

Soon in Trouble for Doing Good (Acts 3:1 - Acts 4:37)

I. Introduction

A. *This Week in Clear Living*

1. Why were Peter and John going to the temple?
2. Why did they take time from their schedule to deal with the beggar? Most people would have looked away and kept walking.
3. Do you think that the ability to heal others was a sign gift?
4. From where did Peter and John get their courage to take on their adversaries?
5. Acts 4:32 mentions the commune lifestyle of the early believers in Jerusalem. Was that way of life good or bad?
6. How was the Holy Spirit building Jesus' church in this lesson?
7. How was the Holy Spirit showing His deity in this lesson?

Question: The early Jerusalem church lived in a commune style. Acts 4:32 mentions the commune lifestyle of the early believers in Jerusalem. Was that way of life good or bad? Was having everything in common a good thing or a bad thing? Did the Lord bless their commune lifestyle?

- B. They shared everything. It was a one-for-all, all-for-one atmosphere.
- C. But did the Lord bless that way of living. The answer is NO.
 1. Acts 2:44 and Acts 4:32 say that they had all things in common.
 2. Acts 2:45 says that they sold their possessions and shared among themselves as someone had a need.
- D. Evidence that God did not bless that lifestyle.
 1. No evidence exists to suggest that any other churches lived in communes.
 2. The practice led those people to a point of desperate poverty.
 - a. In I Corinthians 16:1-3, the Apostle Paul had instructed the Galatian and Corinthian churches to take up a love offering to help out the Jerusalem church.
 - b. Romans 15:26 mentions an offering from those in Macedonia and Achaia for the Jerusalem church.
 3. Such poverty is not reported among any of the other churches. They were poor in later years because they had not been wise with their money during their early church years.
- E. Nevertheless, the Lord blessed the Jerusalem church for their hard work and faithfulness in other areas. The church grew because:
 1. They continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship.
 2. They were in one accord and had a singleness of heart.
 3. They went from house to house sharing the gospel with others.
- F. Some verses that might guide your handling of time, talent, and treasure.
 1. Matthew 22:37 says, "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

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2. Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 3. Matthew 6:21 says, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
 4. II Corinthians 9:7 says, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."
 5. I Timothy 5:8 says, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."
 6. I Corinthians 4:1-2 says, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."
 7. Acts 18:3 says, "And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers."
- G. ***Conclusion: The first three verses say that our giving of time, talent, and treasure should be consistent with our love for the Lord. The fourth verse says that we should give what we can give cheerfully, not that we should give and then grin and bear it. Nothing about the Christian life should involve pretending. The fifth and sixth verses remind us that we must balance our time, treasure, and talents to satisfy all of our obligations and commitments. The seventh verse tells us that the Apostle Paul worked as a tentmaker rather than be a financial burden on the churches that he was trying to start.***

Question: Why were Peter and John going to the temple? Why did they take time from their schedule to deal with the beggar? Most people would have looked away and kept walking. Do you think that the ability to heal others was a sign gift?

- II. Peter and John went to the temple to pray.
- A. In the beginning, the church still had roots in Jewish tradition because the disciples were Jewish.
 1. They went to the temple in the ninth hour, which would have been three o'clock in the afternoon.
 2. Hour (*hora*) - a certain definite time or season fixed by natural law and returning with the revolving year.
 - B. In verse 1, they went to the temple at the fixed time because it was part of their Jewish heritage.
 - C. They also went boldly because they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit and because they were not afraid of their adversaries.
 - D. In verses 2, they encountered a crippled beggar, but they did not have any money to give him.
 1. How do we respond when we see someone asking for money?
 - a. Many times, we ignore their pleas for help.
 - b. Many times, beggars at stoplights are bums that refuse to work.

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- c. *In those situations, we should do what the Holy Spirit wants us to do. Sometimes the Holy Spirit may lead us to do something, and sometimes He may not. In all of life's situations, we should have our spiritual ears open so that we can understand what the Lord wants us to do.*
- d. Peter and John took time to deal with this person because the Holy Spirit led them to do so.
- E. In verses 3-8, Peter healed the man through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. Speaking in tongues was probably a sign gift, which means that it was probably a temporary sign from the Lord intended to show the Jews that the church was approved by God.
 - 2. The power to heal was probably also a sign gift.
 - 3. When studying the Book of Acts, we should focus on the apostles' message rather than their experiences. Their experiences were speaking in tongues and occasionally healing others, but their message was always to repent and come to the Lord.

Question: From where did Peter and John get their courage to take on their adversaries?

- III. When the people gathered, Peter used the opportunity to preach Jesus.
 - A. In verses 9-10, people saw the commotion with the healed man and came to see what was happening.
 - B. In verses 11-26, Peter preached the gospel to the Jewish crowd.
 - 1. Notice that the Holy Spirit had used tongues in Acts 2 as a way to present the gospel and that He was using the healing of a crippled person to do the same thing again.
 - 2. Peter's example is worthy of imitation.
 - a. The Lord wants to use us to reach others for Him.
 - b. Peter saw the opportunity to minister, and he used it.
 - c. He saw that opportunity because of his closeness to the Holy Spirit.
 - d. Later in I Peter 3:15, he would write, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*"
 - 3. Peter preached with the same boldness as in Acts 2.
 - a. In verse 13, he reminded the Jews that they had delivered Jesus to be crucified. He did the same thing in Acts 2:36.
 - b. In verse 15, he told them that God had approved Jesus by resurrecting Him from His grave.
 - c. In verse 16, he told them that the power to heal the crippled man had come from the Lord. Peter did not try to take credit for had happened.

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- d. In verse 19, he told them to repent of their evil deeds and that the Lord would forgive them. **Peter understood what it meant to be forgiven for having done something horrible.**
- C. In Acts 4:1-4, Peter and John were arrested. However, five thousand additional people had been saved.
- D. In verses 5-14 the council questioned the power by which Peter had healed the man.
 1. Peter immediately gave Jesus the credit.
 2. Notice also, in doing so, that he again used the opportunity to remind those around him that they had crucified their Messiah.
 3. Matthew 10:17-20 says, "But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."
 4. Verse 14 indicates that Peter gave Jesus the credit, the healed man was before them, and they could not do anything about it.
- E. **Some people would say that speaking in tongues is a great gift from the Holy Spirit. However, an even greater gift would be to have the boldness and Spirit-given power to stand up to one's adversaries like Peter, John, and the others.**
 1. Their boldness came from the Holy Spirit with them.
 2. An important observation: Peter and John did not pull their determination to preach Christ from any kind of internal personal drive. It was all the Holy Spirit, and they were simply His mouthpieces.
 3. We do not have to do what Peter and John did. Our goal should be simply to do what the Holy Spirit wants us to do.
- F. In verses 15-21, the council threatened Peter and John to stop their activities, but it was to no avail.
 1. Notice in verses 19-20 how Peter responded to the threats.
 2. Notice in verse 21 that the Lord got the glory.
 3. Our goal in life should be to glorify the Lord simply by saying and doing what He would have us say and do.

Question: How was the Holy Spirit building Jesus' church in this lesson? How was the Holy Spirit showing His deity in this lesson?

- IV. The Holy Spirit was very powerful in these two chapters of Acts.
- A. A man was healed.
 - B. The enemy was confronted.

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- C. The people glorified the Lord.
- D. The church was experiencing phenomenal growth.

V. Next week's lesson: "Dealing Harshly with Sin and Unimpeded Growth" (Acts 5:1-42)