

Sunday Morning Message

June 9, 2024

Behold Their Threatenings

Text – Acts 4

Congregational Reading – Acts 4:1 - 4

Introduction

To refresh your memory – a few weeks back we studied Acts 2 and the Day of Pentecost where 3000 souls were gloriously saved and baptized.

Last week, we studied Acts 3 – “Now That I Have Your Attention”

I **A Miracle that was Very Powerful (vs 2 – 11)**

II **A Message that was Very Public (Acts 3:12 – 26)**

A Message about a Saviour Who Is Risen

A Message for a Sinner Who Needs to Repent (v 19)

A Message about Sins That Can Be Remitted

III **A Multitude of Saved People (Acts 4:4)**

5000 more to be precise – making 8000 converts since the day of Pentecost.

It appears that the healing of the lame man in chapter 3, not only got the attention of the people of Jerusalem, gathering them together so that the gospel could be preached; but it also got the attention of the devil and his crowd over at the temple. This is the same bunch that crucified the Lord. We will see our old friends Annas and Caiaphas again. They will begin to attack the Apostles and other early church leaders with the same zeal that they went after the Lord.

You can mark it down: any Christian that is actively living for the Lord will not be too popular with the devil and some of his friends:

"But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." - (2 Timothy 3:10-12)

Read vs. 1 & 2 now

Notice that Peter and John are preaching Jesus at the headquarters of the Jewish leaders: the temple.

Illustrate – Chuck Linderman handing out gospel tracts at the Catholic Church.

Notice that they were grieved because they were preaching about the resurrection of the dead. They were preaching the gospel.

The text specifically tells us that the Sadducees were there. They did not believe in resurrection. Apparently Annas and Caiaphas were Sadducees.

I. The Persecution Resulted in Prison (v. 3)

This won't be the last time that these men would be thrown in jail. They will spend quite a bit of time throughout the rest of their lives incarcerated for preaching the gospel.

Paul also would spend his share of time in jail.

Illustrate - John Bunyan spent 12 years in the Bedford jail for violating the *Conventicle Act* – not attending the Church of England and holding unauthorized meetings. He was released, but then was put in prison again for the same thing. He wrote *Pilgrim's Progress* during the second imprisonment.

Illustrate – Lester Roloff

We talk a good game here in America about how we would stand for the truth if persecution were to come our way, but I don't know. We never really know how strong we are until we are put to the test.

What do you think you would do if they told you that you couldn't speak about Jesus, or read a Bible, or meet at a church gathering?

Illustrate – Underground church in China.

You know if you are not willing to stand for something that you truly believe in, you are already in prison, but a different kind of prison, the prison of pleasing people, or the prison of popularity, the prison of power and position.

II. The Priests Realized Their Problem (vs. 5 – 22)

A. They Identify the Source of their Trouble (vs. 5 – 13)

Notice – “the stone” (v. 11)

"22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. 23 This

is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes" (Psalm 118:22-23).

"16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." (Isaiah 28:16)

Notice the statement made about Peter and John in v. 13 – “they had been with Jesus.”

There are two ways that we can look at that statement:

1. These men had been spending some time with the Lord, and it was coming out in their lives, in their zeal.

There is a lot that we could say here but let me simply ask you the question: Do the people in your life recognize the presence of Christ in you?

Notice – they didn’t recognize Jesus in their education, or in their eloquence – they saw Him in their excitement – their zeal – their boldness.

Where did the boldness come from – v. 8 – The Holy Ghost

Do you have a zeal for God? Are you excited about the fact that you are a Christian? If you are excited about the Lord, you talk about Him to everyone.

2. The religious leaders recognized that if these men had recently been with Jesus, then Jesus must still be alive. They realized that the man that they crucified had truly risen from the dead.

B. They Intimidate in Order to Silence the Apostles (vs. 14 – 22)

They are really hoping that the problem will just go away.

They are afraid to deal too harshly with them, because they are afraid of what the people will do.

Notice that Peter and John tell them outright that they will do what God commands them to do and will ignore the threatening of man.

III. The Preachers Reacted with Prayer (vs. 23 – 31)

Vs. 24 – 28 is a reference to Psalm 2 – Peter is stating that the fulfillment of the prophecy penned by David in the 2nd Psalm came when the religious and political leaders of the Jews and Gentiles put Jesus on the Cross.

They ask the Lord for more boldness; and the Lord gives them a visible manifestation of an

answer. The place was shaken. There was an earthquake. God was letting them know that He answered them.

IV. Conclusion – The Product Was More People (vs. 32 – 37)

The persecution backfired. This early church was even more powerful, and more unified than they were before, and God began to raise up laborers that were going to be a tremendous blessing to this early church.

We are introduced to Barnabas here. He is a giving man, and we will later see that he is the type of guy that you want in your corner. The ministry can be tough at times, but God will send your way some laborers that will make your life richer.

We need more men and woman like Barnabas in the church today. Barnabas is a great example to the believers today. Barnabas plays a very important part in 1st century Christianity.

"Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." - (Acts 11:22-24)

1. He was willing to invest in the Church (Acts 4:36 & 37)
2. He was willing to invest in Christians (Acts 9:20 -28)

Illustrate – Pastor Rick

3. He was willing to re-invest in a Casualty (Acts 13:1 – 5; 13; Acts 15:36 – 41; 2 Timothy 4:9 - 11)

Barnabas seemed to be the type of guy that was willing to give somebody the benefit of the doubt. He wasn't quick to sever ties with people. He was a product of this early church ministry in Jerusalem.