

Opposition to the Gospel

In Acts 4 opposition to the gospel begins. This opposition will grow and grow in intensity as we move through the book of Acts. Such opposition is something the church has experienced in many times and places over the centuries. As we look at this passage, we will see several things that enabled Peter and John to share the good news about Jesus in the face of opposition. What enabled them to be bold in the face of opposition are the very same things that we need to believe and hold onto in our day with whatever opposition we may face. It is these things that can give us courage to step out in faith and bring up a spiritual conversation with a friend, family member, or whomever we sense God is leading us to reach out to.

Read Acts 4:1-22

1. What sticks out to you in this passage? What do you notice?
2. Why were the Jewish religious leaders “greatly annoyed” at Peter and John (v. 2)?
3. If you were Peter or John, what might you be feeling/thinking as you spend the night in jail considering that tomorrow you will face the very group that had condemned Jesus to death a few weeks earlier?
4. What gave Peter and John boldness in the face of the opposition that they experienced?
5. Throughout the history of the church, including in many places around the world now, believers have experienced great opposition to the gospel. What kind of opposition do we tend to face in sharing the good news about Jesus?

Brian said:

In Acts 1:8 when Jesus commanded his disciples to be his witnesses, he promised that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. Peter experiences that here. God gave him courage, boldness, and the words to say in this moment. This same Spirit dwells within us. As we seek to be witnesses for Jesus we are not alone. It isn't up to our wisdom or eloquence as we share about Jesus. The Spirit helps us. The Spirit empowers us. The Gospel of John also tells us that the Spirit is active in convicting the world of its guilt regarding sin (John 16:8). And so we can know that when we step out in faith to have a conversation about Jesus, the Spirit is there empowering us as well as working in the other person's heart. And so trust the Spirit to lead you as you seek to be a witness for Jesus.

6. How might it help you press through any timidity or fear you might experience when thinking about sharing your faith with someone if you believed that the Spirit truly would be there empowering you?

7. Does being filled with the Spirit means we will feel bold and courageous? Why or why not?

Brian said:

Peter couldn't be any clearer. There is salvation in no one else (v. 12). Jesus came and lived a perfect, righteous life on our behalf. He died to pay the penalty that we all deserve for our sin. He was raised from the dead in victory over sin and death. No one else has done this. No one else has made a provision for sin. Jesus is the only way of salvation. Staying clear about this reality can help us live with appropriate urgency and boldness. And we DO need to stay clear about this, because the culture around us more and more believes all religions are essentially the same; that all roads lead to God. But the reality is that salvation is found in Christ alone.

8. Would you say that you stay clear about the reality that Jesus is the only way of salvation? Why or why not? Do your actions back up that you believe this?

9. What is your main take away from this study?