SALVATION IS FOUND IN NO ONE ELSE

Acts 4:1-31

Key Verse: 4:12

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

In Acts chapter 3, Peter and John healed a crippled beggar in the name of Jesus. It stirred people’s heart brining explosive church growth. In today’s passage, the religious leaders tried to stop the apostles from preaching in the name of Jesus. But the apostles overcame their hindrances with the help of the Holy Spirit. We will learn the way of salvation through the name of Jesus alone. May we learn how to advance the work of God in the midst of a spiritual war through the work of the Holy Spirit.

1.Only Jesus can save us(1-12)

Look at verses 1,2. **“The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.”** When there was a work of God, there was also a work of Satan. These religious leaders were greatly disturbed by the apostles’ teaching especially resurrection message.

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. They did not believe in spiritual world for instance heaven and hell, angels and demons. They are the one who had challenged Jesus with a question of 7 brothers’ marriage to a woman and all their death. They were greatly ashamed by Jesus’ words which says, **“You are in error because you do not know the Scripture or the power of God.”** This same religious group hindered apostles’ teaching because Peter and John were teaching in the temple courts without their permission. They were offended by their message because it made them being responsible for Jesus’ death.

So they seized Peter and John and had them put in jail overnight for trial next day. Verse 4 says, **“But many who heard the message believed, so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.”** Even though the religious leaders were able to arrest God’s servants, they couldn’t stop spreading God’s word. The miraculous healing of the lame combined with the powerful preaching of the apostles sent spiritual shock waves throughout Jerusalem. 1Timothy 2:9 says, **“for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God’s word is not chained.”** The Sadducees imprisoned the apostles, however, they could not chain God’s word because God’s word is living and active overcoming all the obstacles.

Verses 5,6 say **“The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest’s family.”** The entire Sanhedrin assembled to put the apostles on trial. The same Jewish leaders who had condemned Jesus to death were there to condemn the apostles this time. Like their Master Jesus, the disciples followed the same footsteps which was the way of the cross. Verse 7 says. **“They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them, “By what power or what name did you do this?”** Did they not know this? Of course, they knew. But they needed the apostles to answer the question in order to incriminate them. But what did Peter respond them?

Look at verses 8-9. **“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed.”** Peter’s testimony before the Sanhedrin was not only powerful but also very eloquent. Where did Peter find such strength and wisdom as he stood before his accusers? The Luke says that Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God who has power and wisdom. The spirit of Jesus was on him. Peter could have spoken while being filled with emotion, anger or frustration. But Peter stood apart from his own thoughts and feelings and surrendered all things to the Holy Spirit and spoke God’s word. Peter told them that they were arrested for showing an act of kindness to a crippled man. They should be awarded for their good work. What an odd charge it was!

Verses 10-11 say, **“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.** Peter answered them clearly saying “It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.” Then he reminded them that they crucified Jesus but God raised him from the dead. Men’s salvation rests on the two pillars of faith. These pillars are Jesus’ death and His resurrection. Peter was ready to teach them the Bible. He opened the Bible to Psalm 118 and then to Isaiah 28. He quoted a verse that exactly fit these religious leaders. Verse 11 says, **“Jesus is ‘the stone you builders rejected which has become the cornerstone.’”**

Jesus himself had quoted this verse shortly before his death. He applied it to the tenants in the vineyard who had refused to give fruit to the owner, but rather had killed the prophets and finally, killed the son. The men who should be building God’s spiritual house had rejected the very stone that God had prepared. So God picked up the rejected stone and used it in his holy building. God made Jesus as the cornerstone of his redemptive history.

The cornerstone was the most important stone in a building because it was used as the standard to make sure that all the other stones were straight and level. Jesus fulfilled the covenant promise made to Abraham. Jesus is the descendant of David who reigns forever on David’s throne. Jesus fulfilled the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. God is the architect. He has designed his redemptive history and his church to all be connected to Jesus. Jesus, the rejected stone became the cornerstone.

What was Peter’s conclusion? Look at verse 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.”** The whole Bible focused on Jesus Christ because He is the way that God provided for man’s salvation. Without Jesus people would perish in their sins and go to eternal condemnation. Some people think that it is narrow-minded to say that salvation is only through Jesus. But the truth is very exclusive. If the truth is not exclusive, that is not truth at all. The Bible is exclusive because it gives us salvation only through Jesus. The Bible were written over the period of 1,600 years with over 40 different authors with one theme. Paradise is lost by one man Adam and the kingdom of God is restored through one man, Jesus, the Messiah.

God himself is the author of salvation. Hebrews 2:20 introduces Jesus as the pioneer of salvation. He is the one whom our sins have offended and saddened. God prepared the way down through history. Finally, he sent his Son to be the Savior of mankind. Jesus Christ, Son of God, and Son of man is the climax of God’s redemptive history. Only Jesus came to this world as God in the flesh. Only Jesus defeated the devil with God’s words. Only Jesus shed his blood on the cross for sinners. Only the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God is sufficient by God’s standard to atone for the sin of the world. Only Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus is the God sent Savior.

Billy Graham’s funeral ceremony was held in Charlotte, NC in 2018. He lived what he preached. His grave marker describes him as, “Preacher of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ,” with John 14:6, **“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”** In his final message at his 95th birthday, Billy Graham said, “There is only one message that should change people’s lives and hearts. I want to tell people about the meaning of the real cross of Jesus that was scarred and bloodstained. That I was faithful to the message that God gave and faithful to the calling that God gave me to go into the world and preach the gospel.” He would be remembered as the preacher who did not deviate from the gospel message that only Jesus saves.

We need to have faith that only Jesus saves. Yes, we should be tolerant. We should embrace all kinds of people. Yes, we should live a life of love so that others may see in us what it means to believe in Jesus and be drawn to God. But we should never compromise on the truth of salvation for the sake of tolerance. Jesus is the only way to salvation for mankind.

2. We cannot stop speaking about Jesus(13-31)

Look at verse 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.”** These religious leaders were astonished by apostles’ powerful message. How could the ordinary men speak so boldly? They were uneducated and untrained. Yet they spoke with conviction and authority. The religious leader took note that the two men had been with Jesus. Although they did attend rabbinical school, the disciples were in Jesus’ school for 3 and half years receiving Jesus’ personal and intensive training. As a result, all were turned to be outstanding bible teachers and preachers. Being with Jesus really changes people. So we need to register Jesus’ bible school and receive His life changing training.

The religious leaders had Jesus executed with their evil plot. They thought that everything would be under their control without Jesus. But now his disciples were rising up to take his place. The religious leaders wanted to get rid of the apostles. However, the formerly crippled man was standing there as a living witness. There was nothing they could say. After much discussion, they said, **“But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them not speak no longer to anyone in his name.”** They threatened and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

But Peter and John replied, **“Which is right in God’s eyes, to listen to you or to him? You be judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”** The Lord had given them the mission to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth. Peter was very clear. He had to do what Jesus commanded him to do, not what men commanded him to do. Peter obeyed a higher law- God’s law and His commission to him prior to men’s law. Jesus’ commands were none negotiable.

When Peter and John reported everything that the chief priests and elders had told them, the believers were amazed at the sovereign power of God and his control of history. So they prayed more fervently. Verse 24 says, **“When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them.”** They raised their voices together in prayer. They prayed aloud, not silently filling the room with crying out voices. They were engaging in united prayer or prayer chain. Psalm 2 describes how the rulers gather together against the Lord and his Anointed One. But their plot would turn to be in vein because God was in control.

They knew that the Almighty God was behind what was happening. They began to view things in light of God’s word. Men plan trying to hinder the work of God, but God’s plan prevails. The leaders were trying to undermine the work of God by persecuting the apostles. But they could not stop the work of God. What was their prayer topics? Verses 29,30 says **“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”** God heard their prayers and responded to them. The place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

In today’s passage, still the name of Jesus is the key word. The name Jesus came from God. The meaning of the name Jesus is that He will save his people from their sins. God gave Jesus the name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord. We may face hindrances as we serve God’s work. However, may we believe that God is behind us. May God strengthen our church members to depend on the name of Jesus and build up a church on Jesus, the cornerstone.