

"Facing the Sanhedrin"

Part 3

Acts 4

Introduction: The people we spend time with have a substantial influence on how we live our lives. This is why the Bible commands us to separate from unbelievers.

2 Corinthians 6:14-17

¹⁴ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

¹⁵ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

¹⁶ And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

1 Corinthians 5:6

⁶ Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

1 Corinthians 15:33

³³ Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

Now while this is true, the opposite is also true. When our company is with the righteous it also shows forth in our lives. This we shall see as we move on in Acts 4.

I. The Testimony

Notice Acts 4:13

There is much to see within this verse.

a. Peter and John were unlearned and ignorant men.

This means that they were uneducated in rabbinical schools. Peter and John were fishermen, but they were not stupid individuals. They were just not educated as the Sanhedrin were. They certainly had been equipped and taught by God. They would have

never been able to teach according to the standards of the religious leaders, but God was certainly able to use them. Let us keep in mind that John wrote the Gospel of John, first, second, and third John, as well as Revelation. Peter wrote first and second Peter. Both of these men were very intelligent and knew the Old Testament very well. Therefore they were able to stand up to the Sanhedrin.

Psalm 119:97-100

⁹⁷ *O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.*

⁹⁸ *Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.*

⁹⁹ **I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.**

¹⁰⁰ *I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.*

Application:

A man or a woman who is grounded in the Bible will have no problem standing up to the highest educated people in the world. God's Word equips us to be able to stand for the Truth no matter who is against us. This is one reason why it is so important for God's people to learn the entire counsel of God. Here in our text are two fishermen standing against the highest court in Jerusalem and the men of the Sanhedrin marvelled at Peter and John's ability to answer.

b. The life of Jesus was seen in Peter and John.

Notice Acts 4:13 again.

The Sanhedrin marvelled and took knowledge that they had been with Jesus. The characteristics of Jesus were evident in their lives. Their words were unanswerable just as the Words of Jesus. Their words brought great conviction upon the hearers as did the Words of Jesus. These two men were just like Jesus because they had walked with Him, they had listened to Him, they were taught by Him, and now He lived inside of them. Is it any wonder that the Sanhedrin marvelled?

Application:

These two men are the picture of 2 Corinthians 5:17-18a.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18a

¹⁷ *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

¹⁸ *And all things are of God...*

The more time we spend with our Lord the more of Him will be seen in our lives. People should be able to tell that we walk with Jesus, that we are taught by Jesus and that He lives within us. Our words should be as the Words of Jesus. People should truly marvel at us as believers because we should be different, especially today. We are called to shine in a dark world.

Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴ *Ye are the light of the world.* *A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

¹⁵ *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

¹⁶ *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

c. Fellowship must precede service.

Notice Acts 4:13 again.

These men had been with Jesus and therefore their ministry was very effective. Let us notice a verse from Mark's Gospel.

Mark 3:14

¹⁴ *And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,*

Here in verse 14 we see the order that Jesus requires. Before we can serve, we must first be walking in fellowship. This verse tells us that "they should be with Him." This means that they would walk with Him and be taught by Him and enjoy a close fellowship with Him. This is exactly what would make them so effective because the result of being with Jesus would be to see His Spirit work His power through them.

Application:

If we are going to be effective in serving our Lord, we must remember this very principle. Before service there must be time spent with our Lord.

Notice the words of Whitcomb:

"Before there can be an outflow there needs to be an inflow. Out of our innermost being must be rivers of living water before we can be a blessing to others. Moses was with Him 40 years in the backside of the desert. David was in the wilderness watching the few sheep of Jesse. Paul was three years in secret before he went to Jerusalem to see Peter. W. Barker has said, "See to it that your service is the outcome of communion with Christ. Be careful to allow nothing to hinder your enjoyment of divine love, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. Seek to realize for yourselves the exceeding preciousness of Christ, so that when you speak of Him it may be out of the fulness of a heart made abundantly happy." The early opponents of Christianity "marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus"

II. The Reaction

Notice Acts 4:14-17

When I read these verses, I find myself asking, "What is wrong with these men of the Sanhedrin?" They make two statements in verse 16 about the miracle that should have opened their eyes.

Notice Acts 4:16 again.

1. The miracle was notable.
2. The miracle was undeniable.

This tells us they fully understood that something supernatural had happened. They should have fallen to their knees, repented, and turned to Jesus Christ for they could clearly see this miracle was connected to Him and done in the power of His name. Peter had also explained to them in verse 12 that they MUST be saved, and Jesus was the only means of salvation. But instead of repenting these men made the choice to suppress the Truth which they were exposed to and then they decided to silence Peter and John. This is a case of "cancel culture." Peter and John spoke the absolute Truth, but the religious leaders made the choice to reject it because it would interfere with their rule over the people. All of this reveals the depravity of the sinful heart of man. These men had undeniable evidence right in front of them but would not allow it to have a place in their hearts. Because of their suppression of the Truth they were now under the wrath of God as well as strong demonic influence. We can be sure that Satan is behind the plan of these men to silence the Truth.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

³ *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:*

⁴ *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Jesus spoke of this spiritual blindness when He addressed the Pharisees.

John 9:39-41

³⁹ *And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.*

⁴⁰ *And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?*

⁴¹ *Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.*

This spiritual blindness has happened to many today because of their suppression of the Truth.

Romans 1:18-22

¹⁸ *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;*

¹⁹ *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.*

²⁰ *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

²¹ *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

²² *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,*

III. Doing the Right Thing

Notice Acts 4:18-20

The Sanhedrin were determined to silence Jesus' disciples, but Peter and John were determined that they would obey God over man. Now this is interesting because Peter knew that believers had the responsibility of submitting to the governmental officials.

1 Peter 2:13-15

¹³ *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;*

¹⁴ *Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.*

¹⁵ *For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:*

Peter answers many questions with Acts 4 and 1 Peter 2. We are to submit to our God appointed leaders but not when they over reach in an attempt to keep us from walking in obedience to God's Word.

Notice Acts 4:19-20 again.

Peter put it right back on the Sanhedrin and suggested that they judge what was right; to obey God or obey men? There are times when we must disobey the authorities in order to obey God.

He then explained that after being with Jesus and seeing His miracles and hearing His teaching there was no way they could be silent.

Conclusion:

Notice Acts 4:21-22

Notice the word "FOR" at the beginning of verse 22. It is a connective, and it connects the two verses together. But what is the connection? The Sanhedrin could not bring any punishment on Peter and John, and they could not deny the miracle because the man was above 40 years old. The idea is that since he was this far along in life there was nothing anyone could do, so the healing could in not be explained away. God made sure that in what had happened He would be glorified, and He was.

Sometimes this is why it takes time for things to unfold in our lives. God has a plan and when the time is right, He will work His plan so that He will be glorified.