

Acts of Jesus – part 11

We saw last time a guy who had a pretty good racket going on outside the east gate of the Temple, but even the best racket leaves you lame compared to a touch from God Himself.

Acts 3:1-10

--Last time we began to answer the question: Where does God's power flow? And we came up with a couple of answers

1. God's power flows where He is.

--Where is God today? With us!!

--We often suffer from the Mary and Martha complex of believing on Him in the past and the future but having a hard time believing Him for today.

--He's with us today and every day – everywhere we go

--If we'd let Him into our daily trials instead of wringing our hands, we'd find He's right there and He'll be more than powerful for us and through us to the world He's sent us to.

2. The second answer to our question = God's power flows where there is expectancy

--Expect Him to be God

--Hudson Taylor's life motto: "Attempt great things for God, Expect Great things from God!"

--Often we get so little from God because we expect so little of Him.

1. We have one more answer left to our question 'where does God's power flow': God's power flows where He will receive the glory.

--God's move to heal this man's legs was for the honor of His great Name. It's the only reason why He ever moves in a miraculous and powerful way, because only when He is glorified are things made right in this messed up world.

--In the beginning all of creation was perfect and God received all the glory--it wasn't until someone else sought glory that things began to unravel.

→God's Power Flows where He Will Receive the Glory←

"The Lord would give us great things if He could only trust us. The Lord would give us great things if He could only trust us not to steal the glory for ourselves."

Acts 4

--Judg. 6:11-12 - Wheat is not threshed in a winepress, it is threshed on a threshing floor on the top of a hill. Gideon is not threshing in the normal place because he's scared to. God's not calling him for what he is but what he will be.

--The Lord did a very similar thing in the N.T. with a guy named Simon: Called him Peter or "Rock", but this was the same guy who wouldn't even confess Jesus before a servant girl, denying Him three times!

--We're going to see where Shifting Sand Simon has turned into Solid Rock Peter.

--Up until this point the church has existed with no opposition, but now things are going to change forever and the opposition becomes the very arena in which the church exists.

1. In this first occurrence of resistance, we are given some valuable rules of thumb about how we are to act and react when we are resisted for the cause of Christ.

--VV. 1-4

1. The first thing that we can gather from this passage as rule of thumb is that we should **expect opposition.**

--On South Padre we learned to expect hurricanes, we didn't wait till they got there to plan for them: we built our buildings up high, we built our structures extra strong, we sunk pilings down deep into the earth.

--Opposition to the Gospel it is much more inevitable than hurricanes; we shouldn't wait for it to come; we should plan for it.

Plan for Opposition

1. Plan to be bold – **II Tim. 1:6-7** – Necessary that we walk with God daily to have the Spirit make us bold.

--Gideon and Peter both had a yellow streak when it came to standing up for God. But when the Spirit came upon them they were bold.

<<**One with God is a Majority; Weakness with God at your side is still Omnipotence.>>**

2. Make sure nothing stands in the way of your boldness:

--What was the first-time sin entered the human existence? Garden of Eden after the Fall they were afraid and hid themselves.

--Unconfessed sin damages our desire to witness, our confidence in prayer, our boldness.

--**Prov. 28:1** = Sin causes us to run --- righteousness causes us to stand strong.

2. The second thing that we can gather concerning opposition is the biblical way to react when under pressure.

VV. 5-6 – They get to spend the night in the “clink”

– High priest was a ruling family – like the religious mafia!!

VV. 8-13 – Any lawyer would tell you that this is not the way you testify in court if you're looking to save your neck. (Didn't deny anything, and didn't claim their civil rights or insanity)

--As witnesses of Christ Jesus, we are not here to save our necks. (They already are!). We are here to save theirs!

--The proper response to opposition to the Gospel is to speak the very Gospel that got us the opposition.

John Wesley, “Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not whether they be clergymen or laymen, they alone will shake the gates of Hell and set up the Kingdom of Heaven upon the Earth.”

3. The third thing we can learn from this situation about how to act and react when we are resisted for the cause of Christ is **to reject the temptation to compromise our message.**

--**VV. 18-21** – Notice: the religious leaders were willing to let them believe anything they wanted, they just didn't want them to act on what they believed.

--It's a strong temptation today: soften our message in order to keep people in their seats giving them a “kinder and gentler” gospel.

--The power of the gospel is not in its presentation --- present softly and gently or preach it till you're red in the face

--**It is in the content of the Gospel that the power of God lies.**

--“Preaching on sin is too condemning and makes people feel uneasy.”

--“The story of Jesus is too exclusive and too bloody.”

--**V. 12**

--**V. 13**-- When they look at us, do they come to the same conclusion?

--Do they see Jesus in what we say, how we act, in the courage we display when faced with opposition?