

3. They Had Been With Jesus

At this point the council had little choice. They could not deny a miracle had occurred, for the lame man stood before them. Peter and John hadn't presented clever arguments, but they had boldly spoken the truth.

Even though they were ordinary men, what did their accusers recognize about Peter and John that made them unique? (Acts 4:13)

2 Corinthians 2:14 NLT - 14 But thank God! He has made us his captives and continues to lead us along in Christ's triumphal procession. Now he uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere, like a sweet perfume.

We are marked by the places where we linger. Just as the odor of a campfire clings to you, so do the hallmarks of the places you spend the most time. If we want to spread the sweet perfume of Christ, we won't let the odor of anything else overpower Him. When people see, or hear you, do they recognize you as one who has been with Jesus or is something else masking Christ's fragrance in your life?

WRAP-UP

The council did not know what to do to stop Peter and John from spreading the news of Jesus. They attempted to stop them by demanding that they never again speak or teach about Jesus. But the truth of the Gospel would not be stopped, because when you've been with Jesus you cannot stop telling everything you have seen and heard about Him.

Memory Verse

There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved." - Acts 4:12 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: _____

Challenge-

Find ways to increase the time you spend in God's presence this week so that you will carry His fragrance with you wherever you go.

"Jesus is Lord" **Book of Acts – Week #5**

INTRODUCTION

The newly formed church was off and growing, but it wasn't without controversy or opposition. Peter and John had healed the lame man, and many who witnessed it came to believe. But now they were arrested and brought before the religious council. For the followers of Christ, the guiding declaration that "Jesus is Lord" dictated every aspect of their lives. No matter what challenges they faced this was one truth they clung to and would sacrifice their lives to follow.

Key Passage

Acts 4:1-13 NLT - 1 While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. 2 These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. 3 They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning. 4 But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of believers now totaled about 5,000 men, not counting women and children. 5 The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met in Jerusalem. 6 Annas the high priest was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest. 7 They brought in the two disciples and demanded, "By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of our people, 9 are we being questioned today because we've done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? 10 Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. 11 For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says, 'The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.' 12 There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved." 13 The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

1. By What Power, in Whose Name

Peter and John's declaration that Jesus was raised from the dead and their demonstration of His power to heal was a challenge to many, especially to the Sadducees; a powerful religious party of wealthy aristocrats who denied the resurrection of the dead. The kingdom of God was confronting the kingdom of this earth. As they stood before the high priest, he asked, "By what power or in whose name, have you done this?" The question was a trap because if Peter answered "Jesus" then he would be guilty of blasphemy.

This was not the first time Peter was asked to declare who Jesus was. How had he responded to that question in Matthew 16?

Matthew 16:13, 16 NLT - 13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ... 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

But Peter had not always been eager to proclaim Jesus publicly. *What was predicted and fulfilled about Peter in Luke chapter 22?*

Luke 22:33-34 NLT - 33 Peter said, "Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you, and even to die with you." 34 But Jesus said, "Peter, let me tell you something. Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me."

But when Peter began to speak before the council there was a significant difference noted in Act 4:8; he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Peter made an "in your face" statement that left no doubt. And he didn't stop at in whose power and by whose name the man was healed. What else did Peter declare before his accusers?

2. The Impossibility of Coexistence

Throughout our lives we must evaluate our own response to the question of "Who is Jesus?". The powerful and controversial statement by Peter left no room for compromise or accommodation. *"There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name*

under heaven by which we must be saved." This is the hard truth of the Gospel; Jesus is an all or nothing proposition.

Pastor David said, "Everything that wants to be Lord in our lives or convince us that IT is our savior, over and above Jesus, will fight with all the power hell can muster to hang on to our lives."

Before accepting Jesus as Lord, many of us had other "saviors" which contended for our devotion. What are some of the other "lords" that you have battled that promised to be your savior? Which do you think generally have the strongest hold on people?

John 14:6 NLT - 6 Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

The implication of Peter's statement not only applies to us personally, it also applies to us culturally. It is unlikely we will be jailed for our beliefs, but our beliefs may result in a different type of persecution. Western society strongly encourages accommodation of other beliefs as equally valid. While others have an undeniable right to accept any belief they choose, it does not mean that we have to agree with its validity. All roads don't lead to heaven. In fact, Jesus plainly said there is no way to God except through Him. (Jon 14:6)

In light of this truth of the Gospel, we may find Christians landing over a wide spectrum of reactions to those of other faiths.

At one extreme we might be so eager not to offend that we try to coexist with other faiths, agreeing with their followers that their way is as good as any.

At the other extreme, we may treat anyone who isn't a Christian as an enemy of our faith.

Neither is likely to result in the person's salvation. What is the fallacy in each of these extremes positions and why does it fall short?

If you are in a conversation with someone who is seeking salvation apart from Jesus, what do they need to hear from you? What should be your motivation when you share the Gospel?