

Missions – Acts and Onward

Week 2 – Preaching Boldly at Home

Introduction: Before someone can be sent out, they must be established. As we consider missions, we should focus on the stabilization and growth of the Early church, which centered on and required preaching the Gospel boldly at Home.

I. The Early Church - Acts 2:41-47

1. Their Message
 - A. The Apostles' Doctrine **PTQ**
 - i. This certainly would have focused on the Gospel message; this is seen in that the Gospel is not only how we get saved but the pattern of a saved life.
 - ii. It also likely had to do with the retelling of Jesus' life
 - iii. The Apostles would have also likely been connecting more of what happened back to the Old Testament as they thought through it.
2. Their Communal Nature **PTQ**
 - A. They had all things common - Shared
 - B. They sold their own things and gave the money to people who needed it. – Personal property
 - C. They were single-minded – on the same page and going the same direction
3. Their Fellowship **PTQ**
 - A. They gathered together
 - B. They attended services together at the temple.
 - “Their presence in the temple was therefore significant as witness that the God who had instituted temple worship had now delivered an additional and climactic word.”¹
 - C. They shared meals together
 - D. They were connected by their faith
4. Their Demeanor
 - A. They were glad
 - B. They were in fear and awe of God's power and work
5. Their Power
 - A. Is the power of God through prayer and praise
 - B. Their Power is of God through Signs and Miracles
 - i. The Miracles seem to be accomplished through the Apostles
 - C. Is the power of God is Salvation.
6. Their Ordinances
 - A. Baptisms – into the church originally and subsequently as people got saved.
 - B. Lord Supper – (Breaking of Bread)²

¹ Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, Fourth Edition, Encountering Biblical Studies (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022), 202.

² Ibid.

II. The Apostles and Miracles

1. The Apostles and early believers are continuing in Jerusalem and following common Jewish Customs.

† **Acts 3:1-2** – *Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.² And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;*

A. The Hour of prayer. **PTQ**

- i. There were a few hours of prayer a day, namely 9 and 3.
- ii. Prayers were pictured by the lighting of incense, which was lit from the coals of the sacrifice.
- iii. The Lame man was asking alms at a wise time and in a wise place.

† **Acts 3:5-6** – *And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.⁶ Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. **PTQ***

B. Understand the big picture.

- i. “The “Beautiful Gate” may have been a popular title for what later sources call the Nicanor Gate (named for its Alexandrian donor), covered with bronze. Josephus indicates that the temple’s main and largest gate was made of the most expensive bronze, more beautiful than gold (*Jewish War* 5.201–4).”³
- ii. “Although Scripture forbade further entrance only to the unclean, some scholars (noting rules at Qumran) suspect that the purity-centered temple establishment would have excluded the disabled from the inner courts.”⁴
- iii. While the sacrifice to make people clean is being presented, there is a man with an infirmity that he did not create, likely excluded from the inside of this religious center, begging for money right next to an immensely beautiful and expensive gate. What old-time religion couldn’t handle, Jesus could fix.
- iv. It is worth noting that God saves you in a particular context and God can potentially use you there. **PTQ**

2. Peter and John used the Miracle as an opportunity to preach.

A. The Man that was healed created a stir.

† **Acts 3:8-11** – *And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God:¹⁰ And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.¹¹ And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.*

³ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, Second Edition (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2014), 326.

⁴ Ibid.

- i. Note that the point of the healing was to get people to hear the preaching. **PTQ**
 - ii. Although Christians cannot go out and heal those lame from birth in order to make people stop staring and enquire, Christians can give the message of the Gospel and give the new Christian something to talk about and bring more people to hear the message.
 - iii. David Garland said, "The lame man's healing would not have been the only miracle the apostles did. It is chosen because it symbolizes the gift of salvation that the preaching of the gospel offers to all people, particularly those who are marginalized and excluded."⁵
- B. Peter preaches about Jesus.**
- † **Acts 3:12-16** – *And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?¹³ The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.¹⁴ But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;¹⁵ And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.¹⁶ And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.* **PTQ**
 - † **Acts 3:19-21** – *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.²⁰ And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:²¹ Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*
- i. What basic truths is Peter getting across? **PTQ**
 - ii. He notes the power comes not through him but through Jesus.
 - iii. He notes this is the same Jesus who is God's Son and is glorified by God.
 - iv. He notes the treachery the Jewish people in Jerusalem had been a part of by condemning Christ to death as an innocent man in the place of a murderer.
 - v. He talks about, in the verses between these, that ignorance played a part but does not negate the need to hear the truth and repent.
 - vi. Peter again shows that Christ is foretold in the prophets, both his suffering and reigning. Gen. 3:15, Psalm 22, Isaiah 50:4-9 Isaiah 53, Num 21:4-9, 2 Samuel 7:12-16, Daniel 7:13-14 **PTQ**

⁵ David E. Garland, *Acts*, ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2017), 38.

- vii. Jesus here is connected to be the prophet like unto Moses from Deuteronomy 18:15-19. The blessing to the Jews and the world from Abraham's seed Gen 12:1-3
 - Luke connects Jesus with the patriarchs, noting the blessing to Abraham comes first to the Jews, but then extends to the Gentiles. The Abrahamic covenant promised all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Acts 3:25; cf Gen 22:18).⁶
- viii. Which parts of what Peter is preaching would you also express to someone today?
- ix. What are the minimally necessary truths to communicate in order for the Gospel to be functionally communicated? **PTQ**

III. The Apostles and the Religious Opposition

1. Persecution of Christ's followers begins. V.1-4
 - † **Acts 4:1-4** – *And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,² Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.³ And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.⁴ Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.*
 - A. Interestingly, two reasons are given regarding the religious opposition, and it garnered the attention of three different groups. **PTQ**
 - i. They taught the people - priests
 - ii. Preached through Jesus' resurrection from the dead - Sadducees
 - iii. By implication, the crowd that formed and followed this new doctrine may have also played a role. (With a minimum of 2,000 new members or potentially 5,000 new ones.) – Captain of the Temple Possibly
 - B. These groups brought Peter and John into prison for the next day's investigation.
 - C. Note that true believers were not hindered by persecution. Instead, it is identified as the point of the next major growth.
2. By whose name or upon whose authority has this been done? V.5-14
 - † **Acts 4:7-12** – *And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,⁹ If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;¹⁰ Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.¹¹ This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.¹² Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

⁶ J. D. Payne, *Theology of Mission: A Concise Biblical Theology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021),

- A. There is a close connection between Luke's Gospel and Acts here.
 - B. We see that Christ is exalted as the one sitting on the right hand of God, that he is the rock that the builders rejected, and that there is salvation in no other but in Jesus' name.
 - † **Acts 4:13** – Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.
 - C. The disciples were obviously not formally educated, but their preaching still came with power, consistency, and showed a relationship with Christ.
 - D. This is not to say that being educated is bad; it is more so the comparison that a better, true relationship with Christ for the sake of God's mission is better than cold orthodoxy.
3. Today's enemy, tomorrow's friend V. 15-17
- † **Acts 4:15-16** – *But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,¹⁶ Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.*
 - A. If the Disciples were removed from this room, who is telling this story? Could it be one of them turned to know the Lord?
4. The plan to stop the spread V. 18-23
- † **Acts 4:18-21** – *And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.¹⁹ But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.²⁰ For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.²¹ So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.*
 - A. The religious leaders threatened them, but wanted to avoid physically harming them, for the sake of not offending the people.
 - B. The apostles appeal to the greatest authority. Their obedience to Christ's commission is treated as obedience to God's will, suggesting that they understood Christ's authority as carrying divine authority. **PTQ**
 - C. They are not unwilling to use their experience as well for reasoning.
5. The importance of community for encouragement, assistance, empowerment, and corporate worship. V. 23-37
- A. They explained what happened to the church V.23
 - B. They came to the Lord together in Prayer. V.24-31
 - i. This prayer focused on God's sovereignty V.24 **PTQ**
 - ii. God's prophetic foretelling of this exact kind of difficulty V.25-26
 - iii. God used opposition to Jesus and always planned it that way. V.27-28
 - 1) This opposition was religious -Chief priests / Herod
 - 2) The opposition was political - Pontius Pilate
 - 3) This opposition came from outsiders - Gentiles
 - 4) This opposition came from his own people

- iv. They brought their difficulty to God. V.29-32
 - 1) They requested continued boldness
 - 2) They requested continued miracles
 - 3) God filled them with the Holy Spirit in a second kind of Pentecost experience.
- C. The outside pressure continued to help keep the church focused and committed to one another.
- † **Acts 4:32-35** – *And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.³³ And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.³⁴ Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,³⁵ And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.* **PTQ**

Conclusion: The Church was established in the way that Acts 2:42-27 explains this is then lived out in the following chapters and shows that even external pressure is not sufficient to God's plan. In these chapters, the difficulties begin primarily with threats, but this will extend further. As a church in the modern day, with a heart and mind toward God's mission, we may find ourselves threatened. It is vital that we stand together, especially if our country grows more aggressive to the work of God expanding.



⁷ Elwell and Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament*, 202.

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