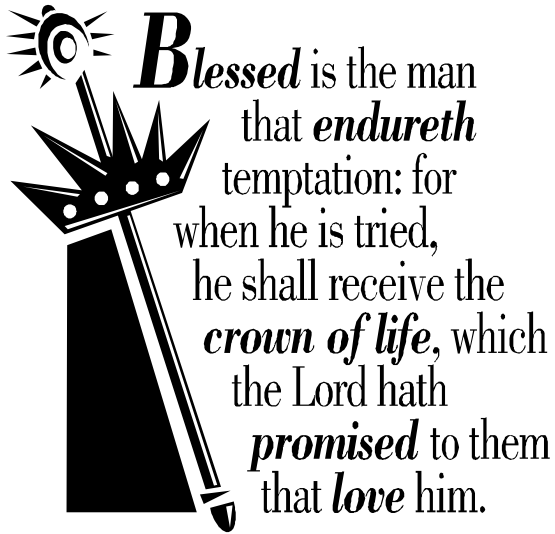


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS
LESSON 6



J a m e s 1 : 1 2 K J V

PETER AND JOHN THREATENED

Scripture Text: Acts 4:1-22

Last week we studied about the miraculous healing of a lame man and Peter's sermon to the crowd that witnessed it. Today we study the results this had on the religious leaders.

The church did not begin as a weak effort. Three thousand were won on Pentecost, five thousand now. All Jerusalem knew of this miracle of healing. The people glorified God for it. Public opinion so favored the church that the rulers dared not punish Peter and John. Being a Christian does not show weakness in one. Nowhere is seen stronger, manly courage and heroic purpose than in the lives of real Christians. It is in our hands to keep the quality of the church high. It can only be done through boldness in the Holy Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE: *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*

—Acts 4:20

DAILY READINGS:

- Mon.—**Daniel 3:13-18** Boldness by faith.
- Tue.—**Romans 1:7-16** Not ashamed of the Gospel.
- Wed.—**James 1:12-18** The blessings of trial.
- Thu.—**Revelation 7:13-17** The reward of faithfulness.
- Fri.—**Romans 10:6-11** The triumph of faith.

Devotional Reading: Psalm 16 Joy in God's presence.

A Night in Jail

Acts 4:1-4 As they—Peter and John—spake unto the people, the priests . . . captain (superintendent of the priests and Levites guarding the temple at night), and the Sadducees came . . . grieved—angry—that they . . . preached through Jesus the resurrection. Sadducees believed in no resurrection (**Acts 23:8**). The priests and leaders hated Jesus to the point of having crucified Him and of trying to conceal His rising (**Matthew 27:1, Matthew 27:62-64; Matthew 28:11-15**). They laid hands on—arrested—them, and put them in hold—locked them up—unto the next day. Were they discouraged by this? Many of them . . . believed . . . five thousand. It would take more than a night in jail to dim the joy over five thousand newborn souls. But yet greater sustaining power was the Holy Spirit within them.

An Impressive Group

Acts 4:5-10 Rulers, and elders, and scribes, And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and . . . kindred of the high priest—an impressive group. Annas and Caiaphas were high priests who had part in the trial of Jesus (**John 18:12-24**). John and Alexander were related to them. They brought Peter and John for questioning. By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Their first question opened the door wide. The Name was the sore spot among the leaders. But it was the strong point of the Apostles, the heart of their message. Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost—not a new filling but a continuation of that he already had, and the Spirit took control. Peter said, Ye rulers . . . Be it known . . . that by the name of Jesus

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Christ . . . He accused them, **whom ye crucified, whom God raised**—indisputable fact. **By him doth this man stand here before you whole**—another fact they could not dispute.

Jesus promised power. He said it would be in witnessing unto Christ. That promise was fulfilled here. The power is in the Holy Spirit. When He fills one, God's power is present. Christianity is a living thing. It is not just a system of theories. Some Person is over it all. Sensing this, the rulers asked the question that touched the heart of the matter: **By what name, have ye done this?** Christianity is the power of a Person, and that Person is Christ. All of the beliefs and practices of Christianity are but the branches which, followed back to their root, lead to Jesus Christ, the Source.

Acts 4:11-12 This is the stone (see **Psalm 118:22; Matthew 21:42-46**). These men were building a nation, building its religious life, yet they **set at naught** Jesus. Now He **is become the head of the corner**—the cornerstone, the foundation and support of all (**Ephesians 2:19-22**). Peter points to Jesus as the **ONLY** salvation. This was true then. It is true now. **There is none other name . . . whereby we must be saved.**

A Tough Problem

Acts 4:13-18 Now when the council saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized they were **ignorant men**—they had no worldly authority, no college degree to give them any power or authority—they **marveled . . . that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man . . . they could say nothing against it.** The council commanded Peter and John **to go aside.** They were faced with a tough problem and must talk it over. **What shall we do?** We cannot deny that **a notable miracle hath been done.** This is great praise coming from an enemy. **But that it spread no further . . . let us . . . threaten.** Even when convinced of the truth, man's stubborn will refuses to give up the unbelief which he holds in his heart. They **commanded** Peter and John **not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.** Was this the end of the Gospel? They thought it was. They underestimated the power of the Gospel of Christ. They thought evangelization was finished when it had only begun.

No one can be saved from sin and death but by Jesus Christ. Not by our efforts, not by our good works, or good up-bringing, not by Mary, or saints, or church joining, or baptism, or last rites, are we saved. Every person who reaches Heaven will be there because he trusts in Jesus Christ. Peter answered the rulers in a definite manner. He drove the point home to those who questioned in whose name they taught. They must personally accept Jesus or remain lost.

Peter and John Reply

Acts 4:19-22 Peter and John answered . . . Whether it be right to obey you or God, judge ye. These were the men who forsook Jesus and fled when He was taken by the mob. But now they were filled with the Spirit. Their message was not dead theory but living truth—the powerful force which has conquered every agent of wrong to come against it. **For we cannot but speak . . .** It was not hard for them to speak of Jesus. It would have been hard not to. **All men glorified God for that which was done.** They dared not to **punish them** because of strong public opinion in favor of the miracle that **was done.**

We can expect opposition and persecution if we do something for God. But it makes us strong and more effective in Gospel work. We should obey God rather than men. We need fear nothing as long as God is with us.

JUST A THOUGHT

The more words there are, the less they weigh.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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