

Acts #32

“Prayer Starts the Wheels Turning” *Acts 4:23-33; James 1:2-8; 12; Phil 3:7-10; 1st Peter 4:12-16*

**Peter and John along with the formerly lame man who had been completely healed were hauled into court before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish law enforcement agency of Jerusalem.** Peter had told the crippled man that he had no money for him but something far better; something more lasting.

*And as the saying goes; ‘No good deed goes unpunished’ so Peter and John were arrested because they took advantage of God’s wonderful miracle as an occasion to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His resurrection.*

So, not only do we live because He lives but we also can potentially live in the power of His resurrection and that means a new life in Christ free from worry, fear and anxiety.

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**In his second sermon, Peter saying in effect: “So, your honor, your good works will get you nowhere; your public displays of piety will not save you; your feeble attempts to keep the Mosaic law bring you no hope; you’re sunk, dead in your sins without the One you discarded as trash; Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our only Messiah.”**

No other savior ever has or ever will be given but Jesus Christ, the Righteous!

*Much like the politicians in our world today, Israel’s rulers of Peter’s day would tell you unequivocally that they stand for truth and justice but the problem is that it has to be their slanted truth and their unbalanced perverted justice.*

**So, the lesson here is: we don’t necessarily want to pray for all persecution to be removed; better yet, we pray that we would trust God during it.**

As believers, we have a unique privilege to suffer to glorify God during the angelic dispute which is a noble honorable type of pressure that far too few get to recognize.

*Suffering in the form of persecution causes us learn self-discipline as it did for our Lord: Hebrews 5:8 “Son though He was, He learned obedience from what He suffered.”*

Our Lord Jesus Christ placed Himself under discipline: Philippians 2:8 “And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death even death on a cross!”

**Sometimes we suffer persecution ahead of someone else using biblical truth all the way to be able to help a weaker believer when they go through the same thing, making this a specialized situation in which God uses stronger believers to encourage weaker believers.**

Persecution is an advanced course to help us learn the value of biblical truth and this is designed for those who won’t turn to the Word of God until they’ve tried everything else and then say nothing else works so I might as well try it God’s way.

*Please keep these things in mind as we study Acts 4 tonight; Persecution is uncomfortable at best and can be horrific at worst but it is designed for blessing us in a way that we'll never have a chance to experience in Heaven.*

**To the extent that we participate in the sufferings of Jesus Christ, we face unjust persecution and it's a privilege and honor granted to us for just a short while.**

There's nothing more valuable in life than tested and proven faith in Almighty God which glorifies Him.

*We can be sure that if we go through trying times of persecution with faith-rest, we can confidently relax in God.*

Persecution builds spiritual muscle; just wait until we see what happens to the Church under such pressure.

*Acts 4:28 "They did what Your power and will had decided beforehand should happen" In other words, this was all a part of the plan of God; it was no accident.*

**The early Church was comprised of believers with a wonderful relationship of Christian fellowship among themselves at this time.**

Later on the Jerusalem church will completely fail but at this time, these new believers have a fantastic attitude toward each other.

*The refence to their own people is not specifically their families or even friends but this is referring to the body of Christ and they were more relaxed around them than even their own families.*

**Acts 4:30–"Stretch out Your Hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the Name of Your Holy Servant Jesus."**

**In other words, God must do the healing which was always the way of getting attention for the Gospel.**

Here we have the answer to their prayer and boldness in witnessing does not come through prayer, it comes through the filling of the Spirit and they are reminded of that.

*1st John 1:9 is the basis of and prerequisite for the filling of the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Holy Spirit is the basis for witnessing.*

Another important factor in evangelism is an understanding of the Gospel on the part of the one who witnesses.

They're doing quite well because they're depending on the ministry of God the Holy Spirit but later on the Jerusalem church is going to fail.

**It doesn't mean they had the same thought every hour of every day; it means that they were looking at life from the same viewpoint; God's , viewpoint which introduces the principle, knowledge of biblical truth as the witness of the life.**

Obviously, the Holy Spirit is the witness of the life but we have to know the Word and by knowing the Word, we're oriented to the plan of God and the grace of God and this gives us a relaxed life.

*One mind gives us the concept of purpose; they had the same purpose in life because all believers have the same purpose: glorifying God.*

So, when they talked about the resurrection, they referred to its past implications; the resurrection was the Father's acceptance of the work of the Son declared to the entire earth.

And the resurrection has future implications in the concept of phase three: that in the future, just as Jesus Christ has a resurrection body so all born again believers would have resurrection bodies and would live with Him forever and ever; so the resurrection was also a part of phase three.