

Acts 4:1-20 (New International Version)

¹The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. ²They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. ³They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. ⁴But many who heard the message believed and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

⁵The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. ⁷They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, ¹⁰then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹He is

" the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the capstone.^{[a],[b]} ¹²Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

¹³When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. ¹⁴But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. ¹⁵So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. ¹⁶"What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name."

¹⁸Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. ²⁰For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Footnotes:

- a. [Acts 4:11](#) Or cornerstone
- b. [Acts 4:11](#) Psalm 118:22

Acts 4:1-20

Possible Starter question: When in your life have you needed courage?

Transitional comment: In Acts chapter 4, Peter and John encountered a group of religious leaders who were pressuring them to stop speaking and teaching about Jesus' resurrection. This encounter took place right after the healing of the man in the temple in chapter 3.

- Pray for the Holy Spirit's leading (if you haven't already prayed)

Read and Overview observations:

- Let's listen as someone reads our passage aloud.
 - Now take several minutes by yourself to study passage. Identify words or phrases that describe or characterize both Peter and John.
- O What words or descriptions give you a portrait of Peter and/or John? What do you admire about them?

First Section – Acts 4:1-4

- Read Acts 4:1-4
- O Explain the rising tension in the plot of this story. Who are the main characters and what is the nature of the conflict?
- I Why do you think the religious leaders so threatened by the message of Peter and John? Were their fears legitimate?
- I Why do you think so many people were believing Peter and John's message?

Second Section – Acts 3:5-12

- A Have you ever been in a situation where you had to speak before a group of important people and answer their questions directed toward you? How did it make you feel?
- O What was the primary question the religious leaders asked Peter and John?
v. 7
- I Why do you think they asked this question? What does it say about their view of authority? (*the leaders understood that power and right of leadership comes from conferred authority. If these men were operating on their own, they could be discredited easily in the eyes of the leaders.*)
- O How does Peter answer the question of authority?

I Think back to only a few weeks earlier when Peter denied that he knew Jesus on three separate occasions the night that Jesus was arrested. How is this experience different for him? What had happened in his life to bring about such a change?

A Have you ever had a time in your life when you have confidently spoken about your faith in Christ when it seemed the stakes were high? Share these experiences.

Third Section – Acts 4:13-20

I What was it that compelled Peter and John to continue to share their faith even at the risk of opposition? How does this relate to the issue of authority that the religious leaders raised earlier?

O What was the result of their courageous and compelling witness?

Summary

A What aspect of this story speaks most directly to your life right now?

A Is there someone in your life right now that needs to hear of the truth of the gospel? What might you do in the days ahead to share the message of Christ with them?

Prayer together: for God to give each one of you boldness in speaking of the life transforming message of Christ.

Text is on other page or www.Biblegateway.com

- a. BIG idea: Followers of Christ share the good news naturally and courageously, knowing that God alone is the one who's approval they seek.
- b. Key verse/idea: ¹²Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."
- c. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge).

Advice to study leaders:

- d. Complement your OIA questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? What do others of you see/think?).
- e. Determine the core questions you'll ask (know which ones to skip if pressed for time.
- f. Always reword questions in words are comfortable for you (and, if the question doesn't make sense to you, then discard it.)
- g. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. How long do you wait? Take your time; don't rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- h. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.

- i. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
- j. Secondary texts—use other texts very sparingly, even if they are relevant. Otherwise, other texts will push you more into the “teacher role,” rather than that of facilitator. It also can cause some people to feel distracted or de-powered.
- k. If you are utilizing this “on-line” study and not part of the OASIS course, I recommend that you get the 1-volume commentary entitled New Bible Commentary, Revised (21st Century Edition, IVP). It is well worth the \$40.