

## **Acts 4:1-12 “Arrested for the Gospel”**

**Intro:** Over the last two weeks we saw that the Christian life is a two-sided coin of word and deed. Gospel and hospitality, gospel and healing. These things go together. Today we will see that message and lifestyle is worth everything. It is, as Jesus Himself says, the treasure in a field. You are familiar with that story in Matt 13:44-46 where a man finds a treasure in a field, and upon seeing it's that it's value exceeds the price of the field and indeed exceeds all his worth. He goes and spends all his money to purchase the field that has the treasure because even though it cost him everything, he gained more than he spent. That is the way the Christian life works. Paul says it this way in Romans 8 “For I do not consider the present sufferings worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed.” In other words, no one in this life will give up something for God and later get to heaven, look at Jesus and regret it. Jesus says, if you want to save your life, you must lose it. And, if you lose it for His sake and the gospel, you'll find it. This is the irony of the good news about Jesus. It will cost you everything, but what you gain exceedingly outshines what you give up. In fact, it is the only guaranteed way to live a life of no regret.

The apostles all died believing this. All of them, except for John, died terrible, gruesome horrible deaths but they willingly did so because Jesus is better than comfort. Jesus is more powerful than death itself.

Because Jesus, the God/man rose from the dead conquering sin, death, the devil and hell, we are not only free but we have been given His presence through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to empower us to live supernatural lives of exception even in the face of persecution and death.

Because death could not hold him, He has no rival, no equal, He reigns forever more. The name of Jesus is the name above every other name. It is the Name that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father.

Because He lives, all fear is gone. Because He lives, He has conquered every power, authority, or anything that raises itself up against the knowledge of God. He is Christ the conqueror. Christ the victor, Christ the Lord. He is Lord of all!

These truths and their implications are the kind of thing the apostles would have been teaching the people. This had been going on since 3pm and it's at least 5 or 6pm now...

### **Exposition:**

**Q:1 -Two parts Arrest v1-4; Interrogation 5-12**

V1 -Priests, captain of the temple guard and Sadducees came up to them v2 “greatly agitated.” Who were the Sadducees? Religious leaders, who were compromisers with the Romans. The Sadducees were the religious pragmatists of their day. They comprised the majority of the Sanhedrin which was the Jewish ruling council of 70 men. They, unlike the Pharisees, did not believe in a resurrection from the dead. That is why they were, “sad you see.” This is why, in verse 2, they were “greatly agitated... because they were proclaiming in Jesus, the resurrection from the dead.” It is easy to see why the Sadducees are “agitated.” The apostles are teaching something diametrically opposed to what they believed and taught.

### Resurrection in NT

My story: I was raised in church, but I never heard that there would be a future resurrection of the body for all of us, like Jesus. It was only as I read through the Bible on my own, that I came across 1Cor 15 and was like... WHAT?! Why has no one talked about this. They talked about heaven but never a resurrection.

If you're following the discussion questions, we're about to answer Q5

You've been hearing a lot over the last two weeks about 1 Cor 15 and how it presents the gospel in a succinct way. I've challenged all of us to memorize it. Now we see that 1 Cor 15 also gives us the clearest exposition of the resurrection. Let's turn there now.

1Cor 15:12-19 especially v19 on a day like today, Resurrection Sunday. Running commentary then v58.

This is not wish fulfillment or sappy sentimentalism. Instead, this is the rock-solid foundation of Christ and His victorious resurrection. “Be steadfast, immovable always abounding in the work of the LORD, knowing that your labor is not in vain.”v58. Live a life of no regrets by living for the King and working in His kingdom.

What the gospels recorded (resurrection), the apostles preached about, Paul says has real world implications.

Future judgement (Rev 20:6, 13-15)

Reward -Resurrection to life.

Punishment -Resurrection to death.

Jailing

Five thousand men (cf. 2:41, “3000”)

Next scene: Next day (v5ff)

## Q2: Who were the major players?

### Rulers, Elders, & Scribes: Sanhedrin

Notice the specificity of Luke in v5-6. This is one of the ways we know that Luke was writing an accurate account of what happened... And, if you're interested in such things, you can read additional commentary on the veracity of this. LMK & I'll get you the info.

Scribes were professional copyists and sometimes called "experts in the law". They were also known as or practiced as attorneys. 6 days a week for 8-12 hours a day...

-James Montgomery Boice points out that there is an emphasis in the Greek that indicates that they came on them suddenly or in a rush. The implication is that the authorities sought to overwhelm and intimidate the apostles. That makes sense because they jail and interrogate them. Look in v7.

### Interrogation: v7

Who told you it was ok to do what you've been doing? Who gave you the authority to preach? Who do you think you are? Under who's license are you operating?

"power or name"

This is a question about power and authority. There are political overtones here. **This is the answer to Q8.** Jesus does indeed upset the political power structure and claims to authority in the early church and that goes on today as well. The Chinese Communist party rightly understands Christianity to be a threat and even perhaps the greatest threat to their existence. The Bolsheviks understood this. Almost every totalitarian or collectivist political ideology has understood that Christianity's claim that Jesus is Lord, is a threat to their existence.

The Sanhedrin understood this as well. The apostles' theology and preaching was a threat to their legitimacy.

Peter's response (8-12)

Filled with the HS -The new (indwelt) temple is standing in the old temple (irony).

## Q4: What was the apostles' message?

Peter says, "If this is about a man being healed, Jesus did it. You remember Jesus right? The One you killed." This is the same message that Peter proclaimed to the people in chapter 2 and 3. "Jesus, the one you betrayed and murdered, the one that God raised from the dead, Yeah, that's right you Sadducees who say that there is no resurrection, you're wrong. God the Father raised Jesus from the dead. You rejected Him and now, He's the foundation of what God is building. You scribes do remember *THAT* scripture right, Psalm 118:22 which was part of the

Hallel psalms that were read and sang at the Passover. Jesus is that stone. He is the only way anyone, anywhere, anytime can be saved. There is no salvation in anyone else but in the Name of Jesus.” Jesus, said this about Himself in Matt 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17.

Verse 12 is a verse that you should memorize. **Q6: What is controversial about the gospel in our time?** This is a verse that you and your family should rehearse this week. This, along with John 14:6 are two verses that insist that salvation is only through Jesus Christ. Not Buddha, not enlightenment, not therapy, not Muhammed, not meditation, not self-help, not positive thinking, not money, not relationships, not a boyfriend or girlfriend, or husband or wife or children, not the government, not a job, or status, anyone or anything else. Only Jesus. Why? Because He is the only one who is God in the flesh, who was able to pay the price for sin, He is the only one to rise from the dead to never see death again. He is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He is the only king forever and ever. Amen!

Is this intolerant, narrow, and exclusive? Yes. But is it true? That’s the real question. And all religions are exclusive and that is not a defeater for the truthfulness of a statement. Even secular humanism that claims not to be a religion, and prides itself on being tolerant, is itself intolerant of anything that doesn’t agree with it. It is, in philosophical terms, self referentially incoherent. In other words, it doesn’t hold up to it’s own standard of tolerance. It’s like someone saying “I can’t speak a word of English.”

That’s the irony. It’s GOOD NEWS and it’s intolerant, narrow and exclusive. The gospel is always ironic. Want to save your life? Lose it. Want to live a life of no regrets? Give up all you have and trust Christ with your life. Sell it all if that’s what you must do.

### **Conclusion:**

Today, on this resurrection Sunday, if you sense the move of the Spirit, run to him in faith and repentance. Today, if you know that you are a sinner and need redemption, come to Him who saves to the utmost. Today, if you need to be born again, come to Jesus the one who lives. He is the resurrection and the life. Anyone who come to Him, though he dies, he will live. Be saved this day, this resurrection Sunday. **Q9: Have you done that? Have you trusted Christ? Today is the day.** For those of us who know Him, serve Him wholeheartedly with no regrets, knowing that the resurrection is coming.

Lord God, Almighty Father, we thank you for what you did in resurrecting your Son. Thank you that we, together in Him enjoy your salvation, and sonship. For those who don’t know you, would you open their hearts and minds to understand and believe the gospel. For those of us who know You, please help us to live lives consistent with the truth we’ve heard today. For Christ’s sake, Amen.

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. What are the two divisions and themes of the passage for today?
2. Who were the major players in the text and what were their roles?
3. Why were the religious leaders “agitated” and threatened by the apostle’s message?
4. What was the apostle’s message?
5. What’s the big deal about the resurrection (v2 & 10)?
6. What is controversial about the gospel (hint: v12)?
7. What is ironic about the gospel?
8. What are the political implications of the gospel?
9. Have you repented and believed the gospel?