

Marks

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading
Giving Time, Talents & Resources ■ Spiritual
Friendships ■ Service In & Beyond the Church

of Discipleship

March 12, 2023

Day 1: Acts 4:5-6

The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family.

Soon after the Resurrection the Disciples began proclaiming what they had witnessed. Many people were beginning to acknowledge that what they were saying was true - that Jesus was the Son of God and was killed by their ignorance. God was willing to forgive them but they had to repent and acknowledge that Jesus was Lord. At this early stage of the movement there was not a sharp distinction between Christian and Jew. Just about all the early followers of Jesus in Jerusalem were Jewish. As this movement was believed to be within Judaism, the Sanhedrin (the rulers) felt they were under their control.

Question: What do you think is the difference between the "high priest" and a priest?

Challenge: Do some research to see how many presidents have come from the same family.

Scripture: Acts 3:1-4:4

Day 2: Acts 4:7

When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, 'By what power or by what name did you do this?'

Because of their belief that this new movement was one within Judaism they sought to control it as they tried to control other movements within Judaism. The question was not for information but to be used for accusation. The rulers did not try to deny the healing that took place nor the preaching that followed the healing. They wanted to use the answer to claim that even though it was a healing it was done through the power of some demon.

Question: Do you think silencing a rumor is a good way to control its spread?

Challenge: When have you ever had to defend your beliefs (in Christianity or something else)?

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-11

Day 3: Acts 4:8-10

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.

Healing was a good deed but Peter uses the word "healed" that had the double sense of "being saved." The man was not just physically made well but saved by Jesus of Nazareth. Peter is making a theological statement about Jesus being the Messiah. Peter always mentions that the one who they crucified is the one God raised from the dead. When we do any good deed today it ought to be in the name of Jesus also, that people will know that we cannot do any good deed on our own, but only through God's grace can we perform good deeds. God is the one to receive the credit, not us.

Question: Do you believe that we should not take credit for our good deeds?

Challenge: What is salvation?

Scripture: Luke 23:13-38

Day 4: Acts 4:11

This Jesus is "the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone."

The implication is that the builders should have been able to recognize a cornerstone. Without the correct cornerstone the building will be off and will fall down when enough weight is put upon it. If we today in the church build our congregations on any other foundation than Jesus Christ and Him crucified, then our congregations will fall down.

Question: Why is a cornerstone needed?

Challenge: If Jesus is the cornerstone of the church what would be the church's mission?

Scripture: Psalm 118:19-29

Day 5: Acts 4:12

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.'

Just as there was no other way the crippled man was healed so too there is no other way for the world to reconcile to God but through Jesus Christ. We are not born into God's family nor can we earn our way into the family. We are adopted by God when we acknowledge Christ as Lord.

Question: Why do you think God planned for salvation to come through Christ?

Challenge: Is there anybody in your life that you need to make up with, to be reconciled with?

Scripture: Romans 10:9-13

Day 6: Acts 4:13-14

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus. When they saw the man who had been cured standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition.

The sad aspect of the ruler's response to Peter and John is that they did not see that it was the Holy Spirit that gave Peter and John the ability to speak with such authority. Jesus told the Disciples in John 14:26 that the Holy Spirit will recall to their minds all that Jesus told them. The man was healed in Jesus' name and the Disciples could speak very eloquently in Jesus' name.

Question: Who in our culture would be considered "uneducated and ordinary men?"

Challenge: Read the Pentecost sermon (Acts 2) and summarize it.

Scripture: Acts 4:15-31