

Wednesday with the Word @Wheat Street Baptist Church

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What Do You Do When People Try to Shut You Down and Shut You Up? Acts 4:1-22

There is a price you pay for obedience. There is a price you pay for doing things God's way and living according to God's word. You will be attacked for trying to be faithful. The sad thing about it is that these attacks are so painful because they are insider attacks. Christians are more under attack in churches than they are in the streets. We have folk in the church who are not of the word and therefore they will attack you for standing on the word of God. There are people in the church who are not in line with God's will for God's church and they take sides against the will and way of God. I always tell you there are two sides in church. You are either on the devil's side or God's side. The Pastor doesn't have "a side". If your Pastor is a man of God and following God then he or she is on God's side. If you ever have a Pastor who is not on God's side it is your responsibility to get rid of that Pastor for your sake and their sake.

Acts 4:1-4

The apostles were still talking to the people, when some priests, the captain of the temple guard, and some Sadducees arrived. **2** These men were angry because the apostles were teaching the people that the dead would be raised from death, just as Jesus had been raised from death. **3** It was already late in the afternoon, and they arrested Peter and John and put them in jail for the night. **4** But a lot of people who had heard the message believed it. So by now there were about five thousand followers of the Lord.

1. What does it cost to tell the truth?
2. What does it cost to share the love of Christ in word and deed?
3. If you were threatened with jail would you reframe from sharing the love of God in word and deed?
4. Have you ever been put in a situation where your witness was challenged and you felt uncomfortable standing up for God and telling the truth of God's word and fighting for God's will to be done?

Acts 4:5-7

5 The next morning the leaders, the elders, and the teachers of the Law of Moses met in Jerusalem. **6** The high priest Annas was there, as well as Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other members of the high priest's family. **7** They brought in Peter and John and made them stand in the middle while they questioned them. They asked, "By what power and in whose name have you done this?"

This is a great line of questions!

Where does your power come from?

Do you know how to tap into that source of power when you are under attack for doing God's will?

You Access the Power via the Spiritual Disciplines:

- Prayer
- Fasting
- Meditating on God's Word
- Reading God's Word
- Silence
- Solitude
- Private Worship
- Public Worship
- Study of God's Word (private and public)
- Reflective Practice where you seek discernment, clarity, wisdom and direction
- Remember what God has done so as to encourage you as to what God will do

Acts 4:8-12

8 Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and told the nation's leaders and the elders:

9 You are questioning us today about a kind deed in which a crippled man was healed.

10 But there is something we must tell you and everyone else in Israel. This man is standing here completely well because of the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth.

You put Jesus to death on a cross, but God raised him to life. **11** He is the stone that you builders thought was worthless, and now he is the most important stone of all.

12 Only Jesus has the power to save! His name is the only one in all the world that can save anyone.

Peter doesn't bite his tongue. Don't hesitate to tell the truth. Don't hesitate to stand up for right. Don't hesitate to answer criticism with God's word when what you are doing is rooted in your understanding of your faith. The interesting thing about these types of confrontations is that they have to purposes:

1. They shore up your faith. They grow your faith.

2. They testify to the one challenging you as to the power of faith and specifically your faith. In essence when we do what we have been called to do with boldness and courage the opposition has to recognize and respect the God in YOU!

Acts 4:13-14

13 The officials were amazed to see how brave Peter and John were, and they knew that these two apostles were only ordinary men and not well educated. The officials were certain that these men had been with Jesus. **14** But they could not deny what had happened. The man who had been healed was standing there with the apostles.

The work God does through us testifies to who God is. The officials were amazed at what they saw and heard. The witness of the healing was over whelming to them and this was further amplified by the courage of Peter and John.

It is also interesting that they comment on the men's lack of education. While I am an advocate of preparation God can use anybody. While education is a worthy pursuit, if you don't have the Holy Ghost you are wasting your time. The power in this witness was their submitting to the power of the Holy Ghost. They knew they had power, they weren't afraid to use that power, submit to that power and in this submission they had no fear.

Fear is of the Devil! Reverence, respect, assess the challenges of a situation make sense but fear is not of God. When fear serves as a deterrent from us doing the will of God it is of the devil. When fear paralyzes us or makes us cower and not what God demands us at this time in ministry, this fear is not of God! One of the chief tools of the devil is to use fear to make you back down, shut up, sit down and not be bold enough to do what God has called you to do.

1 John 4:17-19 - God is love the closer we are to God the bolder we become!

17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. **18** There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. **19** We love because he first loved us.

Acts 4:15-

15 The officials commanded them to leave the council room. Then the officials said to each other, **16** "What can we do with these men? Everyone in Jerusalem knows about this miracle, and we cannot say it didn't happen. **17** But to keep this thing from spreading, we will warn them never again to speak to anyone about the name of Jesus." **18** So they called the two apostles back in and told them that they must never, for any reason, teach anything about the name of Jesus.

What is going on here?

What is the tension? Why is it that the officials are not willing to jail them, stone them, crucify them or do any public thing to them?
What are they concerned about?

What tool(s) are they trying to use to keep this thing quiet:

- A. Fear
- B. Intimidation
- C. Power
- D. Mind Tricks
- E. All of the Above

They see the power the Apostle have. They see the work they are doing in the Jesus Name. They have confessed that these men have power. They can't deny the miracle healing, the people can't deny the miracle healing and still they try to shut it down. They can't touch them, they can't stop them so they try to intimidate them. They give a command an order that they can choose to obey or not.

These officials think their status gives them the right to tell these men of God what they can and can't do! Have you ever encountered this in the church? Have people in power, with no biblical backing, just tell you what you better not do or else?

This is what is happening here. These men who don't know Jesus are telling the men who know Jesus and have been with Jesus what they bet not do! In times like these you have a choice to make they had a choice to make. Let's see what they did.

Acts 4:19-22

19 Peter and John answered, “Do you think God wants us to obey you or to obey him?”

20 We cannot keep quiet about what we have seen and heard.”

How do Peter and John respond?

Why do you think they respond this way?

How would you have responded?

How do you respond when people try to put you in your place for doing what God has called you to do?

Does people threats, mean and evil talk effect and or affect you (make you second guess / bow down or bow out)?

How do you respond to folk who do to you what these officials did?

Acts 4:21-22

21-22 The officials could not find any reason to punish Peter and John. So they threatened them and let them go. The man who was healed by this miracle was more than forty years old, and everyone was praising God for what had happened.

Isn't interesting in the end the officials had no power over them. The one who had all power was the one Peter and John were preaching about.

Do we know how much power we have?

Are we using the power God has given us to spread the Gospel and change the world?

Are we allowing God to work miracle through us or are we happy just doing little stuff when God wants to do big stuff through us?

Personal Notes: