

Peter: Building Christ's Church
LOOKING LIKE JESUS

Wednesday, October 28

Reading: Acts 3-4

Acts 4:10 "...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..." **12** Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." **13** 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.

The apostles' first conflict with the religious leaders came after the healing of a lame man at the Temple gate. No one could deny that a miracle had occurred. Everyone had seen him begging for decades at the Temple. When Peter and John entered the Temple for prayer, the man hoped to get some money from them, but received something far greater. This is a double miracle for not only was he healed but he immediately knew how to walk and jump though he had been born lame.

This miracle aroused the interest of the crowds in the Temple and Peter took the opportunity to share the gospel with them. Again, the power of the gospel led 5000 more to believe in Jesus. However, the priests had another reaction. They did not like Peter and John teaching about Jesus' resurrection (after all, they were the ones who had Him killed), so they arrested the apostles and kept them in prison overnight.

The change in Peter is obvious. Only a few months before, he had denied three times knowing Jesus when asked by a lowly servant girl. But now, standing before the very men who had condemned Jesus, he boldly proclaims there is no other name by which all people must be saved. The Holy Spirit has replaced his fear with boldness. Even the apostles' enemies took note of this change. They realized that these men had been with Jesus. They were acting and teaching just like He did! This is something they would not tolerate. But what could they do? They could not deny the miracle nor could they punish those responsible without alienating the crowds. So, they threatened Peter and John and let them go.

Upon hearing the report of the apostles, the church goes to prayer. They do not pray for the removal of the threats of their enemies. Instead, they pray for boldness to share the gospel despite the danger. God grants their request with a new filling of His power and a unity that drew more people to Christ. (4:31-35).

LESSON ONE: From their words and actions, even their enemies saw that Peter and John had been with Jesus. When people look at your life, can they see Jesus in you?

LESSON TWO: How often do we pray for God to remove the problem people and situations in our lives? What would happen if instead, we prayed for more power and boldness to live and witness for Him?

LESSON THREE: What does it mean that "all the believers were of one heart and mind" (4:32)? Does that describe the situation in your church? Why or why not? What steps might we need to take to make this a reality in our Christian communities today? Are we looking a little more like Jesus every day?