

Acts The Gospel on the Move

Study 5

The Gospel and the Clash of Values

Acts 4:1-31

A. Continuing Fires of Revival

Acts 4:1-4 (NIV)

The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

1. Comprehension question. Summarize what happened in Acts 4:1-4.

The apostles Peter and John were preaching Jesus' resurrection but the temple authorities found them disruptive and decided to lock them up. Despite that, many believed.

B. Questioned by Pharisees

Acts 4:5-7 (NIV)

The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

2. Comprehension question. Summarize what happened in Acts 4:5-7.

The Jewish high priests questioned the apostles by what name they are conducting the miracle in Acts 3.

C. Name of Jesus

Acts 4:8-12 (NIV)

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom

God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

Jesus is
“the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the cornerstone.”

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

3. a) Comprehension question. Summarize what happened in Acts 4:8-12.

Apostle Peter declares Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the one whose name enabled the miracle of healing of the lame beggar. He declared that the miracle was the proof of God’s endorsement of Jesus being our salvation.

b) Fill in the blanks. From the slide, write down the points we can draw from the parable of the wicked tenants in Luke 20:9-19, the rejected cornerstone metaphor in Psalms 118:21- 24 and in Acts 4.

1.	Jesus has been vindicated by God.
2.	Jewish leaders have been mistaken in their rejection of Jesus and will be accountable
3.	God Himself reversed the evil action of the Jews through resurrection
4.	God is building a new building; - cornerstone - a new (spiritual) temple in which God’s presence among his people is based on Jesus’ death and resurrection and is thus contingent on the acceptance of God’s revelation in Jesus as Israel’s Messiah.

D. The Truth Must be Spoken

Acts 4:13-22 (NIV)

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a

notable sign, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

4. a) Reflection question. Do you think God can use you to preach of Jesus despite threats from authorities?

b) Discussion question. Do you think this verse "Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him?" can be used inappropriately by some people for their own personal agenda and how?

E. The Believers Pray

Acts 4:23-31 (NIV)

On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

“Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord
and against his anointed one.

Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the

name of your holy servant Jesus.”

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

5. a) Discussion question. Does this passage affect how you think you should pray to God?

- They prayed as a community
- They prayed for God’s predestined plan to be fulfilled
- They prayed about the threats they are facing, not necessarily that the threats go away but that they have boldness despite the threats
- They prayed God’s support and power

E. The Believers Share Their Possessions

Acts 4:32-37 (NIV)

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.

6. a) Fill in the blanks. Write down the 6 features of authentic faith listed in the video lecture.

	Features of Authentic Faith	Correlating Verses
1.	Authentic Faith Perseveres	Acts 4:20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”
2.	Authentic Faith focuses on who God is	Acts 4:24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them

3.	Authentic faith focuses on what God has revealed	<p>Acts 4:25-26</p> <p>You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:</p> <p>“Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.</p>
4.	Authentic faith reinterprets events from God’s point of view	<p>Acts 4:27-28</p> <p>Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.</p>
5.	Authentic faith is all about the mission	<p>Acts 4:29-30</p> <p>Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”</p>
6.	Authentic Faith is vindicated by God	<p>Acts 4:31</p> <p>After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.</p>

b) Discussion Question. Should we aim to be like them and sell our possessions?

Takeaway

Acts 4:1-37 In Acts 4, we see the apostles, convinced by Jesus’ resurrection according to the Old Testament prophecies and the miraculous healing in Jesus’ name, continues to boldly proclaim the Gospel despite persecution from authorities. When they went back to the believer communities they prayed as a community and was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Case Study

Case 1 – Exclusive Truth Claims

Yunni Veh and Sally Sam are good friends. They both believe in Christian universalism. Christian universalism is a school of Christian theology focused around the doctrine of universal reconciliation – the view that all human beings will ultimately be saved and restored to a right relationship with God.

Yunni says: “It’s all the same anyway, all paths lead to God, so there is no need to keep making others uncomfortable and start fights by saying that one way is the only way.”

Sally says: “That’s true, let’s just tolerate one another. No need to be so exclusive.”

Exclusive truth claims say:
“I’m right, you’re wrong.”

Being inclusive means:
“I’m right, you’re also right!”

Sally says: “The world would be a more peaceful place if we are more inclusive.”

1. a) Discussion question. Is Christian universalism true?

b) Discussion question. Would you consider Yunni and Sally Christians?

c) Discussion question. Is demanding that people accept “all paths lead to God” an exclusive truth claim?

Case 2 – Clashing of Moral Values

“Tom Holland has written a book that is not so much a history of Christianity, but a history of the complex role Christianity has had in the formation of modern western culture. He rightly calls that influence “paradoxical” because, first, the Christian church has often spectacularly failed in its ideals, and other times it has been disastrously divided over what those ideals actually were. Holland gives us all the gory details. He is no apologist for the church and despite his considerable respect for certain aspects of

the Christian faith, he does not profess personal faith.

But the bottom line is this—it is hard to overstate the importance of Tom Holland’s new book *Dominion: How The Christian Revolution Remade the World*. The sub-title tells you the basic thesis. He makes a readable and yet at the same time, extraordinarily well-documented case that the central values and priorities of modern, western, secular culture have actually come from Christianity. And even now, when most of the educated classes have abandoned Christianity and when religion is in sharp decline among the populace, Christianity has such an enduring, pervasive influence that we cannot condemn the church for its failures without invoking Christian teaching and beliefs in order to do so...

Holland punctures common myths about Christianity and secularism in every chapter. In no way does Holland let the church off the hook for its innumerable failures. Nor will he let secular people live with the illusion that their values are just self-evident, the result of reason and scientific investigation. If both sides would allow themselves to be chastened by Holland, their future conversations will be much more fruitful, and more tethered to reality.”

Tom Holland’s *Dominion* – A Review By Tim Keller

<https://gospelinlife.com/article/tom-hollands-dominion-a-review/>

2) a) Discussion question. When you are discussing a topic with your friend on a certain moral issue, do they insist that these values are just “self-evident”?

b) Discussion question. You are in a kopitiam with two friends who are non-Christians, they are talking about topics that morally clash with you. They were making dirty jokes and sharing porn videos in the Whatsapp group you are in. What do you do?

c) Reflection question. Share some common moral issue disagreements that are often up in conversations?