

**Living Out Our Faith - Pt5**  
**Acts 4:1-37**

**V1-4**

- Have you ever done a good, God-honoring deed that was met with great opposition? How did it affect you? Did you become angry and meet fire with fire? Did you become fearful and try to cover your tracks with lame excuses to appease the resentful? Or did you become discouraged and say that's the last time I'll help anyone else like that? Peter and John will be faced with this same dilemma - helping someone become strong physically which will lead to being enlightened spiritually. And instead of a pat on the back they receive threats on their lives.
- Verse 1-2 - after hearing of Peter's second sermon, those who were Jesus' primary opponents now come to confront them. Notice their disposition - greatly disturbed-grieved and worried. These men had a lot to lose. First of all they were making millions off the people with their religious racketeering. That's why Jesus overturned the temple twice; first at the beginning of His public ministry, and then three short years later at the end of His public ministry.
- In **John 11:47-48** after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, instead of these religious leaders rejoicing, they became grieved and worried because their scams were threatened. In **John 15:18-20** Jesus warned the apostles this would come and in doing so He's also warning us that the love of God and His word leads to being hated by the world. In contrast, the love of the world will lead to rejection and compromise of God's word. **James 4:4** says friendship with the world leads to separation from God.
- The Sadducees were the theological liberals of their day. They didn't believe in anything supernatural - angels, miracles, healings, or resurrection. If it couldn't be seen or touched it was to be rejected. So the last thing they wanted in Jerusalem was word getting out that a man had been healed. As a result they bring the spiritual police:
  1. Priests - represents religious hypocrisy
  2. Captain of the guard - political opposition; they came from Rome
  3. Sadducees - rational unbelief
- Next they lay hands on the apostles and give them a night of incarceration. I often think if speaking the truth would cause a loss of my personal freedom would I still open my mouth? ...and would truth come out? Then I remember that if I'm walking in truth now then I've already given up my liberties in order to follow Jesus (**Galatians 2:20**).
- Verse 4 - whether this is in addition to the 3,000 at Pentecost or 5,000 new converts it's impressive. It shows us that opposition and persecution doesn't stop the Word, or weaken the heart. Instead God uses it to spread the Word and strengthen our faith.

**V5-17**

- Luke's description of this group used to present the first persecution of the early church underscores how they enjoyed none of the advantages that many ministries boast of today. There was no ACLJ to protect their religious rights; no endorsements from influential political leaders of the day; no educational degrees

- from respected schools to justify their position. All they had was what Jesus told them to wait for in chapter 1, and that was the empowering of the Holy Spirit.
- Verse 7 - they're asked the basis of their authority. So Peter, just as he did earlier, speaks, however not by his own power or his understanding, instead he's under the influence of the Holy Spirit. And this was the secret of their success (v8).
  - This is the same group that condemned Jesus, and verse 13 tells us they recognized Peter and John as Jesus' disciples. There are two things being used against Peter and John that Satan uses all the time to silence the spread of the gospel:
    1. Intimidation - look at this impressive group; surely you're outmatched
    2. Interrogation - Deuteronomy 13 declares if a miracle is done in any other name but Jehovah we're to be stoned; Caiaphas and the boys had their rocks in hand
  - Verse 9 - Peter begins by asking sarcastically, "Are we on trial for doing a good deed for a cripple man?" Verse 10-12 - just as he did when the crowd thought it was them who healed the cripple they make it known that it wasn't by their power but Jesus who has made this man whole. Yes, the same Jesus you crucified and rejected is still the chief Cornerstone. And by the way there is no other name by which you can be saved. Whoa Peter! What's gotten into him? He's filled with the Holy Spirit, and shows us three things we must do if we're to face this kind of persecution successfully:
    1. We must trust God
    2. We must understand scripture - he quotes **Psalm 118:22** - Jesus the rejected Stone
    3. We must understand the test is an opportunity not a curse (**Luke 12:11-12**)
  - Peter uses a play on words that the religious leaders could understand. Verse 9 - "made whole" is a translation from the same Greek word translated saved (v12). Peter is telling them that salvation means wholeness and spiritual health. That's why Jesus is called the great physician, as He alone can heal mankind's greatest malady - the sickness of sin.
  - Verse 13 - now they have a dilemma; they've already gone on record rejecting Jesus, even crucifying Him, and now they can't deny that a miracle did not happen. The man was standing in front of them and they knew him. And if such a notable thing was done how could it be done by these unlearned, untrained men. They didn't go to any of our schools, nor sat under any of our teachings. The problem with their thinking is that it leaves no room for the unpredictable and inconceivable. If it wasn't tangible (something they could understand) or touchable (something they could feel), then it wasn't believable (something they could relate to). Therefore they denied it.
  - The one thing they couldn't avoid was the fact that these men had been with Jesus, who also confounded their wisdom. After conferring with each other, trying to find a way to silence the apostles, the only thing they could come up with were threats. And it's the same with you and I. Scripture tells us in **1 Peter 5:8-9** that Satan is a roaring lion seeking whom he can devour. But when we walk in faith, being filled with the Spirit, we remove his teeth, and he can't gum you to death.

V18-24

- Because their hearts were hardened it caused their minds to be closed to Jesus. Consequently, they tell them not to mention His name publicly. Verse 19-20 – here's why it's so important to know the Lord personally. What they had both seen and heard is what they must speak. Verse 22 - the man was also testifying. Forty years was seen as an age of maturity. They let them go and returning to the believer's camp they hold a yea God praise party. It includes scripture, reminders of Jesus attributes, of God's Sovereignty, and of their need.