

AND BEING LET GO THEY WENT TO THEIR OWN COMPANY

TEXT: ACTS 4:13-37

INTRODUCTION:

1. Acts 3 records the healing of the man who had been lame for forty years (cf. 4:22).
2. In the Bible, the number 40 represents testing. In this case, the Sanhedrin, the religious leaders of Jerusalem, failed the test. They acknowledged that the man was healed. They could not deny that (4:13-16).
3. But being crooked liars and cowards, they did not want the truth to be "spread" any further (4:17).
4. They threatened Peter and John, "and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus" (4:18).
5. W. Graham Scroggie said, "But the Council might as well have told the sun not to shine, and the tides not to move, and the winds not to blow, as to tell these men not to talk about Jesus" (*The Acts of the Apostles*).
6. So Peter and John told them, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (4:19, 20).
7. Peter said, "Whether it be right in the sight of God..." (4:19). The hymnwriter put it this way:
8. "For right is right, since God is God;
And right the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin." -- Frederick William Faber.
9. The book of Acts gives us a wonderful record of the apostolic church. Acts 4:23 says, "And being let go, they went to their own company..."

I. A PRAYING CHURCH

1. Acts 4:24 says that when the members of the apostolic church heard Peter and John's report, "they lifted up their voice" in prayer.
2. There are many references to prayer in the book of Acts (cf. 1:14; 2:42; 3:1), but this prayer in Acts 4:24-30 is the first recorded prayer in the book of Acts.
3. Prayer moves the hand of God (cf. 12:5-7). Alfred Tennyson wrote: "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

4. In their prayer, the apostolic church quoted Scripture. In Acts 4:25 and 26 they quoted Psalm 2, a great Messianic Psalm. "Why did the heathen rage?" (4:25).
5. Incidentally, nowhere in the Old Testament does it say that David was the human author of the second Psalm. But here the Holy Spirit has revealed to us David was the author (Acts 4:25).
6. The heathen are still raging. The apostles faced hostile adversaries, and we do too. It has always been this way for God's people.
7. G. Campbell Morgan, in his commentary on the book of Acts, wrote these words, "Jesus had been crucified because of His testimony to the spiritual, in an age characterized by material thinking."
8. This persecution of the apostolic church was initiated by the Sadducees, who were materialists. Acts 23:8 says, "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit" (cf. 4:1-3).
9. Acts 4:27 refers to Herod and Pontius Pilate, who together with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, all gathered together against the Lord Jesus Christ.
10. Today, the corrupt politicians, the anti-Christian news media, the religious apostates, the Muslims, the terrorists, the liberals, the communists, the homosexuals are all gathered together against the Lord Jesus Christ.
11. Tim Tebow recently canceled his appearance at the historic First Baptist Church of Dallas, because homosexuals do not like Pastor Robert Jeffress' stand.
12. This is bigger than Tim Tebow and a Baptist church in Texas. Homosexuals and their allies in the liberal news media are trying to shut down all Christians who speak out against their sin.
13. The adversaries of the Gospel can do their worst but God is still on the throne.
14. Psalm 2:4 and 5 says, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."
15. The adversaries of the Gospel can do their worst but God is still on the throne (4:28; cf. 2:23; 3:18).
16. These Scriptures do not diminish man's responsibility. They emphasize God's sovereignty.
17. In 1812, when Napoleon was getting ready to invade Russia he asked for an opinion from his commanding officer. The commanding officer wisely remarked, "Man proposes, but God disposes."

18. Napoleon was not happy with that answer and said, "I propose, and I dispose." But Napoleon's pride led to his downfall. God sent a heavy snowstorm and brought the proud general to his knees. Hindered by the snow and the cold Russian weather, Napoleon was forced to retreat. His army of 600,000 was decimated, and less than 100,000 of his soldiers made it back to France.
19. Calvary was all foreknown and foretold (Acts 4:28). The clearest pictures of the cross are not found in the pages of the four Gospels, they are found in the pages of Old Testament prophecy, such as Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53.
20. Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. John Phillips wrote, "God turned that horrible scaffold upon which men murdered their Maker into a stage upon which He demonstrated the wonder of His saving grace."
21. The disciples prayed for "boldness" (4:29) and God answered their prayer (4:31). That boldness came from the power of the Holy Spirit (4:31).

II. A SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH (4:31).

1. Week after week as we go through the Book of Acts I have tried to emphasize the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit (4:31; cf. 4:8; 1:8; 2:38, 39).
2. Notice that the apostles did not ask God to stop the "threatenings." They merely prayed, "And, now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word" (4:29).
3. God gave them boldness, and many more souls were saved (cf. 5:14).
4. A.T. Pierson, in his book, *The Acts of the Holy Spirit*, says, "The boldness is traced distinctly to the infilling of the Spirit, as though the fullness within could not be restrained, but like a stream bursting through all barriers, sweeping away all obstacles, must scoop out for itself a channel in speech. In every age boldness, such as is born of the Spirit of God, is the first requisite of God's witnesses."

III. A UNITED CHURCH (4:32)

1. Acts 4:32 says, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul..."

2. This is taught all throughout the book of Acts, and all throughout the Bible. Psalm 133:1, 2 says, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments."
3. Acts 1:14 says, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication."
4. Acts 2:1 says, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."
5. Acts 2:46 says, "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple."
6. Acts 4:24 says, "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord."
7. Acts 5:12 says, "They were all with one accord in Solomon's porch."
8. First Corinthians 1:10 says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
9. This unity expressed itself in sharing (Acts 4:32-37). Charles Ryrie said, "This is not 'Christian communism.' The sale of property was quite voluntary (vs. 34). The right of possession was not abolished. The community did not control the money until it had voluntarily been given to the apostles. The distribution was not made equally but according to need. These are not communistic principles. This is Christian charity in its finest display" (*The Acts of the Apostles*).

CONCLUSION:

1. When the Lord's adversaries, Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Roman government, and the people of Israel (Acts 4:27) gathered together to crucify the Lord Jesus Christ, they were only partially fulfilling the prophecy of the second Psalm.
2. This Messianic Psalm will be completely and totally fulfilled when all of the Lord's adversaries gather together to oppose Him at His second coming (Psalm 2:1-12). The book of Revelation calls this the battle of Armageddon.
3. The world opposed Christ at His first coming, and they will oppose Him at His second coming. And now during this interval between the first and second coming, our job is to tell people far and wide that Jesus Christ is their only hope.