

Acts Part 9 – Right in the Sight of God

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Acts 4:13-31¹

We left off in our last study with Peter and John getting placed under arrest and being questioned by the Jewish court and a whole host of people concerning the preaching and healing that they had done that resulted in a lame man being healed. The Bible said that the religious leaders were “grieved”. We covered Peter’s defense as he spoke with power of the Holy Ghost and proclaimed that the miracle was done through the power of Jesus Christ in whom they had crucified, but that he had risen from the dead and it was only through His name that men can be saved.

Tonight we pick up where we left off after Peter’s defense and see what they decide and the results of their decision.

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.

To say that Peter and John were bold is an understatement. They are standing before a group of men who more or less could declare them guilty and have them executed, much like they did Jesus. I mean it’s the same group of cut throats. But obviously the Apostles are more concerned with what God thinks than what these religious nuts think and are very bold in front of them.

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These adjectives that they describe Peter and John with; “unlearned, and ignorant” have much the same meaning. It means that they could tell that they had not been taught proper language skills or had been in school and received any type of education – they were “unlearned.” But that word “ignorant” comes from the Greek word *id-ee-o'-tace* which means “*an ignoramus*.” We don’t use that word much these days, we simply say “Idiot.” It has the meaning behind it of being both unlearned and being rude, you might say a buffoon. In other words they didn’t think much of the Apostles. They thought they were a couple of stupid idiots.

The only problem was, unlearned and ignorant men typically aren’t able to do what they have done. Healing a lame man, preaching with power, and speaking in boldness and authority. It was very unusual and that’s why the Bible says “*they marveled*.” That means they had a fascinating admiration for these two men and how they were behaving.

But, here is the good part: and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. There is no doubt about where their power and authority came from. It came from Jesus and they cannot deny that fact and it is going to kill them to have to admit it. To admit that this power came from Jesus would be to admit that they were wrong in their having him arrested and crucified. It means that they would have to acknowledge that they truly did murder the Messiah, the Son of God.

14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

There was no doubt about it, a great miracle had taken place. They had walked past this lame man for years and years and knew that he simply could not walk. To see him standing there beside them was without a doubt a miracle and they could not dispute it or say anything against it. I’m thinking they are starting to feel pretty foolish about now, and well they should.

15 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.

So they send Peter, John, and the lame man out of the room so they can pow-wow together and decide what they are going to do about this situation. What’s the course of action boys? We gotta do something to these guys or else we are going to look bad. We can’t say anything against this miracle that has been done because by now everyone in Jerusalem has heard about it and we can’t say it didn’t happen. We need to decide what to do here.

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

Okay, so they can’t deny the miracle, they can’t sweep it under the rug, they certainly are not going to admit to anyone that they are wrong so they decide the best thing to do is try and get them to shut up and to never preach in the name of Jesus again. So they decide to threaten them. This threat probably went something like this: “The council has hereby unanimously decided that you men are never to teach, preach, or heal anyone in the name of this Jesus, and if we catch you doing it again you are going to be in big trouble!”

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.

I guess the council wasn’t expecting the answer that Peter and John gave them. They put the burden back on the council and told them they would have to decide if what they just threatened them over is right or not in the sight of God. Peter and John already know what’s right and nothing anyone says or does to them is going to change that fact. They pretty much told them... “uh, so you deal with it, but we are going to keep on speaking in Jesus name.”

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.

Obviously this upset the council but their hands are tied. They threatened them again and then let them go because they had not done anything against the law and they can’t make up some trumped up charge because of the high profile case that it was. All the people are glorifying God because of the miracle so if they go against it then they will look bad considering they are supposed to be God’s men and the religious leaders.

22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

¹ All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version

I'm glad that the Lord included this verse so we know that the man was at least 40-years old. That may seem insignificant to some people but I believe there is a purpose for telling us that fact. You see, if this man had only been lame for a little while then the miracle may not have been so great. Perhaps he just healed naturally, and if he had of been a young child it wouldn't have been as big of a deal, they would have marked it up as he grew out of it or something. But for the man to have been lame since birth, as we were told in **Acts 3:2: 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;** and this had lasted above forty years, it is obvious that he had not grew out of it or some medical treatment had healed him or anything like that, it was without a doubt a miracle that could only be wrought in the power of God.

23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

So, Peter and John return to the Church and they tell them everything that had just happened. You can only imagine how worried everyone must have been that their two Pastors had been locked up and put on trial. This could have possibly been the end of Christianity as we know it today had the council prevailed and had Peter and John not stood their ground. I'm sure that was what the Jewish council wanted to happen. --- The Church may have had a business meeting to decide what to do. Should they move somewhere else and continue as a Church? Should they stand their ground and face possible arrest and imprisonment? Should they go into hiding until everything blew over? No doubt all of these things must have been going through their minds.

I want you to notice what the Church did. They did what ALL Churches should do when faced with trials... PRAY!!! This is one of the first examples of a Church all night prayer meeting.

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: 25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. 27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. 29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

Notice that the early Church prayed with great power and they prayed through Scripture." I love to hear a good Scriptural prayer. They prayed that the Lord would give the preachers boldness to preach and to perform miracles. I also notice that they all prayed together "with one accord." There wasn't one person praying with everyone else listening. When they called for altar prayer that early church got serious and everyone joined together in corporate prayer.

Today's church should do the same thing. We should pray in one accord, we should all come together and get serious about praying for the Church and our leaders.

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Notice what sincere prayer in the Church does. It says that "**the place was shaken.**" I need to preach a message titled that if the Lord gives me direction to do so. God answers the Church by shaking the place. Some people dismiss this as the people were "all shook up," but don't you ever dismiss a miracle in the Bible. God's answer to these folks was that He has the power to do anything that he wants and he heard their prayers and is going to give His Apostles the power to preach. I don't know if it was an earthquake or he just shook the building they were in or the ground they were on but it was no small matter.

Don't forget that God can shake the place anytime He wants to, just as He did for Paul and Silas when they were in the prison **Acts 16:25-26: And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.**

The Jews fully understood that God revealed His power through shaking and earthquakes, just as it is written in **Isaiah 29:6: Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.**

And in **Psalms 68:8: The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.**

So an earthquake was a sign to them of God's mighty power. Friends, God can still shake the place today. If we had enough faith and enough power in Christ we could pray and find that God still shakes.

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I believe this is one of the big differences between the 1st Century Church and the 21st Century Church... the people in the early Church were filled with the Holy Ghost. Their faith was real. They were in touch with God at all times and they allowed God to direct their lives and actions through the Holy Ghost and they witnessed great power in the Church.

Today's Church has become anemic. We have lost our power and influence in the world. Would to God that today's Church could experience such power and Spirit and do **what is right in the sight of God.**