**April 25, 2021 Acts 4:5-12**

 ***No Other Name***

**Scripture:** Acts 4:5-12 NRSV

*(5)The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, (6)with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. (7)When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" (8)Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, (9)if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, (10)let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. (11)This Jesus is 'the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.' (12)There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved."*

**Notes:**

1. Why would the Sadducees be ***offended*** by their teaching?
	1. Peter and John are preaching about Jesus’ ***resurrection***.
	2. Peter and John’s following is ***growing***.
	3. Peter and John are ***dangerous*** to the peace of Jerusalem
2. “By what ***power*** did you do this.”
	1. A ***good*** ***deed*** has been done to a man who was sick.
	2. Peter “filled with the Spirit,” speaks the truth ***boldly*** and ***powerfully***.

 “*When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say;* Luke 12:11 NRSV”

1. Peter is explaining the ***Gospel*** of Jesus
	1. Each time Peter cites ***scripture*** to prove his point.

*(32)… everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved… Joel 2:32 NRSV*

*The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone*. *Psalms 118:22*

* 1. Peter bases his defense in the very scriptures these “Holy Men” ***hold*** ***dear*** to their faith.
	2. Peter shows us how true ***disciples*** act under pressure.
1. This man is ***healed*** in the name of Jesus Christ.

*Salvation comes no other way; no other name has been or will be given to us by which we can be saved, only this one. Acts 4:12 MSG*

* 1. ***Salvation*** is the redemption from the bondage of sin and death
	2. ***Salvation*** is the forgiveness of our sin.

*Salvation comes no other way; no other name has been or will be given to us by which we can be saved, only this one. Acts 4:12 MSG*

* 1. ***Salvation*** is found in Christ alone!
1. ***Salvation*** is offered through the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ.
	1. Pluralistic statements ***contradict*** Scripture.
	2. There is but ***one*** ***way*** to get to the Father in heaven.

*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6 NRSV*

*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. John 3:16 NRSV*

*But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God… John 1:12 NRSV*

* 1. To receive ***salvation***, one must ***repent***; acknowledge Christ ***forgives*** your sin; and, ask Him to be ***Lord*** of your life.
1. We must give serious consideration to what we ***believe***.
	1. It is troubling to think ***many*** have failed to submit to Christ.
	2. If you have not repented and submitted to Christ as Lord, you are still ***lost***.

**Script:**

I know I have shared this story before but it seems to lead so well into our passage today. I remember my mother had some unique methods of getting to the bottom of a situation. When some situation took place, she would line us all up and then ask us to admit what we did or tell on the one who did. If nobody would admit what they did, she would have all of us go down to the lilac bush and choose a good switch from which we would receive our punishment; if our switch was to tender or too brittle, we would have to go get two more.

In one instance somebody broke my mothers tape measure that she used for sewing. So she lined us all up and asked which of us broke the tape. Three of my cousins were visiting; so, down the line she went, my oldest cousin first, then my next cousin, she got to me and I denied it, so she went on to my younger cousin and Karen. Nobody did it, so she resorted to us snitching on the others. When she got to me again, I couldn’t stand it, so I lied and said I did it. Needless to say she knew who had done it to begin with and Mom was giving them opportunity to fess up. And so when I admitted to the crime she proved me wrong. Eventually my cousin admitted his guilt and all was well in the world again.

There is something about standing before your accuser that instills fear into your soul. But when accused of something that you did not do, obviously you will deny involvement. Still when you are accused of something you are guilty of you have two choices. You can deny involvement and hope that you can create a convincing lie or you could defend your actions and the reason you did what you did.

Today we find Peter and John standing before their accusers. They are standing before the Sadducees. After last weeks passage where Peter preaches and calls the people to repent. We read that the Sadducees were deeply offended; they had the Temple Guard arrest Peter and John, holding them over night. The next day we pick up the story in today’s passage. Turn with me in your Bibles to Acts 4:5-12 and join me in the reading of our passage for today.

*(5)The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, (6)with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. (7)When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" (8)Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, (9)if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, (10)let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. (11)This Jesus is 'the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.' (12)There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved." Acts 4:5-12 NRSV*

Many questions arise when reading these and other passages in Acts. Why would the Sadducees be offended by their teaching? First the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. They were offended at the idea that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. And they are now offended that Peter and John are preaching about Jesus’ resurrection. Next this is the second time that Peter and John have addressed the people. Peter and John have also healed a man in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, causing some five thousand people to believe what they are hearing about Jesus, and their following is growing.

Sadducees know that Romans do not ignore crowds of five thousand agitated Jews. The Sadducees are among those whom the Romans hold responsible for keeping such crowds from forming. Peter and John are not just doctrinally out of bounds. They are also dangerous to the peace of Jerusalem and, to the Pax Romana, the peace guaranteed by Rome. Peter and John are given a night in prison to think about what they have done.

This gives the Sadducee’s enough time to gather the officials to put them on trial. The next day they brought them before the rulers, elders, teachers, men such as Annas, Caiaphas, John, Alexander and men of the high priest’s family. All men who have been, are, or will be the high Priest someday. As was the custom, the accusers surround Peter and John, a very intimidating situation to be in. Then

Peter and John are asked a question, “By what power or what name did you do this.” Note the change of reason for their arrest. In v2, “they were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.” The Sadducees would be especially critical about this. By v7, the question has changed to “By what power or authority; by what name did you do this healing?” When Peter stands up to defend himself, the first brilliant thing he does is to reframe the charge against him. A good deed has been done to a man who was sick. He and John have performed an act of kindness. What is the big deal? Of course they have not done it under their own power, any more than Peter is speaking under his own power.

Peter is “filled with the Holy Spirit,” Luke says (v. 8), He is empowered to speak the truth boldly and powerfully; giving everyone a chance to witness what Jesus was talking about at Luke 12:11. “*When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say;* Luke 12:11 NRSV” Now for the third time Peter is explaining the Gospel of Jesus; his message on the day of Pentecost, his message after healing the Lame man at Solomon’s portico, and here before the religious elite. Each time he cites scripture to prove his point. At Pentecost he cites Joel 2:32, “*(32)… everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved… Joel 2:32 NRSV*” When he healed the lame man, Peter refers to Deuteronomy 18:15-20 and Genesis 22:18; and here Psalms 118:22, “*The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone*.

Peter knows his Scripture. Peter bases his defense in the very scriptures these “Holy Men” hold dear to their faith. Peter not only challenges their reading of Scripture; he also implies that the Holy Spirit is no respecter of their theological doctrine and piety. Like Jesus in the wilderness, he can quote the Bible as well as his accusers. Peter shows us how true disciples act, especially under pressure.

All this is nice, but what is the important lesson of this passage? Peter explains to these officials that this man who is standing before them was once a lame man, the same one who begged at the temple doors for handouts. The same man they had seen there for years, this man’s entire life. And this man is healed by power of the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the very same man they had crucified weeks before and God had raised Jesus from the dead three days later. As prophesied, Jesus is the stone the builders rejected and now has become the cornerstone. But his final statement before these men in verse 12 is the one which ends the inquisition. “*(12)There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.*” I prefer the way it is paraphrased in the Message, *“Salvation comes no other way; no other name has been or will be given to us by which we can be saved, only this one. Acts 4:12 MSG”*

Last week we defined repentance as turning around and turning to God. This week we will define salvation, according to Webster salvation is the act of saving; preservation from destruction, danger or great calamity. Appropriately in theology, the redemption of man from the bondage of sin and liability to eternal death, and the conferring on him everlasting happiness. This is salvation. Deliverance from enemies; victory. Remission of sins, or saving graces. SO if repenting is turning from our sins and turning to God; then salvation is the forgiveness of sin, salvation is the forgiveness of our sin, that saves us from the penalty of sin

Peter is rock solid on this. There is no wiggle room here. Verse 12 is straight forward, and is seen as a universal statement *“Salvation comes no other way; no other name has been or will be given to us by which we can be saved, only this one. Acts 4:12 MSG”* Salvation is not found in the elderly or the youthful, not in being more or less educated, it is not given to you because of your heritage. it is not given to any specific or chosen race, gender, or ethnic grouping. Salvation is not found by the one who believes something more than another, and it is not reserved only for those attending the church of the Nazarene; or somebody who has served longer than someone else, salvation is found in Christ alone!

Through the last few decades society has succumbed to something called pluralism. Sometimes this is referred to as being politically correct. Pluralism is the idea that we should not insult others and be sensitive to their beliefs. Pluralism holds that our Christian beliefs can be true for us in our world. Other religions have the same right and we must not criticize their beliefs or impose our beliefs and culture upon them, this way, everyone is right and no one is offended. Different strokes for different folks! Often, people will incorrectly refer to the 1st amendment in the bill of rights to support their pluralistic theory. The 1st amendment is not a reference to a universal pluralistic view. It states only that the government will not impose a religion upon the people. We must be careful not to confuse respect with pluralism. I respect your right to believe or not believe just about anything you want. However, I will not agree with the idea that salvation comes to an individual for any reason that makes them happy or works for them; salvation will not come to an individual just because they are a good person. Salvation is not given to a person just because they are philanthropic

Salvation is only offered through the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. I have heard people who have said about other religions, “We all believe the ‘right’ thing, so in the end it will all wash out.” Have you ever heard or said that “God, Allah, Buddha, Confucius” are all different names of the same deity? I am positive that Buddha and Confucius were just men, philosophers and teachers. Men who focused on some enlightened means of being. There is no getting around the fact that pluralistic statements contradict Scripture. Jesus tells us that there is but one way to get to the Father in heaven. *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6 NRSV*”; *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. John 3:16 NRSV”; “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God… John 1:12 NRSV”*

To receive salvation, we must: first, consider our life; then turn away from everything in it that is contrary to what God wants. This turning away from selfishness and toward God is called repentance. Next, acknowledge that Jesus Christ died on the cross to forgive you of sin. You take Him as your Savior to cleanse you from sin; as the substitute who paid the price due you for your sin. Finally, you must ask Him to be Lord of your life, acknowledging openly and verbally that Jesus is not only your Savior, but is the Lord of your life, the one you submit to.

In this time between the resurrection and Pentecost, we must give serious consideration to what we believe. In society today, where the world seems to thrive on universal pluralism, where everyone is right and nobody is wrong, where the truth is whatever, we say it is. As Christian believers we must cling to the universal truth of salvation by faith alone through the grace and mercy of Christ alone. “*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*”

It is troubling to think that we may have family who may not see heaven because they have failed to submit to Christ. Perhaps you declare that they are honest, compassionate, and loving; all those manners of living that Jesus would expect. But if you have not repented and submitted to Christ as Lord, you are still lost. Perhaps you follow the 10 commandments, you my live an exceptionally moral and ethical lifestyle, you go to church often and always give a tithe. You surely will get to heaven, but if you fail to put Christ first and foremost in your life, you are still lost. “*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*” I am glad you are a good person, but I would be more content, if you were to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Many people are faithful to the tenants of their religion and are secure in that. Some may pray 5 times a day, facing a specific direction, repeating a given format. Still to that person the Bible says “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Last week we learned of repentance. Today we hear the word of scripture telling us the truth of Jesus Christ. “*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*” As you consider what you believe, be careful not to “water it” down. As you consider your relationship with Jesus Christ, be careful not to make it politically correct, do not make it so pluralistic that there is nothing real to it. Be prepared to stand on your commitment. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Jesus Christ, the perfect gift of God, given in the form of a child, lived the perfect sin free life, He was rejected and crucified, died, buried. He arose from the dead, ascended into heaven where he sits at the right hand of God as our intercessor. Someday, He will come again and separate the righteous from unrighteous, separate the believing from unbelieving, divide the saved from lost, revealing the metaphorical, what appears to be, from the metaphysical, what actually is. But here is one of the few universals in all of creation, salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” Accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior today, given to you by God, for your salvation.