurrection, they had squelched that they thought with the story of his body being stolen but now they were facing His disciples and they sounded, acted, and responded just like Jesus had! They were enraged and really couldn't believe it! They knew they had to do something because they were growing at a rapid pace!

#### **The Leaders make a decision** *Vs 3*

- To have them arrested and put in jail overnight  
Too late to take them to council, not really sure what to do
- Also give them to think, rally the troops to get ready

#### **Difficulty is the soil from which true faith blossoms.**

*1 Corinthians 16:13; James 1:2-3; 2 Timothy 3:12*

**ILLUS: Bishop Sheen** – “One advantage of being thrown onto your back is that you face heaven. **Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote** from his cell in 1937 – “Suffering... is the badge of a true Christian. The disciple is not above his master. Discipleship means allegiance to the suffering of Christ and it is therefore not at all surprising that Christians should be called upon to suffer.”

**ILLUS: Jailed Kentucky Clerk**

Let it be clear that you can pay a price for taking a stand!! Students in your school, adults in your workplace, family, neighborhood, wherever! Be courageous and stand firm in the Lord!

It is in these moments where our faith deepens and grows where it would never grow when things are going just “perfect”.

Again, we have talked about the decline of Christianity in America and there are more “nones” than ever before but as others have said and I would agree, that perhaps the line is finally being drawn and people who claim the name are actually living in the power of that name! It’s not

### **The Profession of the Name Vs 4**

#### **The People make a decision Vs 4**

Even in the face of this persecution, 2000 were saved that day. Huge, it did not stop these people from making a decision even in watching the very ones that explained it to them taken away to jail, they still wanted to be saved! The very thing that they thought they could stop by intervening but it only proved to be in vain!

The power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit’s conviction on display! When people are hungry, the truth is being preached, and people see people living out the gospel, things will happen, and nothing will keep them from coming to Christ, not even the threat of persecution.

So we now see this number well over 5,000 of what was recorded but many scholars believe it was far above that number because remember earlier we saw that it said that the Lord was adding to their number daily so it had to be more than 5,000 believers.

By the way, let the focus be on what is happening – not on the conflict and allow this conflict to hamper or even stop what they were doing!

### **The Promise the Name Brings Vs 5-8a**

What the Council was thinking and feeling?

This same council was the very one that had faced Jesus.

You have to wonder what they were thinking, I thought that we were rid of this bunch, this Jesus and his followers, and now here they are!

Great hatred, fear, anger, wrath, vengeful, we have got to this right

Notice the question, they want to know by what power or authority and by what name did you do “this”. They would not even refer to the

miracle that had taken place. But take note, the man who had been healed was present as a witness!

Was that really the question, no. But that is what they asked, who gave you the authority or permission to do this? How ridiculous to us that sounds!

### **They were Filled with the Spirit** Vs 8a

[Ephesians 5:18](#); [Colossians 3:16](#)

This is critical and what allowed them to respond the way that they did. When I look back on my life I wonder why I reacted a certain way or said what I did, many times it was because I was not full of the spirit. I was full of something but not the Spirit. And let's be clear too, this was not just some one time thing, but instead was a part of their daily lives.

The question begs us – are we being filled with the Spirit?

What the disciples were feeling and thinking

Facing the very council that had Jesus crucified

Notice too, it was no surprise really to them, I would have to think that sitting in that jail Peter and John were talking about this. Remember back to what Jesus told us, we didn't understand it then, but we get it now. He told us they would hate us and reject us because of Him.

[Matthew 10:17-20](#); [Mark 13:11](#); [Luke 21:12-15](#); [John 15:18-16:4](#)

Here the words they needed would come flowing forth, perhaps even at times surprising themselves at what they said. Here were these untrained and uneducated men speaking to these educated and trained men in ways that were astounding! How? They were full of the Spirit of God. Too often we try do things in our own strength and power and we fall flat on our faces!

This is the key to it all right here, don't miss this, and we have touched upon this before. Was it because they had said the right prayer, gone to church gone to LifeGroups, on and on. NO!!!

Filled, meaning he was already yielded to the Spirit, walking in obedience, the Spirit had control of his life, and here a fresh wave of that Spirit fills him and we will watch the power of God on display even further. This yielding is what releases His power to the believer!

It was a daily thing for them, walking in the power of the Holy Spirit

## The Power & Proclamation of the Name Vs 8b-11

### The Message of the Disciples Vs 8b-12

- Inquiry Answered

Since you have asked, we will tell you how this man was healed, and here they almost accuse them of why are you so concerned that we healed this lame man? Really knowing again that was not the issue, and so Peter goes straight to the heart. Peter doesn't waste an open door to share the Gospel? **Are we willing to walk through the open doors the Lord gives to us?**

Peter doesn't really give them what they wanted – a defense – but instead he preaches a sermon!! We didn't heal this man, this man was made well so that you and all the people of Israel will know it was by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth! God had a plan and a purpose of not only healing this man both physically and spiritually, but was also for the benefit of the many who would see it and believe!

- Indictment Given

Here Peter goes further Filled with the spirit here, he seizes the moment, filled with boldness He tells them not only is it Him, you crucified Him, but God raised Him from the dead to show His was the Messiah. Then he quotes from [Psalm 118:22](#); [Isaiah 28:16](#); [Matthew 21:42](#); [Luke 17:20](#); [I Peter 2:6-8](#) , he was the chief corner stone that you rejected. You missed it. It is right there in the Old Testament, the fulfillment of prophecy has taken place and you missed it. But hear he tells them the truth, does not shy away from it and then tells them what they can do about it. By the way, Peter is taking the Word of God and applying it to their situation. The Word of God has something to say in our daily lives!

## The Priority & Problem of the Name Vs 12

Inclusiveness Rejected [John 10:7-9](#); [John 3:16](#); [14:6](#); [2 Corinthians 2:14-17](#); [Philippians 2:9-11](#)

It is all about the name of Jesus, it is not anything we could have done, or wished we could have done, it by the Name, the name of Jesus There was a huge push that started then and it's still here today – we are fine if we talk about God but not when we bring Jesus into the mix or to

say what Peter says – it is this name that brings salvation!

We must be careful not be obnoxious or prideful about it either! -

Humility is called for because it's what Jesus did in us!

They could have answered and said God did it and they would have answered this inquiry they had and perhaps it would have been done but they were not about to compromise and they answered in boldness!

This is as clear as it gets, and here Peter wanted them to know as well just as today there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved!

### Our Response:

- Have you responded to that name of Jesus Christ for salvation? Have you been made whole? The Word is clear, today is the day for salvation and there is no other name under heaven by which men must be saved.
- Are you connected to the body of Christ, have stepped over the line and said, I don't want to just be on the sideline, but I want to be in the battle! You can, and I urge you to that today.
- Christian are you daily being filled by the Spirit, are you walking with a yield sign over your life? Or are you in control, yielding only when it is convenient, easy, or makes you feel good, or if you like the situation or person?
- Christian are you and I sharing the gospel with people as we should? Are we bold, the key: being filled with the Spirit. Some of us are scared to share, what will I say, will I mess it up, not a chance because the Word promises us that He will give us what we need to share in that moment.
- We need to be careful that we are not like the Sadducees, this is my church, we want and like it this way, we have always done it this way, I don't want to lose control, don't want change, but instead to yield to the Spirit, and if we get there and I get there sometimes, I am reminded, this is not my church, my job, my people, my class, my position, it is all about GOD! If we forget that we are in great trouble! Let's be careful!