

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 21ST–22ND, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

## CORNERSTONE (ACTS 4:1–12)

Peter and John have just been used by God to heal a lame beggar in the temple in Jerusalem (3:1–10).

- After this incredible miracle, Peter preached a gospel message to the gathering crowd in Solomon's Colonnade (3:11–26).
- The greater the impact, the greater the pushback.
- For every great miracle and mighty move of God, there's always opposition.

## OPPOSITION (VS. 1–3)

The Sadducees were an aristocratic, theologically liberal sect of the Jews.

- They had full control over the temple, the Sanhedrin (the Jewish council), and often collaborated with the Romans to hold power.
- The Sadducees rejected any belief or teaching about the afterlife and the supernatural. They only followed the Law of Moses.

All this talk of Jesus being raised from the dead and the coming “restoration of all things” (the resurrection) greatly annoyed this group.

- The undeniable miracle of healing that had just taken place would have also been quite inconvenient for their theology. They didn't believe God did that anymore.
- So, this group had Peter and John arrested.

Religion is always more in love with tradition, power, and theological hobby horses/pet doctrines than it is with the God it claims to worship and the people God loves.

- Anytime God shows up and begins to move, religious people will come out of the woodwork to discredit, discount, and stop it. Religion seeks to kill what it can't control.

## GROWTH DESPITE OPPOSITION (V. 4)

A true move of God always prevails despite opposition. Two thousand more people were added to the Church that day because of the miracle and the Word being preached.

- Tyrannical leaders/governments and demonically influenced false ideologies/religions think that persecution will slow down the Church—the exact OPPOSITE always happens!

## BY WHAT NAME? (VS. 5–7)

The next day, the ruling council of the Jews brought Peter and John before them and demanded to know “by what power or in what name” the miracle was done.

- This was the same group of leaders who condemned Jesus to death. Now they want Peter and John to know that they have the power to do the same thing to them!

## THE NAME JESUS (VS. 8–10)

Despite this attempt to intimidate and silence the apostles of Jesus, the Holy Spirit was at work.

- Full of boldness from the Holy Spirit, Peter courageously declares that it is only by the name of Jesus, crucified and risen from the dead, that they have this power.
- They tried to stop Jesus by killing Him, but He's still at work through His disciples.

## THE CORNERSTONE (V. 11)

Psalms 118:22 speaks of a stone that was rejected by builders that ended up being a “cornerstone.”

- In building practices, the cornerstone was the principal stone placed at the corner of a building.
- Peter is saying that Jesus, who was rejected by the Jews, is “the cornerstone”—the foundation and rock that all of God's people would be built upon.

## NO OTHER NAME (V. 12)

According to Peter, Jesus isn't just a way to salvation. He's the only way to salvation.

- There is salvation in no one else, and there is no other name under Heaven given by which we must be saved.
- We can run the theoretical scenarios about the people who never hear or the infant who dies or those with no mental capacity to reason...

## WHAT ABOUT YOU?

God will deal with humanity fairly and justly, and anyone who is saved will be rescued by the work of Jesus done on their behalf—but what about you who have heard and are rejecting Him now?

- If you find it unfair that God would only provide one way, you don't understand God. It's not even fair that God would provide any way at all!

## ARE ALL PATHS TO GOD VALID?

Anyone who says all religions basically teach the same thing and are all valid has clearly never studied major world religions. Hindus, Buddhists, Ba'hai, Muslims, and practicing Jews all teach very different things about approaching God.

- To say they're all right...
- ...is to say they're all wrong and to practice a form of intellectual snobbery/supremacy.

## UNEDUCATED AND UNTRAINED (ACTS 4:13–22)

By using Psalm 118:22, Peter had just employed a rhetorical device known as a “peshet.”

- A “peshet” was when a Jewish rabbi took an OT text and provided an interpretation or fulfillment of that text.
- It's a pretty gutsy move to take the most trained, intelligent, and academically qualified religious leaders of your day to school concerning your own religious texts.

## “WHEN THEY OBSERVED THE BOLDNESS...” (V. 13)

Peter's speech was quite remarkable considering that he and John were “uneducated and untrained” men. They had no formal rabbinic education according to the customs and standards of that time.

- Peter and John were qualified in far more important ways: they knew the Scriptures, and they had been with Jesus.

Knowledge “puffs up” (1 Cor. 8:1). You can have a head full of theological ideas/arguments and a heart as empty and ignorant of the things of God as a Pharisee standing three feet from the Messiah and still demanding a sign.

- Truly growing as a disciple of Jesus is more than just learning ideas about Him. It means spending time with Him and reading His Word for transformation (not just information).

Even though Peter and John weren't academically qualified and their teaching greatly annoyed the powers that be, it was hard to deny the reality of what had happened—the healed man was standing right in front of them (v. 14).

- As the group decided what to do, they realized they were in quite a pickle—denial of what had happened was impossible, and the message of Jesus was spreading (vs. 15–16).

So, their solution was to threaten and order Peter and John not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus (vs. 17–18).

- Disciples of Jesus had been taught to obey the word of their civil and governmental leaders.
- Adherence to civil authority was taught by Jesus and later became a major theme in the NT, written about by both Peter (1 Peter 2:13–17) and Paul (Romans 13).

However, the choice in this situation was very clear: obey civil authority or obey God.

- When someone in authority requires a Christian to do something explicitly forbidden in God's Word, civil disobedience is not only permissible but also the most biblical choice.
- These disciples basically said, “We must obey God rather than men!” as the council continued to threaten them.

## PRAYER FOR BOLDNESS (ACTS 4:23–31)

Peter and John were released and went back to the other apostles and the Christian community with good news to report (v. 23).

- Were they now under the threat of imprisonment and death for speaking the name of Jesus? Yes.
- But also 2,000 people had just responded to the gospel!
- What we fix our eyes on matters. Ministry and Kingdom work are a mixed bag.

Wherever we see fruit, growth, and God at work, there will always be opposition!

- We can acknowledge the challenges, but that shouldn't keep us from celebrating and thanking God for the harvest.
- This incident at the temple was a decisive win for the Church. Their first response to that win was prayer (v. 24).

The prayer of the Church recorded in this passage emphasizes the fact that God is sovereign and the Creator of all things.

- Peter and John's arrest and trial were part of the plan of God for Jesus to be preached!
- Most of us don't have any trouble acknowledging that God is the Creator, but often it's hard for us to imagine that our current painful circumstances are part of God's sovereign plan.

These Believers acknowledged that, while opposition would be a painful reality, NOTHING—not Herod, Pilate, or the Jewish leaders—could stop the plan of God!

- In fact, God “predestined” these things to take place (v. 28).
- While the Jewish leaders were looking for ways to stop God, God was using them to advance His message even further!

What would your prayers look like if you knew that speaking the name of Jesus and living out your faith could get you arrested and killed?

- “Consider their threats”: Entrusting justice to God rather than seeking vengeance for themselves.
- “Grant that your servants may speak your word with all boldness”: This isn't a prayer for the opposition to go away but for courage to be obedient in the face of it.

## “STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND FOR HEALING...” (V. 30)

As Believers, we have a responsibility to be bold, to be full of courage and tenacity, and to proclaim the name of Jesus in obedience to God.

- But God must move in power for the miraculous to take place. These Believers are calling upon God to do something they can't do on their own strength.
- This is the prayer of humility and desperation.

## “THE PLACE WHERE THEY HAD ASSEMBLED WAS SHAKEN” (V. 31)

In Exodus 19:18, when the Lord descended on Sinai, the whole mountain shook.

- In Isaiah 6:4, when the prophet sees the Lord high and lifted up, he witnesses shaking.
- In Psalm 18:7, when the Lord rises to act in deliverance for His anointed, it says, “the earth shook and quaked.”

When Jesus breathed His last breath on the cross, there was an earthquake (Matthew 27:51–54), and there was another earthquake when He rose again (Matthew 28:2).

- Now the Lord shakes the place where His people gather and fills them with His Holy Spirit—the spirit of boldness and power.

## COURAGE

- Courage is never depicted in Scripture as the absence of opposition or fear but, rather, as action in the face of opposition or fear because of unshakeable belief in the power of God.
- What are you most afraid of?

## IT TAKES COURAGE TO...

- Proclaim Jesus is the only name that saves.
- Take a stand for God in the face of opposition.
- Trust that God is still working in the midst of your trials and suffering.
- Live generously and sacrificially, believing God will provide and obedience is worth it.

## IF GOD DOESN'T GIVE US A SPIRIT OF FEAR (2 TIM. 1:7)...

- ...and we're being led and controlled by fear, by default we're not being led by the Holy Spirit.
- The Spirit of God makes us bold to follow Him, even in the midst of opposition, and puts our fears in perspective.
- If God is for us, who can stand against us?
- When is the last time you brought your fears to God?