

The Council Confrontation

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[0:00] Hey everyone, good to see you all. It's great to be back here again. I've been really blessed these last few weeks. We had Joe, we had Gabs and Shum share the week before. And then last week we had Johnny share. We've been going through the book of Acts and there's been a whole ton of firsts. The first time they saw a man fly in Acts 1 when Jesus ascended into heaven. The first time the first church that was started in Acts 2 because of the first filling of the Holy Spirit.

And then you saw the first sermon preached by Peter. First presentation of the gospel. He was filled with the spirit and he goes, hey guys, these people are not drunk. They are filled with the spirit and this is the gospel. This is your sin. You crucified him and this is your savior.

And so we talked a little bit about what it means to actually share the gospel. You have to talk about sin and you have to talk about the savior that comes to save you from that sin. And actually Peter in Acts 2 has this whole sermon where he talks about the savior and actually any presentation of the gospel really must include Jesus.

And what it really must include Jesus is his life, his death and his resurrection. It is sometimes about actual real life testimonies, things that have happened to you that have completely transformed you.

But you see Peter here, you see the apostles here, they just point to Jesus. They said, you'll see that our lives are transformed, but you can, I want you to know about Jesus. And then last week, actually just before that, they were then filled with awe and wonder. They were cut to the heart from this gospel.

[1:28] And then the three guys shared with us what a community started to look like, what this church started to look like. They were filled with awe and wonder. They were devoted to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread and prayers.

They started to see miraculous signs. They started to just be filled with gladness and generosity. And so they would share things with one another and they had favor with all people. And then the Lord added to the number and the church, the first church suddenly became a group of 3000 people.

So we had the first flying man, we had the first church, we had the first sermon. Now we have the first taste of persecution. Up until now, it's been pretty good. Things have been hype has been building.

And last week, Johnny showed us that actually in chapter three, Peter and John, they see this lame beggar and they see him and he's asking for money. He's like, I've been here for 40 years. All I really want is just some money now.

I have lost all hope in wanting to be healed. Can you just give me some money? And then Peter and John say, hey, look at us. They reestablish his integrity. They start a connection with him.

[2:34] They say, look at us. They fixed their gaze onto him and the other way as well. Because they know the most important thing that he needs, we need, everyone needs is connection. Not just with each other, but with the father.

They say, we don't have any money to give you. But what we do have is this, the power of the name of Jesus, would you stand up? And for the first time in 40 years, he stands up.

And you look at our passage and you wonder, wow, what must we do to get that kind of power?

And then Peter explains it to the people.

He says, it's not us. You're looking at us again. It's not about us. How tempted are we often when we see people who do great things and go, wow, I want to be like that person. Wow, what does that person have?

What's the secret sauce? But then Peter says, it's not about us. You've got the message wrong. Again, it's about Jesus. And then he preaches the gospel again.

[3:31] That you guys sinned. That you guys crucified him. But Jesus is the savior. He talked about the life and the death and the resurrection of Jesus once again. And now we hit to chapter four, the persecution. Where you have a bunch of people who come who are incredibly annoyed with what they've just talked about.

Now, so I'm going to ask us to, in a minute, stand for the word of the Lord. Because we believe that that's just one way to really show reverence and awe. Just I want you to all brace yourself. Because this is a slightly long chapter. Okay. So this is chapter four, verse one to thirty one. If there's any comfort to you, the early church started with everyone listening, standing for the whole sermon and the rabbi sitting.

So whilst you're standing in the middle, just find comfort in that. It's okay. But I have tried to help us. I found the most dynamic reader of scripture that I could possibly find. A drama teacher is going to read it and maybe even reenact the whole scene for us as we do this.

Can we give a round of applause to Danny? And I invite you to stand for the word of the Lord. Acts chapter four.

[4:37] And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the word believed. And the number of the men came to about five thousand.

On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem with Annas, the high priest, and Cephas, and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high priestly family.

And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power or by what name did you do this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, By what means this man has been healed?

Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well.

[5:42] This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished, and they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, saying, What shall we do with these men?

For that a notable sign has been performed through them as evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.

So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge.

[6:47] For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard. And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them because of the people.

For all were praising God for what had happened. For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than 40 years old. When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servants, said by the Holy Spirit.

Why did the Gentiles rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed. For truly in this city

they were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

[8:05] And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. This is the word of the Lord.

Please take a seat. Thank you, Danny. We should have only South Africans read scripture from now on. That can be a fourth gathering statement.

When was the last time you said something that annoyed someone? Gigi, when was the last time you said something that annoyed Flo? Hello. I've lost count. You've lost count. You've lost count. I annoyed my wife.

She's not here today. She's at a young lives camp. But I can safely share with you. We had a fight this week. We don't usually have that many fights these days. But those of us who have done pre-marriage counseling with us, you'll have heard us say this.

When we fight, well, usually one's a hedgehog and one's a rhino. That's usually the kind of the analogy that, you know, someone wants to just keep going. And the other person just wants to shrink away, right?

[9:06] I'm the one who wants to keep going. And for some reason, when we start fighting, she will start to lose the words to say. She won't know how to speak. Whereas I just get wittier and wittier. I just get more and more cocky.

And I'm just filled with the spirit of cockiness. And, of course, that annoys her even more. It doesn't help the situation. It just gets it worse. But then once I'm in a row, I'm just going to lie. It just keeps going.

I just can't stop. But she gets greatly annoyed. But I don't know if I've ever annoyed anyone because I've shared about the gospel. That's something that I was reflecting on.

If this is the first persecution that the church met, they were preaching a pretty offensive message.

And they were annoyed. The Sadducees were annoyed. And we'll talk a little bit about that.

But just straight off the bat, I was like, I don't know if as a church we are even offensive enough or controversial enough to share the message of Jesus Christ, the gospel of sin and the Savior and the life and death and the resurrection of Jesus.

[10:04] I don't know if we say it enough. And I don't think we say it clearly enough. To the point where people are like, whoa, whoa, whoa, I'm offended by what? I don't know if I've done that. Have you? Has anyone?

Brilliant. Of course, it's got to be the lawyers. But it's interesting. The Sadducees, we haven't heard much about the Sadducees.

We hear a lot about the Pharisees. The Pharisees were everyday teachers of the law. They were the scribes. They were just serious nerds about the law. And so they would argue with Jesus a lot because they knew scripture.

The Sadducees were a different group of people. They were a group of wealthy, elite aristocrats that had a lot of power in the temple. They were people who actually, they were very influential. You see, they are annoyed at what Peter and John did. And what could they do? They threw them into prison and they arrested them. That's how powerful they were. They were a group of people that were a part of the Jewish high council, which was called the Sanhedrin.

[11:01] And they were just, they had basically were very politically savvy too. So they were able to liaise with the Romans and liaise with the Jews and basically have accumulated a lot of power and influence.

So it was this group that was annoyed. Something more interesting about this group is that they didn't believe in anything supernatural. They were Jews by culture and they would believe. But they didn't believe in anything supernatural.

And they definitely didn't believe in the resurrection. I'll tell you a little bit more about why that's important afterwards. But this is the group that shows up because they're like, wait, they're annoyed.

Not because there was a lame beggar who'd not been able to walk for the whole of his life for the whole 40 years is now being able to walk. They're annoyed because the people who healed him are now talking about the resurrection. And they say, oh, no, no, no, we have to stop it there.

There is no talk of the resurrection. We do not believe it. We've said, I hope, enough time and time again. 1 Corinthians 15. That is the only thing we should be talking about. That Jesus, that there is a son of God who came and died and he rises again and he lives among us.

[12:02] That's the only thing that separates us from this service being a memorial service and being an actual worship service of celebration. And so they come and they say, hey, we cannot have that kind of talk because we do not believe in the resurrection.

We do not want to give these people hope. It's interesting. So if you're following with me, Acts chapter 4, we're just going to go through 1 to 31. It actually says it, verse 2, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. Verse 3, and they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day for it was already evening. They annoyed the Sadducees so much. The Sadducees were like, okay, it's late now. We can't really do anything right now, but we still have the power to put you into prison.

And we'll talk about this in the morning. So that's what they did there. But verse 4, Luke just kind of drops in something else. He kind of does this, just this little kind of Easter eggs, I'd say, or what Steve would call it.

But many of those who had heard the word believed and the number of the men came to about 5,000. Boom! The lame beggar is healed. They preach the gospel. An extra 2,000 people are added, just like that.

[13:05] Of course, these are just men, so they're not even counting the women and the children. So he puts that in there. He says, well, even with this message that was annoying certain people, there were still a whole bunch of people who were believing.

The gospel was well and truly on its way. But yet, they are put into the prison. Now, the question is, why did those people believe and why did the Sadducees not? Why did they get so annoyed to the point where they would arrest these people and put them into prison?

I think Peter knew what the issue was. And he actually jumps into another part here. You see the next morning, they finally get everyone together. So they put them into prison. Then they're like, okay, we're going to leave them there tonight.

Hey, can we rally everyone? Annas, Kaifers, let's get everyone there. Alexander, this whole priestly family. This is basically just the city's most powerful people. This is the same group of people that put Jesus on the cross.

They're like, can you just imagine the conversation? I mean, they wouldn't have been WhatsApping, but they would have somehow, you know, I don't know what it would have been, owls or whatever, just sending messages. Just, hey, that Jesus that we put down a couple months ago, there's these annoying guys who are around who just keep coming back.

[14:10] We thought we had dealt with this. Hey, but we have to reconvene the council because we need to put this down once and for all, is what they're saying. So they gather the Avengers again and they assemble them.

And then they stand in front of Peter and John and they go, this is verse seven. By what power or by what name did you do this? Who's letting you do this? Is what they're saying. How are you able to do this?

We want to know. And then Peter, I love this, verse eight, filled with the Holy Spirit. Remember, this isn't just Peter, the betrayer. This isn't just Peter, the coward. This is a new Peter.

This is a Peter who's filled with the Spirit. Says this. He says, rulers of the people and elders. If we're being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed.

Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him, this man is standing before you well. Peter's like, what are we talking about here?

[15:08] Are you serious? Are you seriously criticizing us for healing this man? That who you probably, as you walked in and out of this temple for 40 years, you didn't even notice.

And now we do this. And now you're coming to talk to us about this. Well, now that you're asking, let me tell you how this man was healed. It wasn't because of me, Peter. It wasn't because my friend

John here.

It's because of Jesus of Nazareth, whom you crucified. Now, a couple sermons before, he was telling the masses, hey, you have sinned. You did this. You need a savior.

Now he's actually talking to the group of people who were actually directly responsible for Jesus's death. And he's like, you remember who was here a few months ago? You put him to death.

But it's funny, isn't it? You thought you put him to death. But now by that same power, he's now walking. This lame beggar, who actually the rest of the community knows, and that will be the problem later for them.

[16:05] He's walking now, and it's because of that. He turns it on them. And then he says this, verse 11, this Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation and no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

He's talking about the beggar, but he's not really talking about the beggar. He's talking about them. This is an implicit appeal to them and say, hey, stop rejecting Jesus. You thought you put him down, but he is alive and well.

And something's starting that you won't be able to stop. There is no other name. Why did that group of people, the Sadducees, get so annoyed? I think it's because their core value system was being threatened to.

How did they have so much wealth? How did they have so much power? They had worked for it. They had family. They were born into families that would preserve it. I don't know if we live in a city that's all that different where there are a small group of people in control of a lot of things.

And so this group of people would have been very, very comfortable, very, very familiar, very confident in relying on their own name. Do you know what family I'm from? Do you know how I got here?

[17:18] In fact, Annas and Caiaphas, they were both high priests and there was a father-in-law and a son-in-law. He'd passed it on to him. So this was a group of people who had so much power.

Their core value system was retaining and keeping that power. So this is why they were annoyed. Because they were like, do you know how hard we've worked as a family to preserve our wealth and our power?

And so that the Romans will leave us alone so that they're happy with us, so they can give us all this power, so we can arrest whoever we want to. And we can do whatever we want to. Do you know how hard we've worked to preserve that?

I'm a fourth generation aristocrat. I need to preserve this. You two coming in here and doing all these miracles and then talking about this Jesus is going to threaten that.

Because the Romans are going to hear about this. And Pilate's already not very pleased with what happened a couple months ago. Please, stop rocking the boat.

[18:15] We're good. It doesn't matter that you guys are not. We're good. That's why they were annoyed. Jesus, no, Peter seems to know this because he goes straight into talking about the cornerstone. Verse 11.

This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders which has become the cornerstone. Later we find out this is uneducated Peter. This is unschooled Peter.

Verse 13, it talks about this. They recognized that they were uneducated and common men and they were astonished. They were shocked. Peter, actually every time Peter speaks now since he's been filled with the Holy Spirit, he is quoting scripture left, right and center.

And people are looking at him going, you shouldn't know this. You're just a fisherman. How are you handling scripture? How are you quoting the prophet Joel and talking about Psalm 16 and now you're talking about Psalm 118? Psalm 118.

How are you doing this? Peter is filled with the Spirit. And he's saying, so they would have known this verse, Psalm 118. And he's saying, hey, you grew up knowing this verse.

[19:16] Let me tell you, I now know who the cornerstone is. You rejected it. Can you believe it? You've grown up in Sunday school learning that passage and you didn't realize that actually you ended up being the ones rejecting the stone.

How humorous is that? How ridiculous is that is what he's saying. He is the cornerstone. What is the cornerstone? I'm no architect, but apparently the cornerstone is the stone that basically unites two walls.

The first two walls as you build a whole building. It's basically the foundation where everything else becomes, it's following that as the reference point. This whole building revolves around, it started with this cornerstone here.

And Peter's saying, Jesus, you thought you got rid of him, but now there's going to be a kingdom that's going to rule. He's going to rule forevermore. And he is the one who started it. See, here's the thing.

When the message of Jesus comes into your life, it will wreck your core value systems. Whatever you've been relying on, whatever your cornerstones have been, it will completely tear them apart.

[20 : 16] Because when Jesus comes in and builds his house in your heart, he's saying, I want everything. I want to be the one that it starts with. I want to be the cornerstone, not everything else.

The Jews, what was their cornerstone? Tradition. What were the Greeks? What was their cornerstone? Philosophy. Intellect. Americans, individualism.

The Brits, I don't know, politeness. Passive aggressiveness. The Africans, harmony. The Chinese, money.

When Jesus comes into your life, he's saying, whatever your cornerstone is, I need to remove it. I am the only cornerstone. That's why it's offensive. Because whatever you've built, whatever you've said, maybe you are a modern day Sadducee.

Maybe you come from a family of wealth and influence. Maybe you would be a modern day aristocrat. You come here and say, James, I'm sat here by, well, not just my own accolades, but my father's and my father's father.

[21 : 21] And Jesus is saying, do you realize that I am the only one that you can rely on? Do you realize that the majority of the things happening in your life that you have were not because of you, were not in your control at all?

You didn't get to choose where you were born. You didn't get to choose which family you were born to. You didn't get to choose how tall you would be. You didn't get to choose how smart you would be. So you sit here and you go, oh wait, everything I have is by my own.

No, it's not. Jesus says, everything I have, I gave to you. Would you allow me to be the cornerstone? Would you revolve your life around me?

If you revolve your life around me, then you will understand what you were made for. And then you will be truly fulfilled. You will live the abundant life in John 10. But if you don't, you will be offended. If you don't, you will be annoyed.

Because you think you have your cornerstones that you can rely on. And that's what Peter's getting at here. So he's talking about the beggar and then boom, he's not. He's saying there is no other name that you will be saved by apart from Jesus.

[22 : 17] That's it. There is no other name. That's why he was so annoyed. I think a lot of us treat Christianity as a good thing. Bless you. Some of you are here because uncle and auntie or mom and dad brought you.

Or it's a good time. It's an admiral tea. Because... So this is a perfect place to come and have that. And you have just got just so used to, okay, what this is. But it is. But you say, oh, Jesus. Yeah, Jesus is important.

I think I might even prioritize. You know what? Jesus is my number one. At least I want him to be my number one. And here's Jesus' message that it will be offensive to you. Jesus says, I don't even want to just be your number one.

I want to be your only one. Because when you say, Jesus, you can be my number one. What does that mean? That means actually I have a number two, number three, number four, number five, number six. Jesus says, no, no. God says to the Israelites, you shall have no other gods before me. And the word before me isn't just put ahead. It's anywhere in my sight. You cannot be... They cannot be in my presence at all. It can only be me.

[23 : 20] Do you recognize how ludicrous that message would have been for the people of that day? Because the Romans kept control via one of the methods was something just called religious relativism.

They just say, actually, everyone believe all your different gods. You have a god of Ephesus here. You have a god here. Why? If you all believe in your separate gods, then we can still be in control. Did you know that actually the Jews would have been the last people because they were the ones that are saying, there is only one God.

Yahweh, there is only one God. So for a Jew to stand up there to handle scripture in Psalm 118 and say, this Jesus is the cornerstone would have been mind-blowing for Peter himself probably and also for the people listening.

That's how important it was. It makes me think about just how hard it is to actually follow Jesus.

Now, Christian faith is as inclusive as it can get.

But anyone, wherever you're at, whatever you've done in your life, however bad you have messed up in the past, however bad you still are, the Christian faith says, come.

[24 : 23] There is grace and mercy for you. So it's inclusive, but it's also exclusive. Because when you come and follow Jesus, you cannot follow the other gods. You shall have no other gods before me.

That's the tricky part. That's where most people struggle. People will say, I will follow Jesus, but so long as he gives me idol number two, which is money. I'll follow Jesus as long as he still gives me health.

As soon as I lose my health, I don't know. As soon as something doesn't, that's how we know, right? That's how we know when someone has a real faith, when things just don't go their way.

When things go, I mean, we're getting to summer camp and, well, even though it doesn't look like summer out there, but summer camps are always fun. Summer is always fun. But as an Arsenal fan, one thing I know is summer is always fun because there's no games to disappoint us.

But on a cold, dark night in November in Stoke, our true colors are revealed. We are fair weather men. A little bit better these last few years, but you start to see the true colors.

[25 : 31] You start to see what your real idols are when things don't go your way. And that's when you realize, oh, and that's where we have to ask, Jesus, are you actually my only one? Are you the only one I'm pinning my hopes on?

Or am I actually pinning my hopes on you and an Ivy League university? Am I actually pinning my hopes on you and getting a good job in consulting? Am I actually pinning my hopes on you and so long as I get to find a girlfriend who I can marry and we can have a happy life together?

What is our actual God here? Jesus says, Peter says, I can be the only one. I can be the only one. Verse 13.

Now, when they saw the boldness, not my boldness, their boldness is different, of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated common men, they were astonished and they recognized that they had been with Jesus. They were shocked.

Peter and John should not be able to handle scripture in the way that they were doing. And they were shocked. It reminds me, if you're sat here going, well, I would love to share the gospel. I would love to gather in this chapter, but I don't know the Bible well enough.

[26 : 33] I don't know this well enough. I'm just not confident. I'm only a new Christian. Well, how long has Peter been a Christian for? He was filled with the spirit, which was different.

When you're filled with the spirit, you can do it. At this point, Peter, I swear, must have had flashbacks from Jesus. Because Jesus told him, there's going to be a time when you follow me that they're going to drag you into synagogues and they're going to persecute you and they're going to beat you.

And you're not going to know what to say. Luke 12, Luke 21. You're not going to know what to say, but what? The Holy Spirit will tell you what to say. He must have just been just living the life at that moment.

He's like, I don't know what I'm going to say, but I'm going to open my mouth. And the spirit is going to give me the words. I am uneducated. I am in common. I am a common person. That has to encourage us.

If you're like, oh, I don't know. I've only done alpha once or I've only done alpha five times. I still don't get it. Speak. Put yourself in a position where you're like, Jesus, if you don't come through for me, I want to take this step of faith and trust that you will then teach me what to say.

[27 : 37] Are we willing to do that? You don't know the amount of times where someone comes to me and says, hey, Pastor James. And I, you know, for the record, once again, I hate being called Pastor James. My name is James.

Okay. I don't come in to you and say Dr. Arrow. Well, actually, I guess I could. But James, I need you to talk to this person because I said, what do they need?

Well, they just need someone to care for them and maybe share with them the gospel. I'm like, well, you can do it. That's the whole point. Aidan and I spoke about this a few weeks ago. The whole point is now it doesn't have to be just the one who is trained and anointed.

Acts 2 says everyone now is anointed and filled with the spirit to do this. That's the whole point of Pentecost. That we all do this. There's not just, we're not just all gathering around one little fire. We are all burning bushes filled with the spirit, able to say the words that God is telling us to say. So this Peter and this John are an educated man. So it's funny for them. They saw him and they were shocked.

[28:35] And verse 13, the second half says this. And they recognize that they had been with Jesus. Wow. They're like, wait, isn't that, isn't that the guy that lied to the little girl just a couple months ago because he was too scared?

Isn't that the same person? Oh, this guy was now filled with the spirit. And this guy had been with Jesus. Charles Spurgeon says this.

The same Peter who denied Christ before a servant girl now stands before the Sanhedrin without flinching. Just can you see how big a deal this would have been for Jesus to stand in front of the same people that put Jesus to death.

But this time not flinch at all. And there's a whole beautiful story where when Jesus comes back in John 20, where he restores Peter and gives him the confidence once again, even though he messed up before. Without flinching.

He carries on the quote. What made the difference? The Holy Spirit, the cowardice of the flesh, was swallowed up by the courage of the spirit. The cowardice of the flesh was swallowed up by the courage of the spirit.

[29:38] John Stark calls this, the spirit transforms fear into holy audacity. Fear into holy audacity. That's the difference.

I came across a video a while ago by the actor Chris Pratt. FYI, I don't know everything about Chris Pratt. I don't know about his whole life. But I have seen him accept awards.

And he says, every time I have a platform, I'm going to talk about Jesus. I'm going to talk about God. And I just find it fascinating. I mean, the guy in Guardians of the Galaxy, he's just an idiot in the film.

So I'm not used to seeing him on the stage sharing about Jesus. And I think there was one interview that asked him, are you not scared that people will look at you in a different way and start thinking that you're weird and really just treat you differently because of your message?

And he said, well, Jesus already covered that for me. He said that 2,000 years ago, he said that, well, they hated me, so they're going to hate you. And he said, well, if they hated Jesus, then yeah, my message actually best be offensive in some way because if the world loves me, that means I'm not with Jesus.

[30:45] I was like, wow. How good is that? How inspiring is that? And the other thing I love to just see that is they recognize that they had been with Jesus.

There is something that happens to you when you're filled with the spirit of Jesus, but also when you just spent time with him. People can tell the difference.

When you spent time with Jesus and you walk in, there's a glow about you. There's just some, you're just not shaken in the same way. When you've been with that person, it reminds me of Paul talking to his mentee, Timothy.

In 2 Timothy 3, it's one of my favorite interactions between the two of them. And Paul says, and actually it's the verse I chose to memorize this week for our scripture club, but because I'm at the front here, I'm blanking out a little bit.

He says to Timothy, you followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my suffering, my persecution.

[31:49] And you saw everything that I endured. You know what? I just stopped there and I was like, what an interesting list that a teacher would give to his mentee. Out of everything, really, the teaching was just the first one.

Everything else was about his living. Everything else was about his conduct in life, his aim, his faith, his love, his steadfastness. It was about the way he lived. Timothy had spent enough time with Paul and Paul knew that so he could talk about it.

He's saying, hey, Timothy, you know what I've taught, but you've also know how I live. When you are with Jesus, when you've spent time with him, it's just different.

Many of you know, it was my birthday a couple of weeks ago and one of my least favorite activities, but I am truly blessed by it is when the community give me words of affirmation that you all beautifully did.

And one of the things that stuck out to me that I went home and joked about with Christina was everyone just kept talking about how, oh, yeah, you do your sermons, but what we really like is just the way you live. And after a while, I was like, wow, my sermons must be really bad.

[32:50] They must really not like my sermons. But it's been the prayer of mine that my living would always outrun my preaching because there's no point being a good preacher if I don't live it out myself. So to be able to actually do what I want you to do, I must first do it first.

And I see Paul telling Timothy the same thing. He's like, you get my teaching. And if we're all honest, every pastor knows most people forget the sermons by, you know, one or two weeks. I mean, if you ask me what I preached on three weeks ago, I probably couldn't tell you either. So, but it's not really about the teaching. It's about the living. You look at someone and you go, okay, that someone's different. They live in a different way. They looked at Peter and John and went, they've been with Jesus.

They've actually spent time with him. And at this point, they didn't really know what to do. Verse 14, but seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. They're like, okay, well, we really want to keep them arrested.

We really want to punish them, but we can't actually find any reason to punish them. And what's worse, no judicial reason, but what's worse is there's a lame beggar stood right next to them that the whole community can see.

[33:57] If we do anything right now, it's going to cause a revolt. Because everyone sees that there's been a transformation. How many of you, I want you to raise your hand here, just a bit of passive interaction.

How many of you have been trying to share the gospel with someone? It is not always easy. If that someone is a family member, Jesus has you covered.

There's no, no prophet has honor in his own town. So just find comfort in that. But can you see what's happening here? When people see transformation, there's nothing that they can say.

What that tells me is, I may preach the gospel, I may share as much as I can, but the only thing that will really transform their hearts to start with is just that they see you and you're just different. And Ken's talked about this when he's, you know, Ken's a cutthroat banker.

But he came to Christ and, you know, he says his colleagues look at him different now and go, wait, you're not the same Ken as I used to know. That's a transformation. Still a work in progress, of course. But that's a transformation.

[35:08] Because if we want to share the gospel with people, if we want to talk to them about the sin, our sin, and the Savior that will come and transform us, we better be transforming, at least. Because when they see true transformation, there's nothing they can say.

They'll just be shocked. You know what? I may not fully agree with your message right now intellectually, but I look at the way you've changed your life. I'm like, you know what? I can't argue with that. Wouldn't it be great for us to have all the people who know us go, wow, I can't argue with that.

I may not agree with you, Josh John, theologically, but I cannot argue with the way you live your life. Wouldn't that be a great thing to hear? Wouldn't that be a great thing to say?

And so they do that. And so they're like, hey. But when the council commanded them to leave the council, they was like, okay, what should we do then? For a notable sign has been performed through them, is evident to all, and we cannot deny it. But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak.

So they're like, we're warning you. Don't do it anymore. We're going to give you another slap on the wrist. But just please, just stop. And then Peter says this incredibly annoying, incredibly cocky line.

[36:22] Verse 19. Peter and John answer them, whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.

They show this basic submission to the authority of the council and say, hey, we will submit to you. You can judge whether we listen to you or to God. We'll let you be the judge of that. But for us, you

don't know what to say to what you've seen.

We cannot shut up about it. It's the opposite. We're going to have to keep talking about it. We didn't make this up. We are all witnesses, is what he said in an earlier chapter. We cannot help but keep talking about this.

We'll let you decide what to do with us afterwards. This is just an interesting place where they actually are being threatened. And it could get worse. And it will likely get worse.

And yet they say, hey, we will submit to you to this level. But after that, we cannot. Of course, we went through a turbulent time as a city a few years ago.

[37:27] And the passage Romans 13 kept coming up, talking about submitting to authority. But here's the thing. Why do we submit to authority in an earthly sense?

Because of the God who's behind. Why? Because we trust in the God who's sovereign over everything. And they subjected themselves to the judgment of the council because they said, look, you keep doing you.

But we have to do us. And we will open ourselves to whatever it is because we submit to you because God's placed you here. And that's why we don't jaywalk.

And that's why we wait for the green man before we cross the road, James. I won't tell that story.

Anyway, so. But I submit to you, not just because of you, but because of the God behind you.

And that's something that we have to hold on to. When we live our lives, when we look at our boss who's like, hey, I need you to do this. And you're like, okay, well, I'll do this because ultimately God is above all of this.

[38:34] And God's also placed me beneath you. But only up until this point. We need to have that kind of courage. It's funny.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a pastor in Nazi Germany, he said this. The spirit grants no cheap grace. He empowers costly confession. When Peter said we cannot but speak, he embraced the risk of the cross.

The spirit's courage is born in the furnace of surrender. He's saying there is no cheap grace. His whole point, his whole sermon in his life was there is forgiveness, there is grace, but it came at a cost.

Someone paid for it. And when we make our decisions, we have to recognize, hey, whether we listen to you or to God, you can be the judge, but this is what we're going to do. We cannot shut up about this.

You can then deal with us however you wish. You're saying, I am willing to take on whatever cost that might be. Why? Because Christ took on the cross for me. And I'm good with that.

[39:36] The next time you're in the hospital or in the office or at the family dinner, and you know, deep in your heart, the Holy Spirit saying, okay, you have to say something now.

Take courage. Because it's not you who's going to say it. The spirit's going to say it through you.

But may he say it through you through grace and truth. But recognize there is a cost to that.

Jesus talks about there is a cost to discipleship. When you choose to follow him, when you choose to make him your only one, it does mean you have to say no to other things. And it will hurt in other ways. I think sometimes we don't talk about that enough because we say, hey, follow Jesus.

Why? Because you'll be a better person. And when you're a better person, your kids will be better and they'll study better and they'll go to a better university. And they'll be healthier and they'll be happier and they'll have a better job and they'll be richer.

And then you're like, oh, wow. That's not why God came. God didn't come to give us the earthly pleasures here. But he pointed us to an eternal kingdom.

[40:39] Would you trust that? Would you submit to that? Would you follow that at all costs? So they don't know what to do with them. So they release them. Verse 23. And what do they do when they get released? They don't run.

They go straight back, probably to the upper room and they go and hang out with their friends. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who threw the mouth of our father, David, your servant by the Holy Spirit.

And then he goes into Psalm 2. Why did the Gentiles rage? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed. What they do is that when they go back and they're released, they go and they just praise God.

They're like, God, you really are in complete control. You are the one who created heaven and earth. No one can do anything without your say so, is what they're saying. And then they carry on and he talks about it.

Verse 27. They basically point to the sovereignty of God. They say, wait, you are the anointed one for truly in the city. They were gathered. The whole city tried to rage against you and now they're trying to rage against us.

[41 : 40] And yet they still had no power. You are the one who is in complete control. And this is the verse I want us to focus on just to finish. Verse 29. And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness.

So they know something's coming. Because Jesus told them in Luke 12 and 21 that, hey, it's not going to be a fun time, what you're going to do. But then when they pray, they're not praying for the problems to go away.

When you had a problem last and you prayed, what did you pray for? Well, likely, just like me, you prayed for that problem to go away. Whether there is that tricky person at work or whether there's that project that you are trying to get over.

What you prayed for or the exam that you want to just get rid of now. Or the injury that you, whatever it is. You're praying for that threat to go away. You're praying for that problem to go away. It would have been so reasonable and so understandable if we were in that prayer meeting.

God, could you just make a way? Can you just make the Romans like us? Can you just make Christianity the main religion in Rome?

[42 : 48] And that we can just kind of build your kingdom smoothly and safely. They don't pray for that. They pray. They say, look, the threats are coming. Grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness.

They pray for courage. They pray that, Lord, whatever we're about to face, would you help us face it? That's a different prayer, brothers and sisters. I don't know if I pray that prayer that much.

I pray for people to be healthy. I pray for passage to be smooth. I pray for flights to be on time. But they're praying for boldness to continue to speak the word despite the threats.

Francis Chan says this. We pray for safety and comfort while the early church prayed for boldness. The spirit doesn't give us polished words. He gives us power to proclaim Christ's lordship without apology. If you're not facing opposition, ask, am I speaking the uncensored gospel?

That's the fine line we have to find. Because the last thing I want you to do is to go to work and take this Bible and just whack people around the heads with the Bible and say, repent. The kingdom of heaven is near.

[43 : 53] There is grace in the way we do it. This last month I've been looking at scripture and I've just been blown away by how gracious Jesus was. That he came not to judge the world but to save the world.

He just, he had just incredible compassion, incredible patience that we don't have. And yet his message was uncensored. I am the cornerstone. I am the only one.

There is no other name by which you will be saved apart from mine. And the final bit, which is just a, would have loved to see this in movie form. Verse 31 at the very end.

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. Can you imagine being in a prayer meeting? Can you imagine being here and you closing your eyes and praying and then this room shaking?

That would have been terrifying, but incredibly encouraging. Because you'd have been like, whoa.

[44 : 56] Now, prayer was heard and then he responded by shaking this room. Up until this point, when was the last time they had experienced an earthquake?

This group of people. Think back. Gabs, you're looking very thoughtful. After Jesus was crucified, the earth shook.

The veil was torn. Fast forward to now, they're praying and the earth shakes again. The last time that happened, there was a man that said, it is finished.

It is done. What must have been going through their minds when they were praying in that moment and the earth was shaking again? They're like, there is nothing we can be afraid of.

Nothing. Nothing at all. Nothing at all. We were supposed to be dead. He was supposed to be dead.

[45:59] But now he's alive. And we're still alive. That would have filled them with faith. That would have filled them with courage. That would have filled them with conviction.

And so they went straight back into the threat. They went straight back into the fire. Because now the Holy Spirit had given them boldness. Had given them faith. Makes me think of Hebrews 6 where it talks about Jesus being the anchor.

The one who entered into the inner sanctuary. When we face storms. When we're being shaken. And our circumstances are all over the place. We can sit and go, wow, Jesus, you are my anchor. Why? Because you went into the inner sanctuary and you gave us connection back to the source of life.

The creator of heaven and earth. The one who is in complete control. And he was the only one who entered into that place. That's why he was the only one.

[47:01] That's why he's the only name who can save us. No fame, no power, no money can save us. No health can save us. Only the name of Jesus.

Because he was the only one who went into that place. Why? Because he died for us. Tim Keller puts it in a just beautiful way. Maybe I'll butcher it. But I just want to share it with you here.

Jesus is the only name. Because he was the one who did the only thing to save all of mankind. No religious teacher ever claims the claims that Jesus did.

That he is the son of God. That he would die and that he would rise again. No one ever did that. Let alone actually do it. And then Keller puts it in an interesting way.

He says, well, if there was another way, don't you think Jesus would have found another way? If there was another way to save humanity, wouldn't he have found another way? My goodness, in the garden of Gethsemane, we see him asking, God, is there another way?

[48:02] If there is, would you remove this cup of suffering? Because this one is too painful. If there is another way, can you help? And he knew there was no other way.

Because in order to pay for the depths of this world, the sinless one would have to be sacrificed.

And because there was no other way, there is no other name. Are you trusting in the name of Jesus?

And only Jesus. That's the message of Peter here. That's what filled him with courage. That's what shook the world. To the point where there was a group of terrified, terrified followers.

Who'd be even scared of a little girl questioning them. To be able to stand in front of a council and say, you did this. And yet he still lives. And because of that, there is nothing you can take from me today.

Can I pray for all of us to have that same boldness? To have that same courage? To have that same conviction? That when you leave here, you would be filled with the spirit.

[49:15] You would be cut to the heart by the gospel. You would be transformed. Like Peter was. Because there's only one name that you trust. There is only one name that saved you.

When you recognize that you are the lame beggar. When you recognize, when we recognize that we are the lame beggar. That for 40 years could not stand up ourselves. Yet by just the whisper and uttering of that name Jesus.

His ankles were strengthened and he could stand up. When we recognize that we are that person.

That fills us with courage. Because we know we're playing with house money. This isn't on us.

There's nothing to lose here. The last time the earth shook, Jesus said, it is done. It is finished. It is a done deal. The victory has been won. And authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him.

So no boss, no uncle, no family, friend. Can threaten what you have in him. Can I ask you to be open to being filled with that same courage and that same spirit.

[50:17] Let's pray. Let's pray. Holy Spirit, we.

We sit here now and we approach you with humility. Knowing that the same spirit that shook the room that day.

Is the same one that could do it right now. Jesus, we as your followers, we believe you.

We believe in you. We believe your name is the name that saves. This is the only name that saves.

But let us not stop at just believing.

Give us the strength to follow. Give us the strength to count the cost of following you. And once we see that cost. We deem it completely worth it.

[52 : 04] Everything else. Can be considered rubbish when compared to the surpassing worth. Of knowing you. Knowing that you desire connection with us.

That you came to save us. You came to say, look at me. Fix your gaze at me. There is no other way that you can be saved apart from through me.

We are going to sing a final song now.

And it's no other name. And maybe I'll pray that as we sing this. Can we declare this truth over our families. Over the places that you think the Lord is calling you to go to.

That when you go back home. That when you go back home. Wherever you are. That the name that is above all other names already goes before you. That there is power in his name.

[53 : 01] To break the chains that have held you back for so long. We believe that. We have to believe that. We do believe that.

Because Jesus died and rose again. And showed us that he can be trusted. So let us declare. That there is no other name. Can I invite you to stand? Thank you. Jesus we know that.

Every value system. Every religion in this world. Tells us that we have to better ourselves. So we. Keep reaching out.

Climbing up to reach you. Every religion tells us that we have to prove ourselves. Every system tells us we have to make a name.

Trust in ourselves. Yet you are the one. The light of the world that reached down to us. You are the only one. That knows us by name.

[54 : 14] That fixed your eyes on us. Reach down to us. And so we trust in you.

And only you. We fear in a holy. Reverent kind of way. We fear only you. Help us not to be afraid of anything else.

Your grace. Abounds. So then when we have to. Seek forgiveness from family. When we have to share the gospel. With family. When we have to declare your name.

To those who are nearest and dearest. It will be you that carries us through. We trust in you Jesus. Fill us with your power and your spirit. As we go from here. Let us be messengers of grace and truth. In whatever arena you send us to. Here we are Lord.

[55 : 19] Send us. We thank you for this time. As we go from here. Would you allow us to be acutely aware.

Of your presence. In the present. Thank you Lord. We love you. We worship you. We follow you. It's in your name we pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen.