

Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin

Acts 4:1-37

Main Street

March 11, 2012



bible verse

COMMITTING TO MEMORY

Acts 4:12

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



story lesson

BIBLE STORY

The crippled man had just been healed and Peter and John were speaking with the people. “Many people heard the message and believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand” (Acts 4:4).

However, the priests, Sadducees, and the captain of the temple guard, “were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead” (Acts 4:2). They seized Peter and John and put them in jail. Annas, the high priest, and members of his family, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and the rulers, elders, and teachers of the law, brought Peter and John before them and began to ask them questions. “By what power or what name did you do this?” (Acts 4:7). Peter is on a roll. He has been delivering sermon after sermon. So, filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter says...

“Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are 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... Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:8-12).

The rulers and elders and teachers of the law saw the courage of Peter and John and were quite taken aback by it. They also noted that these two men were unschooled and ordinary, and they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).

But this elite group had no idea how to deal with this dilemma because the healing obviously took place. The man was standing there with Peter and John! And everyone in Jerusalem had already heard about this miraculous miracle. So the rulers and elders



and teachers of the law “commanded [Peter and John] not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus” (Acts 4:18). Peter scoffed at this notion: “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19).

After further threats of punishment, they were released. They returned to the assembly of believers and followers of Jesus and reported what had happened to them. Instead of complaining or being frustrated, “they raised their voices together in prayer to God...” (Acts 4:24). Amazing! They were pumped! They prayed for great boldness in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ of Nazareth! “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” (Acts 4:31).

And this is what the believers and followers of Jesus did:

“All the believers were in one heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need” (Acts 4:32-35).

This group of people, under that banner of the kingdom of God as manifested in Jesus, were turning the world upside down one person at a time. They lived in direct contradiction to the way “the world” operated. They were bringing about a quiet, yet loud, revolution! No matter how hard they tried, the rulers and elders and teachers of the law could not suppress the spreading of faith in the name of Jesus.



questions

REMEMBERING

1. **When people saw the crippled man healed and heard the apostle’s message about Jesus, how big did the number of people in the new “church” go?** 5,000
2. **Who seized Peter and John and put them in jail?** the priests, Sadducees, and the captain of the temple guard
3. **What was Peter filled with when he would preach?** The Holy Spirit
4. **What did the rulers and elders and teachers of the law say that Peter and John couldn’t do anymore?** “...not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus” (Acts 4:18)
5. **How did Peter and John and the rest of the “church” respond to being imprisoned for preaching about Jesus?** They were pumped! Excited! They praised God and were filled with the Holy Spirit!
6. **What was special about the new “church”? What did they do that was so different than the rest of the world?** They shared EVERYTHING—all their possessions, land, houses and money



life application

MAKING IT REAL

Be Courageous

Take courage, even when the odds are against you. The Holy Spirit will come through for you. Peter and John were swimming against the current. And that is what the kingdom of God is all about—modeling to the world what God wants the world to look like. God is on our side, and in that, we can take great courage and hope!

Overflowing

Do you find it hard for the words to come when people ask you about your faith in Jesus? Peter and John said that they could not help but speak of the things they had experienced with Jesus. It just flowed out of them. It was like a secret you are just dying to tell someone because it is so good! They JUST HAD to tell the world about Jesus!

Share Everything

The church was created by Jesus to show the world God's will on earth as it is in heaven. To model to the world that God is active and present in human affairs. One of the ways we display God's radical rule on earth as it is in heaven is by sharing everything and owning nothing. That doesn't mean we don't buy things and take care of them, rather we "own" things in order to share them. Our "stuff" becomes something we let others borrow and use. Interesting way to live, eh?

The Church

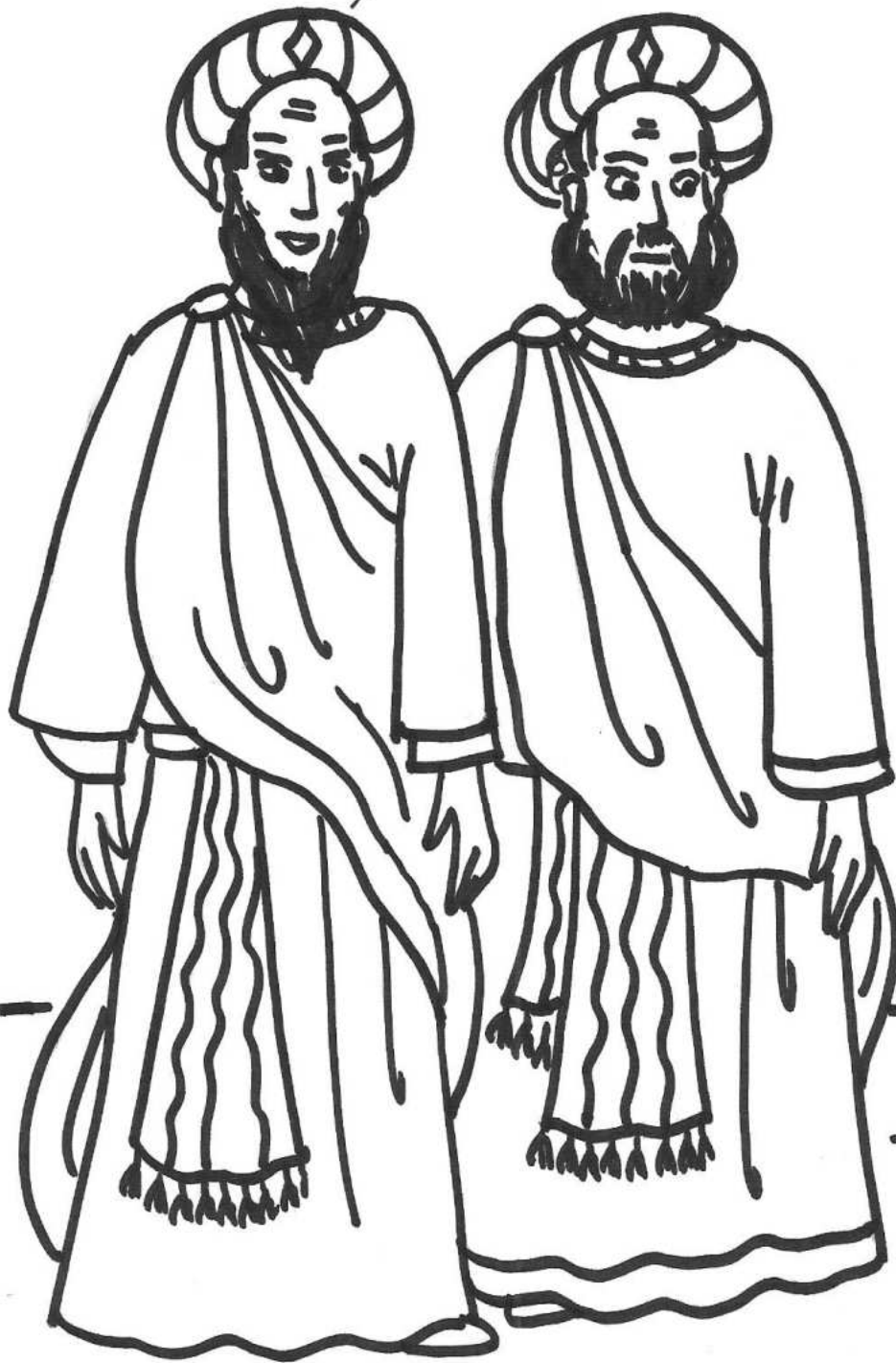
What does it concretely mean to be a follower of Jesus? Nowhere else in Scripture (save for the letters of Paul) is the answer to this question so clear. But it is a difficult answer isn't it? I mean, sell everything? Give it away? Own nothing? Share possessions? This is so antithetical to the "American" way of life (get all you can, can all you get, then sit on the can!). But isn't it clear what a community who calls themselves followers of Jesus are to do? It would seem rather simple, yet extremely difficult to enact and live out. I wonder if "church" needs to be redefined a little... perhaps.



coloring sheet

ON THE NEXT PAGE

BY WHOSE POWER ARE YOU TWO MEN ABLE
TO DO SUCH MIRACLES?



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Before the Sanhedrin**