

Acts 4:1-13

How Jesus is Manifested in Times of Opposition

Today we are picking back up in our study in the books of Acts that we began in September. -

A)Made as far as Chapter 4

B)If you are just joining us - I don't want you to feel like you are walking into the middle of a movie

Bb)Quickly catch you up - The Book of Acts is about the birth of the Christian church as we know it

C)The Holy Spirit of God moved on a small group of Jesus followers who were banded together after his Resurrection

D)This group of people empowered by the Spirit of the Living God
1)literally turned their world upside down.

E)The world has never been the same.

We are studying the book of Acts because - we want to be an effective representation of God's church in this broken world

A)We are learning what that looks like through our study in the book of Acts.

B)The book of Acts gives us a template or a model to follow for how we study the Bible,

C)How we worship, how we evangelize.

1)The type of community we want to build, how to approach missions

D)as well how to approach the subject of Bible Prophecy.

1)Those are some of the things we have been learning in our study of the book of Acts

Now in our study so far in the book of Acts we have seen a lot of firsts.

A)Acts 2 - the first outpouring of the Holy spirit - 120 upper room

B)That led to the **first sermon** - Peter preaches in Acts 2 -

1)First mass salvation - 3,000 people turn to Jesus

Then in Acts 3 we saw the first recorded miracle in the book of Acts

A)Peter and John were on their way to the temple to pray

B)They pass by a man - begging - lame - been lame since birth - for 40 yrs

C)Peter says - Silver and gold I don'tdo have I give to you - **in the name of Jesus rise and walk**

1)The Dude was instantly healed.

D)Everyone was amazed! - Peter used that moment as an opportunity to preach Jesus again.

Peter said to the people - we didn't do this - not our power -

A)this was done in the name of Jesus - the Risen Messiah

B)Well that led to another first - the first

PERSECUTION that we see in the book of Acts -

1)Chapter 4

Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

5 And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, 6 as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 11 This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under

heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

So here in Acts 4 The First persecution against the Church -

A) We see that there was this mounting opposition coming against the followers of Jesus

B) The First thing I want us to note - first big idea this morning is that **Opposition should surprise us.**

C) 2 reasons

➤ #1 Whenever Jesus is working Satan opposes.

D) Whenever Jesus is working In a culture / in a city - in our lives personally -

1) Satan is going to try and oppose what Jesus is doing

See The Devil does not get excited when people are falling in love with Jesus or when people are coming to Jesus

A) See this all the time - someone wants to serve or start getting involved in ministry -

B) **the opposition comes/** They start fighting in their marriage - or their kids are acting up.....

1) Spiritual warfare - Satan is opposing

C) Satan loves idle Christian's no threat to him/ -

1) they are not influencing anyone else - no threat to his agenda

D) The last thing that Satan wants to see is you being excited about Jesus

The last thing he wants to see is you telling your unsaved friends about Jesus

A) Or wanting to help others grow in Jesus

B) So He will seek oppose you- distract you and discourage you.

C) So don't be surprised when you are facing opposition for wanting to follow and serve Jesus -

D) Whenever Jesus is working Satan opposes. #1

Another reason why Opposition shouldn't surprise us: Because #2 Jesus told us to expect persecution

A) John 15:18-20 Jesus told his disciples:

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.” John 15:18-20

B) The martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote from his cell in Flossenburg Germany in 1937: **Suffering is the badge of the true Christian. The disciple is not above his master....** Dietrich Bonhoeffer

C) Paul declared in 2 Timothy 3:12 ¹² All who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus **will be persecuted**

D) Paul is saying - if you are desiring to live for Jesus - you should expect persecution

1) Being misunderstood, ridiculed, and even hated - it just comes with the territory.

E) The more our culture turns from God and the truths of the Bible

1) the more intense the persecution is going to be!

Martin Luther said suffering was among the marks of the true church,

“Discipleship means allegiance to the suffering Christ, and it is therefore not at all surprising that Christians should be called upon to suffer.”

So Opposition shouldn't surprise us: Because

➤ #1 Whenever Jesus is working Satan opposes.

➤ #2 Jesus told us to expect persecution.

Back to our text: Who was leading this opposition against the apostles?

V.1 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, {aggressively} 2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.

The Sadducees' had a leading role in the incarceration.

A) Little good can be said about this bunch.

B) They were the materialistic rationalists of their day.

C) The Sadducees denied the supernatural, didn't believe in angels or evil spirits

1) And they didn't believe that there was a Resurrection - which is why they were Sad U Cee

D) The Sadducees were motivated by the 3 P's Power, Position and Possessions

They saw the followers of Jesus as a threat to all three.

A) they saw this emerging church as a threat to their political structure,

B) So they became relentless enemies of the followers of Jesus.

1) Here we see they came upon them - aggressively - laid hands on them

C) Notice what they are worked up about? V.2 **greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.**

D) So this is the group that is coming against the church in the book of Acts

E) Here is the thing I want us to spend the rest of our time considering today - 2nd Big idea

Even though the opposition was coming on strong / Jesus was still at work -

A) Jesus was still being manifested in the midst of the opposition.

B) So I want to spend the rest of our time today considering this:

C) How was Jesus manifested in the midst of the Opposition? 3 ways

#1 The gospel prevailed. V.4 4 However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

A) We saw how 3,000 pp began to follow Jesus in Acts 2 -

B) here 2,000 more people came to faith in Christ - in the midst of the opposition.

C) This is one of the reasons why I am not worried about growing persecution here in America

D) If the Lord tarries his coming - the opposition against followers of Jesus is going to get more intense

E) We need to Realize there is an agenda in play today that wants to silence our voice

F) But even if it gets more intense - that doesn't worry me one bit - here is why:

Right now the places in the world where the gospel is prevailing the most

A) Are in nations - where it is against the law to preach

B) China - the largest Christian population in the world - and it is largely underground -

C) The gospel has prevailed in that country for decades now - in the face of great opposition

D) Iran is another place where it is against the law to be a Christians

1) but the gospel is prevailing there in a radical way - 1,000' coming to faith in Christ

When I was in college many years ago - back in the early 80's - before some of you were born

A) I heard Dana Key the lead singer of the Band DeGarmo and Key - say something that has always stuck with me.

B) He said a lot of people are praying right now for revival, but maybe we should pray for persecution

1) Because every time in the history of the church that there as has been great persecution -

C) It RESULTED IN REVIVAL!

D) PROFOUND - statement!

There is a lot of talk and prayer and songs being sung today about our need for revival

A) Maybe it is going to come out of this growing opposition

B) See in times of persecution: those who are not serious about Jesus fade away -

1) too much at stake - the cost is too high

C) But Those who are serious about Jesus stand out - become more effective- have a greater impact.

That is what we see here in Acts 4 Jesus being manifested in the midst of opposition because the gospel was prevailing -

A) Masses turning to Jesus -

B) Back to our text - v.5

5 And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, 6 as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"

THE court before which Peter and John were brought was the called the Sanhedrin,

A) the Sanhedrin was the supreme court of the Jews.

B) Three groups formed, the Sanhedrin/ The rulers, elders, and scribes (teachers of the law).

C) Annas was high priest from A.D. 6–15, at this time

1) He was the leader of the group

D) Annas would arrange for five of his sons and one son-in-law to follow him as high Priest

1) You could say it was the family business -

E) he functioned in something of a "godfather" role.

1) These guys were religious thugs

So Peter and John are brought before this group and set in the midst of them- to be interrogated.

A) Peter and John were asked "By what power or by what name have you done this?" - What authority.

B) That was the thing - that they were worried about - Authority - Who said you could do this?

C) Notice Peter's response: V.8

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you

crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.

In Peter's response we see another way that Jesus was manifested in the midst of opposition

A) #2 Through the preaching of the word!

B) I love this: We have a saying around here: Keep the main thing that main thing - that is simply Jesus

C) Peter isn't challenging their agenda -

1) he is not getting into a political debate about authority and where it comes from

D) Peter is simply talking about and pointing to JESUS

1) This is what Peter learned from Jesus

Jesus comes into a world living under heavy Roman oppression- Dictatorship

A) But Jesus doesn't attack Rome - he doesn't challenge their authority

B) Even though he was continually being asked to do just that- to challenge the authority of Rome

C) Like the time where they asked him - should we be paying taxes to Rome -

1) Hoping Jesus would say something to get himself in trouble with the Roman authority

Jesus responded - Show me a coin - Whose image is on the coin? Caesar

A) Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and give to God what belongs to God - Brilliant response

B) The Point - Caesar's image is on the coin - pay taxes -

C) But God's image is on you - you have been made in the image of God

1) Give yourself to God.

This is what we need to remember - Jesus was primarily focused on the souls of men -

A) That is what he was concerned about

B) He wasn't there to overthrow the Govt. or to challenge Roman oppression

C) The souls of men were living under the power of a greater threat than Rome

1) Power of sin - Power of Satan and the power of death

D) Jesus had come to rescue mankind from that oppression

See Jesus understood: That when the soul of a man changes -

A) When a man gives himself to God that can change his entire family.

B) When a family changes - that can change other families and that can change a city -

1) when a city changes that can change the county

C) When a county changes - that can change the State- when states change that can change a nation

D) When nations change that can change the world

Which is exactly what happened in the book of Acts

A) we are told this is what happened through the movement of the early church

Acts 17:6 These are the ones who have turned the world upside down / Right side up

B) It was the very first Jesus people movement!

1) What our world needs today is another one

C) So Peter doesn't get into a debate about power and authority -

1) He simply preaches the word and points to Jesus.

Now don't misunderstand what I am saying -

A) I am not suggesting that we should just ignore politics

B) In this country we have been given a right to VOTE and we need to vote and vote Biblically -

1) Love what Impact North County is doing

C) We definitely need to see Christians run for offices - especially on the lower levels

1) mayor - city council - school boards -

D) One of the ways we fulfill our role salt and light - Lunch with Mayor tomorrow

E) Why I was privileged to give the invocation and pray at his swearing in ceremony this month.-

1) Bringing Prayer back to city council meetings

It is Important that we do those things -

A) show support and stand for and with leaders who stand for morality

B) There is place for making our voice known and standing for morality and Biblical principles

1) like we did yesterday Love life prayer walk

But this is what we must understand- the answer for the problems in our world is not going to be found in the political arena

A) The answer is found in JESUS and Jesus transforming lives

B) When those people who lives have been transformed - begin to live for Jesus -

C) and Be the church - by living like Jesus in this broken world

1) That is when real change can happen

D) So this why what Peter is doing is so important

1) Preaching the word - because Jesus is manifested in the preaching of the word.

But don't miss something key in V.8 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit,

A) How is Peter speaking and sharing - through the power of the HS

B) Acts 2 we saw when the Disciples were first baptized with the HS -

1) the Holy spirit came upon them and empowered them

C) Here it says Peter was **filled with the Holy Spirit** - Baptized afresh - empowered again.

D) We noted our need to ask Jesus to constantly baptize us afresh with the Holy Spirit -

1) to fill us afresh - empower us

See We must recognize our need to be dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit to live for Jesus in this broken world

A) It was Key for Peter and it is key for us -

B) See we have saw what Peter was like before that/ he tried to minister in his own strength and boldness

1) Rebuking Jesus - prideful - I won't deny you - like these losers

C) In my flesh I can be the same way:

You too - I can be bold - no problem - Italian - not afraid of conflict - in our blood

A) In my flesh - rude, obnoxious disrespectful of others opinions

B) I think that is how a lot of Christians are coming across today on issues

C) Angry - Obnoxious - rude -

D) Some are great at winning the argument - but they lose the soul in the process

1) I would rather lose the argument - and win the Soul - Linda Barret - 1989

That is why Paul said I am not ashamed of the Gospel - it is the power of salvation for everyone who believes

A) CHS - we don't need to defend the gospel - the gospel is like a lion - **you don't defend a lion cage and let it do its thing**

B) So like Peter we just Keep pointing people to Jesus - keep the main thing the main thing

1) Rely on the Spirit - dependent upon the Holy Spirit - Speak the truth in love

C) Peter is respectful, he is not rude - - but he is also speaking the truth - not holding back

You want to know the Authority that we did this?

let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, **whom you crucified**, {Truth- just telling it like it is- we can't back down from sharing the truth even though we know the truth might offend} that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, **whom you crucified**, whom **God raised from the dead**, by Him this man stands here before you whole.

Peter is speaking the truth: You guys blew it crucifying Jesus - but God raised him from the dead.

A) Peter is drawing attention to the power of God - to right the wrongs of human sin and failure.

B) Then Peter says something really interesting here:

11 This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'

12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

C) Peter is quoting from Psalm 118:22 - **a Messianic Psalm - a prophecy about the Messiah**

D) How the Messiah was going to be rejected by the Jewish leaders -

1) those who oversaw the building of the temple

E) It was Symbolic of the building of the religious system in Israel

The Psalmist was using the analogy of the Cornerstone

A) The Cornerstone was typically the largest and heaviest stone because it formed the footing for the building.

B) The Cornerstone was at the foundation of the building -

1) The cornerstone set angles for the rest of the building

C) If the Cornerstone wasn't lined up right the building would be off and could collapse

D) So, think of the cornerstone as the reference point for the whole building

E) Peter is plainly saying here: You guys fulfilled that prophecy -

1) Jesus is the cornerstone that was spoken of
You guys rejected him and crucified him

Really important we see this: Jesus is the cornerstone for LIFE.

A) Don't miss this- Jesus is the reference point for life - for standards

B) And This is why we shouldn't be confused about marriage - Jesus clearly taught - **Marriage is between a man and a woman.**

C) We shouldn't be concerned about gender - because Jesus said - **God made them male and female**

D) And we shouldn't be confused about when life begins - because the prophet Jeremiah said - The word of the Lord came to me: 5 I chose you before I formed you in the womb; I set you apart before you

were born. I appointed you a prophet to the nations.
Jeremiah 1:5

E) Jesus affirmed again & again that Jeremiah was a Prophet of God and knew what he was talking about

But not just Jeremiah - the psalmist David declared in Psalm 139:13 For it was you who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

A) Jesus affirmed both the writings of David the psalmist and Jeremiah the prophet

B) He affirmed that both David and Jeremiah spoke on behalf of God

C) See this is the point - we can't believe in Jesus and not believe what Jesus taught and affirmed about these things.

D) So Jesus teaches us about marriage/ when Life begins - teaches about gender

E) How do we know that Jesus was right? - He died on the cross and rose again from the dead.

1) Proving that he was who he claimed to be - and what he said was right

This is Peter's point - Jesus is the cornerstone that the Psalmist said the builders (YOU religious leaders) would reject -

A) You rejected him by crucifying him - But God raised him from the dead. - He is alive

B) He has become the chief cornerstone.' 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

C) Peter would write in his epistle there are only two responses one can have to Jesus as the corner stone 1 Peter 2:6-8

6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense."

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

TWO Responses

A) ONE HE IS Precious to those who believe/ he is the rock that your life is built upon

B) Or a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense They stumble, being disobedient to the word {don't believe}, to which they also were appointed.

C) What did you do with my son Jesus?

1) Not for me you are against me -

D) YOU TODAY - only 2 responses

E) So Jesus was manifested (clearly seen) through the preaching of the Word

One more #3 Jesus was manifested in the lives of his followers.

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

Note a few things: They saw their boldness - their confidence - (saw in how they were standing on the truth)

A) Their conviction was compelling -

B) But they marveled that they were uneducated, and untrained - they didn't go to seminary

C) But they knew the word/ -listen you can't preach the word if you don't know the word

D) They spent time w/ Jesus learning the word and learning his heart

Same thing is true for us - Spend time with Jesus by sitting at his feet

A) Fasting - feasting on Jesus - taking in the word

B) The More time we spend with Jesus the more we become like him

C) It is like two married people - start to look alike and act alike - finish each other's sentences

D) Their lives are being so intertwined together

That is what happens when we spend time with Jesus - spend time in his word - we become like him

A) That is the goal God's objective – conform us into the image of his own dear son!

B) So many Books sermons where the idea is on – Becoming a better you!

C) God's objective is not to make you a better version of yourself - **but to make us all more like his son.**

Not the phrase - They could tell that they had been with Jesus.

A) Best compliment that we can get

B) That is what the world needs to see in us

C) I will Close with this thought

We are living in a culture right now - where the American Utopian dream is being shattered

A) In this time of rising inflation and interest rates it is making it very hard for people to live and survive.

B) Young people are becoming depressed - especially here in the West - **seems impossible to buy a house -**

1) Rent is enormous

C) **Older people are wondering** - Am I going to be able to afford to retire?

1) Is my 401k going to last? Is SS going to run out

Then we look at the moral decline in our nation - Is it safe to send our kids to a public school?

A) But we can't afford private school - not sure we can do home school

B) We see all the political unrest - realizing that everything that made our country great is-being threatened

C) Two reactions: **We can curse the GOVT. - and hope they get their act together**

D) Or we can realize that everyone around us is facing the same challenges and frustrations

But for everyone around us who is frustrated and discouraged because the longing of their hearts and dreams are not being satisfied

A) We can say: We know the **ONLY ONE** who can really satisfy the longing in the heart and **that is Jesus**

B) Imagine what would happen if those of us who claim to know Jesus and have been satisfied by Jesus

C) Focused are eyes on JESUS - Not economy not politics

D) Do what we can do - draw near to Jesus - closer to Jesus

E) Jesus would manifest himself in our lives –

People around us would look at us and see a difference

A) They would be prone to say - How come you are not freaking out? - Joy - peace - calm

B) Why aren't you mad at the Govt. - why are you not discouraged

C) We could tell them - Our hope is in Jesus ?

D) He is the one satisfying our hearts!

1) Amazing

Guys that is what this week is about - We gather to pray and fast

A) Feast on Jesus this week - God is going to move and work

B) People are going to see a difference in you

C) Starts right now today - we close our service. -We want to seek the Lord together! -

1) Press in - these final minutes - Jesus have your way.