

Acts: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Community, Supernatural Gospel
Acts 4:1-31 (Part 4)

Intro:

- In Chapter 3 we see the first part of the signs and wonders to come in the book of Acts where Peter and John heal a man who was lame from birth and through faith in the name of Jesus he can walk
- John 15:18-20 “If the world hates you, understand that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you. 20 Remember the word I spoke to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.”
- Have you ever wondered what happened to the first apostles and early Christian writers? – Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*.
 - Philip
 - He labored diligently in Upper Asia, and suffered martyrdom at Heliopolis, in Phrygia. He was scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified, A.D. 54.
 - Matthew
 - He shared the gospel in Ethiopia, in which he suffered martyrdom, being slain with a spear A.D. 60.
 - James the Less
 - He was elected to the oversight of the churches of Jerusalem; and was the author of the Epistle ascribed to James in the sacred canon. At the age of ninety-four he was beat and stoned by the Jews; and finally had his brains dashed out with a fuller's club.
 - Matthias
 - Of whom less is known than of most of the other disciples, was elected to fill the vacant place of Judas. He was stoned at Jerusalem and then beheaded.
 - Andrew
 - Was the brother of Peter. He preached the gospel to many Asiatic nations; but on his arrival at Edessa he was taken and crucified on a cross, the two ends of which were fixed transversely in the ground.
 - Mark
 - Mark was dragged to pieces by the people of Alexandria, at the great solemnity of Serapis their idol, ending his life under their merciless hands.
 - Peter
 - Among many other saints, the blessed apostle Peter was condemned to death, and crucified But that he was crucified, his head being down

and his feet upward, himself so requiring, because he was (he said) unworthy to be crucified after the same form and manner as the Lord was.

- Paul
 - Paul, the apostle, under Nero, was beheaded
- Jude
 - The brother of James, was commonly called Thaddeus. He was crucified at Edessa, A.D. 72.
- Bartholomew
 - Preached in several countries, and having translated the Gospel of Matthew into the language of India, he evangelized it in that country. He was at length cruelly beaten and then crucified.
- Thomas
 - Preached the Gospel in Parthia and India, where exciting the rage of the pagan priests, he was martyred by being thrust through with a spear.
- Luke
 - He travelled with Paul through various countries, and is supposed to have been hanged on an olive tree, by the idolatrous priests of Greece.
- Simon
 - Surnamed Zelotes, preached the Gospel in Mauritania, Africa, and even in Britain, in which latter country he was crucified, A.D. 74.
- John
 - Banished to the Island of Patmos, He was the only apostle who escaped a violent death.
- Barnabas
 - His death is supposed to have taken place about A.D. 73.

“And yet, notwithstanding all these continual persecutions and horrible punishments, the Church daily increased, deeply rooted in the doctrine of the apostles and of men apostolical, and watered plenteously with the blood of saints.”

John Foxe

- Why do I share that with you?
 - It's because I want you to know what is really going on here and could happen to us.
 - “In modern times the church (at least in the West) has rarely faced physical. Satan's attacks have become much more subtle. Instead of threatening the body, Satan's persecutions today aim at the ego. They threaten our selfish pride, need for acceptance, or status. Satan has largely destroyed the spiritual effectiveness of the church without having to kill the individual believers in it. In fact, letting believers live self-centered, complacent, [lazy], worldly lives is more effective in keeping people from being attracted to the

Christian faith than killing them. (John MacArthur, *Commentary on Acts 1-12*, 127.)

- Is Jesus worthy enough for you to suffer with him?

Read Acts 4:1-22

1. **Authority: Vs 5-12**

- All the ruling elders and authority of the day have one question for him and it is the same question we are asked today:
 - What authority can you do this in? What is your authority?
 - We must be able to articulate well here... our community demands it and our kids and youth deserve it..
- How shall we answer this charge?
 - 1. Vs 8 – Filled with the Holy Spirit
 - Luke 12:11-12 Whenever they bring you before synagogues and rulers and authorities, don't worry about how you should defend yourselves or what you should say. 12 For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what must be said."
 - 2. Vs 10 – Proclaim Christ Alone
 - Vs 12 – There is no one else
 - Point people's eyes to Jesus, he is the only unique one
 - 3:3-9
 - 3. Vs 11 – Use the Word of God
 - Quoted from Ps 118:22
 - God who has made heaven and earth and created all things in it has chosen to reveal himself through his Word.
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2. **Obedience (13-22)**

- 13 – 18 show that these men are just normal, ordinary, everyday guys
- Psalm 119:30 - I have chosen the way of truth; I have set your ordinances before me
- They were obedient and true to the word of God
- 1 Samuel 15:22
 - Then Samuel said: Does the LORD take pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? Look: to obey is better than sacrifice, to pay attention is better than the fat of rams.
- Read vs 18 – 22
 - What would you do?
 - The way we live now answers that question better than any word we have:

- “My mind flashed back to five years prior when my daughter and I went to an underground gathering China. Young people were praying so passionately, begging God to send them to the most dangerous places. They were actually hoping to die as martyrs! I had never seen anything like it. I still can’t get over the fearless passion for Jesus this church embodied. As they shared stories of persecution, I sat in amazement and asked for more stories. After a while, they asked why I was so intrigued. I told them the church in America is nothing like this. I can’t tell you how embarrassing it was to try to explain to them that people attend 90-minute services once a week in buildings and that’s what we call church. I told them about how people switch churches if they find better teaching, more exciting music, or more robust programs for their kids. (Francis Chan, *Letters to the Church*, 154)

- What is more important to honor man or God?

3. **Petition (23-31)**

- They go back to their faith family...do you see why it is so important that we are a family?
- And what did they do together?
 - Vs 24 -Prayed
 - Master, you are the one in control
 - Vs 26 – Ps 2:1-2
 - They have assembled against you
 - But they can only do what your hand has allowed and predestined
 - His point here is that God is in control!
 - The King is not threatened by threats in the kingdom
 - Now give us the boldness to speak your word some more!
 - 365 times in the bible is says do not fear or fear not
 - 6 times in Scriptures Paul had to hear the words of Jesus say Fear not!
 - Lottie Moon – I have a firm conviction that I am immortal until my work is done.
- When they had finished he answered their prayer!
- Let me return to my first question? Is he Worthy?