

By What Name?

(Acts 4:1-22)

Introduction

1. Accelerate: Jesus accelerates us by the power of the Holy Spirit to a transformative, relational, missional life in Christ.
2. How do people respond when we see the work of God around us?
 - a. Sometimes we fear He will do something we don't want or ask for.
 - b. We can learn to be genuinely thankful for His work, regardless of the circumstances.
3. Background: [Acts 3:1-26] Peter & John heal a crippled man by Jesus' name to point people to Him in repentance.

People want to be in control [Acts 4:1-7]

1. [1-4] The ruling elite get annoyed
 - a. [1] People who run the Temple: Priests, captain of the guard (#2 after the High Priest), Sadducees.
 - i. Sadducees: Another sect of Judaism (like Pharisees).
 - ii. Privileged aristocracy: They are rich & powerful
 1. The High Priest comes from their line, as they claim roots back to the High Priest Zadok (1 Kgs 2:35); hence 'Zadok'-sees ("righteous ones").
 2. They work with the Roman government to protect their economic & political interests.
 3. Most Jews despise them.
 - iii. Theology:
 1. Most only accept the Pentateuch as Scriptures.
 2. They believe the spirit dies with the physical body, leading to a materialistic outlook on life.
 - b. [2] They're annoyed by John & Peter's follow-up teaching about eternal life & resurrection through Jesus.
 - c. [3] They arrest Peter & John, imprisoning them overnight for the Sanhedrin (supreme court) in the morning.
 - d. [4] They're annoyed because 5000 men (not counting women & children) now follow Jesus as a result of the miraculous healing & teaching about Jesus.
2. [5-7] The Supreme Court questions the disciples' authority.
 - a. [5] The Sanhedrin (civic/religious leaders) convene
 - i. [6] This includes Sadducees like the High Priest emeritus (Annas), his son-in-law & current high priest (Caiaphas), & other members of the high priestly family.
 - ii. Sanhedrin met in Hall of Hewn Stones (building in the North wall of the Temple Mount)
 1. They walked by this man at the Temple gate every day, but are oblivious to the hurt/need.
 2. Jesus' followers help this man; they never prayed for him, helped him, did anything
 - iii. Point: They are all alarmed; they are all part of the wealthy, powerful ruling elite in Israel.
 - b. [7] They inquire: "By what power/name did you do this?"
 - i. They don't ask because they're curious or really want to know.
 - ii. Their question implies: "It wasn't us; the teaching is not ours; we didn't give you permission to act. Whose authority gave you the right to do this? We're in charge/control."
 - iii. They are more concerned about their standing, position, authority & control (themselves), then about a miracle (the healed man / God's work).
3. Underlying issue: Because of sin/selfishness, people want to be in control/authority.
 - a. To be lord over our own lives, others, & our circumstances
 - b. We fear losing what we have here (in this life).
4. Application: What do you hold in such high value in this life that you grab/control because you're afraid to lose it?
 - a. Even if Jesus says it's not good for you, and were to take it away?

Disciples give Jesus credit [Acts 4:8-12]

1. [8-11] Disciples give Jesus credit for His work in them & through them.
 - a. [8] Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit to address the ruling, privileged aristocracy.
 - i. "Filled with the Holy Spirit": To say 'yes' to God & invite God's will be done in him & through him.
 - ii. Jesus fills him with words & wisdom to speak to the Sanhedrin (cf. Luke 21:12-15).
 - b. [9-10a] This miraculous authority & power to heal are from Jesus.
 - i. "By the name of Jesus": Not magic words, but by Jesus' power & authority, it was done.
 - c. [10b-11] They are opposite teams with God: They killed Him but God raised Him.
 - i. They are guilty of crucifying/rejecting Jesus as King, Savior, Lord, God (cf. Acts 2:36; 3:15)
2. [12] Disciples give Jesus credit for being the source of salvation
 - a. This miracle is proof of Jesus' power & authority to give salvation.
 - b. He alone has power & authority to move us from sin/death to resurrection/eternal life (cf. John 14:6).
 - c. Jesus doesn't just bring help/comfort for this life, but also guarantees a future/hope in the next (for eternity).
3. *Application:* As we give thanks this holiday season, we must give Jesus the credit He is due.
 - a. Do you give credit to Jesus for His miraculous work (in us & through us)?
 - b. Do you give Jesus credit as the only means of salvation?
 - c. Do you give Jesus credit, even in the face of opposition (like Peter & John)?

Who is in authority? [Acts 4:13-18]

1. [13-16] The Sanhedrin & Sadducees are at a crossroad.
 - a. [13] They see fearless confidence in Christ by uneducated/common men
 - i. They know the words/wisdom are not their own, but the influence of their Master, Jesus.
 - b. [14] They can't deny Jesus' authority/power to heal/save because the healed man is standing right there.
 - i. By the authority & power of Jesus, this man is healed, salvation has come.
 - ii. It is an authority & power greater than their own (as the Sanhedrin).
 - c. [15-16] They're at a crossroad; which direction will they go in acknowledging Jesus' authority?
2. [17-18] The Sanhedrin & Sadducees choose poorly.
 - a. [17] Their sole concern: "Spread no further among the people... speak no more to anyone in this name."
 - b. We don't care what Jesus has done; stop telling us/people about Him (His work of healing/salvation). We don't want people to follow Him, be changed by Him. We're the leaders here, not Jesus.
 - c. Issue: They refuse to acknowledge Jesus' authority because it messes up their plans/control.
3. Implications: If Jesus' authority is greater than mine, then...
 - a. People don't have to do what I say; they have to listen to Jesus.
 - b. They don't have to treat me with deference because I'm wealthy/powerful; they have to revere/worship Jesus.
 - c. It's not my money, stuff, time, energy; Jesus gets to determine how I use/invest it.
 - d. I don't get to pick & choose which things I obey from His Word; it's all good & all from God.
 - i. E.g., forgiving/loving enemies; His prescription for holy, healthy relationships;
 - e. He can bring all sorts of people & changes to church; it's His church & we follow His lead.
4. We love sin/selfishness, want control/authority.
 - a. We want to be lord over our own lives, others, circumstances; we fear losing what we have here.
 - b. But when Jesus comes & does a miraculous work, it upsets the status quo & interrupts our plans, control & authority over situations.
 - c. He doesn't do it because He's mad or mean; He doesn't just do the miraculous work in others, but ignore us.
 - d. He actually shakes up our status quo for our good (cf. Jer 29:11)
 - i. He moves us out of self-centeredness/selfishness.
 - ii. He frees us from working to maintain control or trying to be lord/god over our own circumstances.
 - iii. He gives us opportunity to trust His authority & goodness as true Lord.
5. *Application:* Who's in authority in your life?
 - a. By whose name are people/circumstances miraculously changed, healed & saved?
 - b. Who has authority to change the direction of your life or your status quo?
 - c. Surrender to Jesus as Lord; trust Jesus as good.