

## **Acts, Sermon #8**

Acts 4

Peter is preaching the sermon that began in chapter 3 and the temple authorities are making their way toward the crowd. With a show of force, they laid hands on Peter and John and put them in jail.

Beginning in Chapter 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 – we begin to see opposition against God's church. The early church history is written as an example to us of the conflict we find ourselves in when striving to expand God's Kingdom.

I've entitled today message: "Encountering Stormy Seas"

Acts 4:1

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

Acts 4:1-20

Let us pray

You may be seated

## “Encountering Stormy Seas”

Many churches are not encountering stormy seas because they have never left the harbor.

Why was Peter in trouble? -- Strong Preaching – Bible Preaching – Gospel Preaching

Churches who are at the heart of God’s work encounter conflict – what is the heart of the churches work? – 5 things:

- 1. Salvation of the Lost
- 2. Baptism of the Believer
- 3. Discipleship/Christian Education of the believer
- 4. The believer exercising their spiritual gifts in the church
- 5. From this pool, several will be called to go out

What we have here in vs. 1 is a violent interruption.

God healed a crippled man and it drew a crowd and Peter went to preaching.

We have an interruption of that preaching. Satan was at work then and he is at work now.

- We have an entering in and disrupting of the work of God.
- What is that interruption? Persecution.

But this isn’t the only thing that disrupts the work of God.

Chapter 5 – 2<sup>nd</sup> kind of interruption; Ananias and Sapphira – Pretending (Pretension).

- They tried to deceive the people of God.

That is a 2<sup>nd</sup> way that the work of God is disrupted – deceit of God’s people from within.

- Hypocrisy – church is full of it today and it hinders the work of God. How can God’s people be so mean?
- Ananias and his wife Sapphira were pretending surrender to God but they were liars.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> way the church is disrupted and the churches work is hindered, chapter 6:1, murmuring.

Here is a third ploy to interrupt the work of God; a matter of division or dissension.

- The preoccupation of the leaders with administrative affairs.
- It bogged down the leaders and the people's needs were not met – leaders are executives instead of shepherds and servants.

Division among people, murmuring, griping.

Anyone of these three things can enter into the life of the church to interrupt its work.

This is an example to us -- persecution from without; pretension from within, and division amongst God's people.

From within and division amongst God's people.

I don't know of any church that is working the work of God and not encountering disruption. How do we overcome?

1. Prayer – Eph. 6:18
2. Practice conflict resolution – Matt. 18:15
3. Walk in the Spirit and not the flesh.
4. Wearing the shield of Faith.

These chapters are here to forewarn us, to teach us how to deal with these conflicts.

When the church is advancing the Kingdom, these types of interruptions should be expected.

What is it God wants us to learn? Acts 4 will teach us how spirit filled people respond to persecution (vs. 8 & 31); people who are completely under the control of God's Spirit.

Acts 4:

Vs. 1-3 – It tells us who arrested Peter and John and their motives for doing so in vs. 2.

Vs. 4 shows us that in spite of this arrest, the Word of God went forward and people were saved.

Beginning in vs. 5, we have the account of the actual interrogation of Peter and John.

Vs. 5 & 6 -- impressive group of questioners.

The name “sanhedren” in fact appears in verse 15.

- The religious leaders also ruled the political life of the Jews.
- They are most likely in the chamber of “hewn stone” where the Lord Jesus had met this very group on the night of his betrayal.

Vs. 7a – The apostles stood in their midst. You could imagine the thoughts that ran through Peter and John’s mind as they remembered Jesus standing here all alone and what happened to Him.

They asked them two questions (vs. 7).

- First of all, “by what kind of power,” and
- by what sort of name have you done this?

Vs. 8-12 is Peter’s amazing response. Yes, this is the same Peter that the rooster crowed on after he denied Jesus Christ 3 times.

Vs. 8-12

Vs. 13, records for us the impression made by that brief speech of Peter’s.

Vs. 13 – How do we encounter conflict?

1<sup>st</sup>

- A spirit filled person responds with boldness, with a freedom of speech, the might to say, that is liberty of speech.
- When people are really controlled by God's Spirit, it does something to their tongues.

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit of God? Eph. 5:18 says, *“And be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the spirit.”*

- Spirit filled does not mean we get more of the Spirit –that's false teaching.
- It speaks of control, influence.

We don't get more of the Spirit of God. God gets more of us. We give Him every thing and He literally takes charge of a man's brain, tongue, emotions, and our speech and that gives evidence of the control of the Spirit of God.

The greatest hindrance to spirit filling is self.

Peter and John spoke frankly – with disregard to self -- not worried about themselves, cast everything to the wind, no caution, out spoken and with boldness – gave the truth.

How do we face the giants? – spirit filled boldness/confidence

Vs. 13 records a 2<sup>nd</sup> way we handle interruptions/conflicts of God's work.

Vs. 13a, b,

A spirit filled person is enlarged beyond himself, beyond his capabilities, his training, and his schooling.

- He somehow is increased – to be able to do above and beyond himself.

- He transcends who he normally is and it is a marvel to people, that this person could talk like that or he could do that.

Look at what Peter said in vs. 11. He quotes Ps. 118:22 and in vs. 12, he was dogmatic and said, Jesus is the only way of salvation. That Jesus Christ is exclusive to all other religions, including Judaism.

In other words, Peter has answered in such a theological way that it is a marvel that such an unschooled and common man could talk like that to the theologians of his day. The educated have nothing they can say in reply, vs. 14. The foolish confounds the wise.

When people are disregarded just because they do not have a formal education, that is an improper attitude of people in our day. I do believe in formal education, but I also believe the most important education is that which we receive by being close to Jesus.

Human thoughts are often wrong. God's truth as revealed in the scriptures is absolute and infallible. So, whatever other training we might receive, we had best study the Word of God.

Because the Scriptures teach that the **fear** of the Lord is the beginning of true knowledge and wisdom.

So we see the capacity above one's ability - this is what happens to a spirit filled believer. God will allow us to do more than we could ourselves.

- They have power, they have ability, they have words.
- The Lord Jesus said this didn't He?

Jesus said, Luke 21:12-15, <sup>12</sup>*But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.* <sup>13</sup>*And it shall turn to you for a testimony.* <sup>14</sup>*Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:* <sup>15</sup>*For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to contradict nor resist.*

And, these two men (2 fishermen) stand in the midst of these powerful and educated men.

What is the difference between Peter and John in Acts and Peter and John in the Gospels? The resurrection of Christ and the Spirit of God. Peter wilted before a young girl and now he stands in front of all these authorities and boldly speaks.

Peter and John are different than before. They are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now the Bible says at the end of vs. 13... What caused them to think that? The boldness and the authority with which they spoke

Vs. 11, Psalms 118:22; do you know what the actual interpretation of that illustration is? The boldness and the authority with which they spoke.

Ps. 118:22-24 – What is all this talking about?

This is prophesied over a 1,000 years before the coming of Christ that this stone, Jesus Christ, would be rejected by the very people responsible for building the House of Israel, the religious authorities.

How did they reject Him? When did they reject Him?

Peter said it in vs. 10, you have fulfilled the prophecy, that the stone was rejected of you builders. But, the stone rejected by you has been made the head of the corner. Ps. 118 says, this is the Lord's doings.

When was that stone made the head of the corner? Peter said it in vs. 10, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead. Psalms 118 is a prediction of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This is the Lord's doings and it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord hath made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. What day? The day of resurrection, Easter Sunday. What is our attitude? We will rejoice and be glad.

Every Sunday we gather, the first day of the week, the day of resurrection. This is a great day. We will rejoice and be glad in it. This is a special day for us.

Turn to Matthew 21:23, 42

That verse was also quoted to these very people by Jesus Christ the week of His death.

Matt. 21:45

Peter is saying the same thing, verbatim unto them and they take knowledge that he has been with Jesus. Why? Because he is saying what Jesus said and he is saying it with authority like Jesus.

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> way we handle conflict, by being close companions of Christ.

Look at Acts 4 -- vs. 12a. Do you believe that?

There is no salvation in any other. There is no name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but this name.

Peter speaks exclusively of Christ. That, by the way, is why no other religion can tolerate Christianity. Christianity negates and eliminates all other religions.

Christianity is intolerant! Christianity says to the world, if you do not accept Christ for who He said He is, you are going to die in your sins. You're eternally lost. There are no two ways about this, you have no other alternative. It is Christ or damnation.

This is why Christianity and its strong preaching antagonizes the most liberal and flexible people. Because Christianity will not give them any slack at all.

It is Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone. You receive Him or you have no salvation. What a strong message to give in these circumstances, straight from the Book of Acts.

Vs. 14-15

In Vs. 16, the Holy Spirit lets us eavesdrop on what they say in private.

Vs. 16

Vs. 17, is that going to work? It might, if you are not spirit filled. It worked before when someone questioned Peter about knowing Jesus. It silenced him.

Vs. 18, 19, 20 – We are not able, not to speak

If the government's orders are a violation of God's direct command -- "We must obey God rather than men."

While human government is ordained of God, and the laws of the land should normally be obeyed, there is a time when it is not right to recognize and obey human government and human laws.

When the laws conflict, we must follow the law that is higher.

How do spirit filled people respond to persecution?

1. With boldness
2. With enlargements beyond their own capacity
3. They give evidence of being companions of Christ
4. They are compulsive witnesses, vs. 20

Vs. 21-31

Encountering Stormy Seas -- we need spirit filled believers.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

I believe this church is advancing the Kingdom and we are in stormy seas. Help us to be bold and not shrink back, not to fear but to trust.

Let us believe that God can do more with us than humanly possible.

But folks, we must be disciples of Christ, spirit filled; surrendering all to Christ and each moment to His Spirit, yielding our tongues, thoughts and actions to Him. Are we spirit filled believers?

Do you have salvation through Jesus?

No other name, No other way

He loved you, He died for you – blood, God raised Him from the dead

Corner stone – accept Him

Farewell – May God's grace keep you till we meet again.