



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 12 The HOPE of the Resurrection
By Pastor Jody May 12/04/2022

Acts 4:1-12 ESV

Peter and John Before the Council

4 And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ²greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

⁵On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, ⁶with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" ⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. ¹¹This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹²And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

[INTRODUCTION]

5 weeks ago we had landed on Peter's 2nd evangelistic sermon and just like the 1st one on Pentecost, his 2nd one is accompanied by a miracle. Miracles accompanied the preaching of the Apostles to demonstrate the power of God. These physical miracles show that God has power over every aspect of a person, and His ability to change/manipulate a physical reality also relays God's ability to effect spiritual reality, and anything affected in the spiritual realm is an **eternal reality**. **Miracles point to God's**

Healing a person in the physical world means they have received forgiveness (the removal of justified wrath) in the spiritual world, showing God forgives sin first and is quite capable of offering effectual eternal Salvation.



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ability to effect one's eternal life. That is good news, that's the best news you and I can HOPE for. This good news that God saves us from an eternal death is what begins to expand the church. **Do you really want to hear what's at the heart of the Christmas Message?**

¹²"And there is **SALVATION** in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

At Christmas, the HOPE of Christmas is that you have a RISEN SAVIOR, and by Him because He lives, He can and will save you.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for... Hebrews 11:1

Main Point:

HOPE at Christmas is the HOPE of Eternal Salvation.

Over the next several weeks we are going to witness the early pains and joys of church expansion. The initial body, the first church, has been brought in at Pentecost and now it is about to grow. It needs to be pointed out that growth is a good thing, but growth is often accompanied with pain. That's the way it is for all things. God is going to grow His church but the process that He is going to put them through is tough, He's going to challenge them, He's going to make them do some things that are intimidating.

And if we want to become better and stronger as a church it means God will put us through some tough situations as well. **(How is HOPE birthed?)** The HOPE of Eternal Life comes through the challenges of bringing Christ's name into this world.

Christmas - It was a challenge both spiritually and physically for Mary and Joseph to play their part in the Incarnation of Christ. Perhaps this Christmas if you want to share the in the HOPE of Christmas, **you may need to share in the challenges** of it as well. **What are we doing to bring the name of Christ into this world**, how is our living HOPE Jesus, being incarnated in our life?



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Let's go back to our text and examine the first challenge to the new church. As you will see it doesn't start small, but God goes big with His challenge. No guts no glory!

1. **HOPE** – God's people are called to **TALK** about it!

4 And as they were **speaking** to the people,

Alright, evangelism 101, ready for the first part of the challenge to have HOPE; v.1 it says, "**they were speaking to the people**". λαλέω (*laleō*) a verb, simply means to say words but the power of this particular word in that it is used 295 times in the NT always in reference to the Gospel, that is the NT shows us that the **Gospel is a thing that must be SPOKEN!** In a world that says you can only have free speech if you agree with the popular or state-controlled beliefs, when there is a failure to recognize the 1st amendment, the Bible says that you are to speak about the HOPE you have in you.

While Peter is wrapping up this bang-up sermon, it gets shut down. The *popo* arrive and serve him papers and lead him out. Why? Because **he was talking about Jesus**. Isn't it strange that for over 2,000 years the most offensive thing you can tell anyone still hasn't changed: "**You got a problem it's called sin, I know the solution His name is Jesus the Christ.**"

Let's look at **WHY** this action of speaking got Peter in trouble.

4 And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ²greatly **annoyed** because they were **teaching** the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

They were annoyed, because of **what** they were teaching and **who** their teaching was pointing to.

Why would they be annoyed with HOPE-filled good news? Well because the thing they were pointing to, this healing in Jesus' name, was blasphemous,



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only God could heal but if the man was healed in Jesus' name that meant trouble!

See what this all means is that if they are doing these miracles/teachings in the name of Jesus, it makes Jesus responsible, and that means Jesus is alive somewhere. AND if **He's alive He's still a threat**, and God help them if He came back from the dead, because that means He has power that can only be given by God. **For Jesus to have power means they are powerless!** It messes with their belief system.

The Sadducees, the controlling party in the Sanhedrin, believed that the Messiah was not a man but was a movement represented by them. This movement that was brought in by the Maccabees in the time between the OT and the NT, they saw themselves as the Saviors of the Israelites. That makes them the ones that should have the power.

On top of this Sadducees did not believe in the afterlife. That makes their beliefs about end times/eschatology wrapped up all in the present. To them they are living in the end times every day, for death brought nothing. That makes the problem simple to identify, **Jesus threatens their way of life**, it removes their power because it points to the HOPE that all men will be resurrected to an eternal life.

That right there is what makes the church so dangerous. When you have a bunch of people that are sold out to the idea that there is more to life than today. Here's what it got them:

³And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.

Jail time – and they were held until sentencing- **without bail.**

Friends I just want to point out why it is so important we study God's Word, is because what the Apostles encountered 2,000 years ago, is what we still encounter today, the **willful aggression against the truth of the gospel.**



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You see man-made systems like Communism, World Economic Forum, Religious Climatologists, Atheistic LGBTQs, Pro-Choice Warriors, all believe in the same thing, **no afterlife**. Their best day is today, that is why they are willing to cause you to suffer, to try and remove rights, to get you to shut up and it's why you and I need to **SPEAK out**. If we really cared for the lost, then **instead of being quiet we get loud**, but you get loud about the right things and while being truthful be courteous - **Jesus first + then Sin that Separates + Hope of Eternal Life**. And here's what can happen:

⁴ But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

When we speak out about our reasons for HOPE this Christmas and for the rest of our lives, people will get saved, the dead come to life, and Jesus gets glorified, because here's what's being realized.

HOPE at Christmas is the HOPE of Eternal Salvation.

2. **HOPE** – Jesus talk is empowered by the Holy Spirit!

⁵ On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, ⁶ with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?"

Alright let's see who got jury selection this day, I mean this is a first-time offense for an unknown, this should be a quick slap on the wrist, here's your fine, pay the bailiff and get out of here. That's not what happens though.

You have Annas, Caiaphas, and John (head of the DOJ) all of the High Priestly family. These are the same folks that caught Jesus, condemned Him for heresy, turned Him over to Pilate, and demanded the death of a traitor for an innocent man. So, here's what we are seeing, you would have the Sanhedrin, the legislative body, the Temple Guard (Levites) who are the federal agents or



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the DOJ, and you have the High Priests representing the executive branch of government.

Here's is what was on trial that day, **HOPE**. You see the governing body of the Jews had put Jesus to death because that was their HOPE. They hoped to keep their power, they hoped that by His death the people would calm down, they hoped by getting the Romans to do it they could lay the brutality of it at their feet, their hope was to gain favor with Herod to keep them as their ally, their HOPE was to kill Jesus, to make Him the scapegoat for their lack of ability to keep power. Real HOPE could have been theirs if they would have been but humble men.

Peter's trial is in the presence of the full weight and might of Jewish culture and governance, and he has done the exact same thing that got Jesus killed!? All because Peter has offered HOPE not in the Temple and its' power but in Jesus. **How do you think he's feeling right now?**

Just a couple of months earlier Peter was outside the very same room, standing next to a brazier waiting to see what would happen to His Lord. While standing there he denies Jesus 3 times for fear of life. He is the one guilty of treason, but something has changed in Peter. Can you imagine, he's the one in the room now, he's the one looking at the men that killed His Lord, He's the one being questioned as Jesus was, **Here's the Growing Pains, Here's the test, will Peter deny Jesus OR will He SPEAK for Jesus?**

⁸Then Peter, filled with the **Holy Spirit**, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders,

Peter **speaks again** but this time it is to a captive audience. What the audience doesn't know is that this is not about the arrest and detention of Peter & John, but that God has brought them all here to proclaim their condemnation for killing His Son. **The Spirit was on Peter**, he must be remembering what Jesus told him:

Luke 21:14-15 ESV



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Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer,
¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.

Because here is the strategy that God loves to implore:

1 Cor. 1:27 ESV – But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;

Peter begins his courtroom address: ⁹ if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed,

Peter is reciting Hebraic law from the book of Deuteronomy, remember Jesus had taught them the connections to Himself after His resurrection. Look at what he is referring to:

Hebrews 13:1-3 ESV

13 “If a prophet or someone who has dreams arises among you and proclaims a **sign or wonder** to you, ² and that sign or wonder he has promised you comes about, but he says, ‘Let us follow other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us worship them,’ ³ do not listen to that prophet’s words or to that dreamer. For the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul.

In light of the law, Peter connects Jesus to God by calling Him the Christ first and then lays into them:

¹⁰ let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus **Christ** of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well.

Jesus is the anointed one of God so of course this sign was done in God’s name! He connects the rulers to the Messiah’s death, he connects the fact that God raised Him from the dead, which means Jesus was innocent and was fully capable of using His earned power. It also shows He is alive and thus has



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been vindicated for all His actions by God Himself. **On the basis of Biblical law, the Sanhedrin stands condemned.**

The HS gives Peter courage, He gives Him knowledge, and He gives him the reasoning to condemn them all in one sentence (Luke 21:14-15). If that's what Peter can do through a simple man, in the face of his accusers what do you think He can do through you in this world today.

Do you have someone that doubts God, that questions their faith, that is always saying things like "Jesus wouldn't be like that" or that "God loves all people". What you and I have to keep in mind is yes, we are called to speak, but the first and most important thing of the Gospel is to **open with Jesus**. Let's stop letting the world tell us how to define Jesus' love and like Peter let's use God's Word to define who Jesus is and let it define what is justified. He came to reveal the Father's attitude toward rebellion not to accept the defiance of men. You want to start somewhere and have the Spirit support you in your declaration, you start with Jesus and see where that goes.

HOPE at Christmas is the true HOPE of Christ revealed by the HS.

3. **HOPE** – A HS empowered HOPE is necessary to **save** us.

¹¹This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the **cornerstone**.

Peter now keeps the Sanhedrin on the ropes and keeps flexing his knowledge of the OT.

Psalm 118:22 ESV

²² The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

This is known as a Messianic prophecy and what Peter does by putting this forward is that he is **removing from the Sanhedrin the ability to claim they are any kind of Messiah**. In fact, when they can see Jesus as the real one, it is because God foresaw that, it was preordained.



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And what had started 34 years earlier in a day's journey from where Peter stood, in a town called Bethlehem, the HOPE that was brought forth into the world is finally realized and proclaimed, based on the evidence of the resurrection, that the HOPE of not just Israel but all men had come.

¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

HOPE at Christmas is the HOPE of Eternal Salvation.

Please notice that HOPE is defined by God not by us, so there is a necessity for God's people to explain this.

But God:

1st there is only one way to God and that is through Jesus.

2nd if we say there is another way, we deny the name of Jesus.

3rd acknowledgment of sin must be dealt with, in order to have Jesus.

Now friends, I want to leave us with this challenge this morning, I want to work this out with you, what does it **mean to accept the responsibility of speaking the HOPE of Christmas to someone?** Well folks let's work out our faith that we really believe the Bible is true, secondly let's practice speaking, thirdly let's be smart and plan it out.

Open up your calendars with me...

[PRAYER]

[COMMUNION]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, who has sent HOPE into this world in the form of His eternal Son.



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Go in the name of the Son, that came to the world bring the HOPE of eternal life.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that wants to birth HOPE in you and through you by **SPEAKING** the name of Jesus to a lost world.