

In the Name of Jesus (Acts 4:1-31)

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[0 : 00] So today we are reading Acts chapter 4 verse 1 to 31. Alright.

Because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who had heard the message believed. So the number of men who believed grew to about 5,000. 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 family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them.

By what power and what name did you do this? 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, 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. Jesus is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.

[1 : 35] Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved. 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.

But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together.

What are we going to do with these men? They asked. Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.

Then they called them again 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 the judges. As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard. After further threats, they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened.

[2 : 51] For the man who was miraculously healed was over 40 years old. On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

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. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David.

Why do the nations rage and the people's plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.

Indeed, Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in the city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

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.

[3 : 58] After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. That is the word of God.

Thank you. Thank you.

and whenever I appear here, I always say it's such a wonderful thing. It's like coming home because a lot of the leaders now were with me when they were younger and I think we went through a period where we did discipleship together and time has passed so quickly. It's almost 16, 17 years. Gary was very, very young then, believe me. Gary, no, he wasn't wearing diapers, but he was young. And yeah, Showa, Venus, and the Lord here. And I've always felt so privileged that I was able to journey for a while with you guys. So whenever I come back, it's like family. It's like family.

[5 : 30] And the reason why William has invited me this time was because I'm also going to be one of the speakers during camp. And he told me that not everybody knows you, so maybe it's good for you to appear and just to show your face before camp.

All right, so that's where I am. And I was so glad. He said, do you mind preaching on Acts? Because the church is currently doing a series on Acts.

And I was very excited because Acts is a wonderful book. You know, Acts is a book where we see God doing great things. And that was when Jesus was just, you know, just ascended to heaven. And then the church was started. It was the birth of the church. And God did miraculous things in the church. So he said, okay, you're going to be preaching on Acts chapter 4.

And I said, sure. You know, well, I roughly knew what chapter 4 was. But I didn't refer to it when I answered yes. But when I read chapter 4, I was very excited.

[6 : 37] Why? Because chapter 4 is a great chapter. And, you know, I kind of tried to be relevant and tried to be in context. So I actually asked William to let me know what he has been preaching on from chapter 1, 2, and 3.

And in order to prepare preaching on chapter 4, I've got to go back, you know, all the way to chapter 1, 2, and 3, just to be able to put the whole message into context.

But what I was very impressed with when I was reading through the scripture was the repeat of these words, you know, basically talking about the name of Jesus.

The name. What name are you doing this in? The name of Jesus. This whole thing about the name of Jesus came about. And chapter 4 is actually a continuation of chapter 3, whereby Peter and John did just a miracle, performed a miracle.

They healed the cripple. You know, this beggar that was at the temple gate. You know, he was healed in the name of Jesus. And because of that, they were holed up in chapter 4.

[7 : 54] Why? Because they had to answer for their action. Because the Sanhedrin, the Jewish leaders, was very anxious about this particular miracle and this particular healing.

They thought that they had gotten rid of Jesus. You know, in their mind, ah, the troublesome guy is gone. But least did they know that trouble for them had just started.

Why? Because they had to face up with the power of Jesus, with the things that people were doing in the name of Jesus. So chapter 4 was basically a trial.

A trial whereby these disciples had got to face up to what they had done. And when I read chapter 4 in its entirety, actually I realized that the name of Jesus was mentioned no less than six times.

So I was very curious. If you don't believe me, go ahead and count it, alright? So I was very curious. I said, okay, it is mentioned six times in chapter 4. So I went back to chapter 3 and I said, was that ever used in chapter 3?

[9 : 05] And I realized it was mentioned three times. And I said, what about chapter 2? I went back to chapter 2 and this was mentioned twice. You know, when words and phrases are repeated in Scripture, they usually tell you something.

They usually tell you the importance of those words. And I found that in these chapters, the name of Jesus is extremely powerful.

And that really caught my eye. So when I was praying and preparing, you know, the message of chapter 4, I said, what better title to give than the name of Jesus.

The name of Jesus. You know, the first time, well, just to give you a feel of the times when the name was referred to. Just a few times.

In chapter 2, verse 21, I think this is an extremely powerful verse because it says, the disciples there declared, everyone who calls in the name of Jesus will be healed.

[10 : 16] You see how powerful that is? The people who call on the name of Jesus will be healed. And in verse 38, chapter 2, verse 38, it says the disciples again tell the people, repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus.

And chapter 3, verse 6, the disciples once again said, in the name of Jesus, walk. Telling a crippled man who is 40 years old, who was crippled from birth, in the name of Jesus, walk. And chapter 3, verse 16, it says, by the faith in the name of Jesus, the man was healed. Well, the reason why I'm referring to this is so that it can give us a flavor, okay, of how this phrase, or how this word name has been used in the chapters.

And to me, that is awesome because it kind of brings us, it kind of brings us to chapter 4 itself. You know, the first time the word name appeared was in chapter 4, verse 7, when the Sanhedrin basically were asked, you know, by what power and name, what name did you do this miracle? [11:47] You know, it's as if all these people, you know, knows and acknowledge that whatever you do, the name that you claim that it is being done by, that is important.

So they asked, they asked Peter, they asked John, by what power and by what name are you doing this healing? And the second time the word name appeared was in verse 10, when Peter replied to that question.

Peter said, then know this, you, the people in the Sanhedrin and all the people in Israel, it is by the name of Jesus whom you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead, that this man who stands before you is healed.

You know, to me, I can't underestimate what has been said in chapter 3 and chapter 4. You know, I just want all of us to understand that context. When Jesus was on this earth, Jesus was being persecuted for all the good he had done.

[13:08] Jesus was being persecuted for the miracles he performed. The authorities, the Jewish leaders, questioned him. By what power are you doing this?

And Jesus has been saying, you know, it is by the power of God because he is the Christ, he is the Messiah. But they rejected all this. They didn't believe it.

You know, they were so threatened that they crucified Jesus. Get rid of the problem. Why? Because he is too much, he was too much of a danger, a danger to us.

He threatened our status. And it so happened that when Jesus has risen from the dead and Jesus had descended to heaven, the disciples had to continue to harp on this name.

And it is because of this name that all the power came. It is because of this name that the man is being healed. You know, I love the third time when the word name appeared.

[14:16] And it is in verse 12. That was our memory verse. You know, there Peter made a powerful, powerful declaration. And let me say this, this should be all Christians' declaration.

What is this declaration? This declaration is that salvation is found in no one else. for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

You know, to us Christians, we use the name Jesus very often, don't we? We use the name Jesus in our conversation.

We talk about Jesus, we mention Jesus, and this world has blasphemed the name Jesus. You know, for every exclamation, it is what?

Jesus. You see how we abuse that name? But this name is powerful. You know, I want all Christians to acknowledge and to know this, because Peter here declared that salvation is found in no one else.

[15:35] And under heaven, there is no name, no other name given by which we can be saved. Awesome declaration. You know how exclusive this thing is?

You know, a lot of people say that Christians are too narrow-minded. You know, when Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no one can come to the Father but through me, they said Jesus is too small-minded.

Why? Because all road leads to Rome. All religions are the same. But do you realize that this verse 12 is the same as Jesus' own declaration?

No one can come to the Father but through me. Why? Because salvation is found in no other name but in the name of Jesus.

And this is the declaration that all of us as followers of Christ must, first of all, believe in. We must believe in this declaration ourselves.

[16:45] And the thing is that we must not only believe in this declaration but we must remember this declaration. And more importantly, believing and remembering is not as important as living out this declaration in our lives.

Why must we believe in this declaration that there is no other name except the name of Jesus? Jesus. Because this belief concerns eternal life.

It concerns eternal life. You know, we take the word, the name for granted but the name of Jesus concerns eternal life. All those who believe in the name of Jesus will have eternal life.

Why do we need to remember? because it will help us stand firm when we go through life's ups and downs. You know, I like the song that we just sung. You know, even when we can't see His hand doing things.

What were the words again? I can't remember. Do you remember? You led in the song. What are the words? Even when we can't see it, You are working.

[18 : 07] What a powerful declaration, isn't it? Even when we can't see it, we know that You are working. Why must we remember this declaration?

Because it definitely will help us stand firm in this day and age as we go through life's ups and downs. How many of us have gone through life's ups and downs?

I am going to ask you to tell me what your ups and downs are if you put up your hands. Alright, maybe in this day and age young people have lots of ups and downs also.

I don't know. But when I was your age, I would tell you what ups and downs. You know, I loved life. I only knew what ups and downs were when I got older.

But life is full of ups and downs, isn't it? You know, full of ups and downs. You know, when we are faced with trials, when our faith is being attacked, when our faith is being questioned not only by other people but by ourselves, when we are challenged and when we are persecuted for our beliefs and our faith.

[19 : 14] it is of utmost importance that you remember this declaration that salvation is found in no one else but in this name.

And thirdly, this declaration must not only be believed or remembered, it must be lived out. what do I mean by living out this declaration?

We must live it out because there is only one hope for this world and for this life. there was once I was invited to attend a Christian gathering.

The Christian leaders in Hamilton were invited by the MP, one of the Labour MPs who was in charge of the Hamilton area.

His name was Strange, something strange. I can't remember what it was. and funny, isn't it? His name is Strange. So he invited us to want to talk to the church leaders about this funding that mental illness was going to be having.

[20 : 29] It was \$25 million. Okay, wow. A big sum of money. You know, they believed that to solve problems so long as we have enough money, you'll solve those problems.

You know, a lot of the leaders there were very politically correct, very PC. None of them there to ask questions. But for those of you who know me, you know I'm very direct.

Don't stop nodding ahead. Say I'm not. But I'm very direct and I couldn't take it anymore and ask him, you know, you are a Christian. Okay, you belong to the governing party.

You know, does the governing party, do Christians in the governing party ever speak up and tell the people, tell the leaders that money does not solve the problem?

You know, we are only looking at symptoms, but we are not looking at the cause, the causation of those problems. I said, if really, as Christians, you know, we know that the causation of all these issues and all these problems is because of men's sin.

[21 : 42] Men has decided to walk away from God and behold, comes all these problems. You know, if we look at all problems of society, you will realize that it is all related to sin, isn't it?

It is all traced back to the fall of men. When men want to be smart and when men wanted to be independent and when men wanted to go their way, do things their way.

But you and I got to live out as Christians this declaration. Why? Because the world needs Jesus. Amen? You and I agree that the only hope for the world is Jesus. And when I say let us live out this declaration, what I'm saying is guys, if you and I are so, so, so sure that Jesus is the only solution, then we must make sure that the name of Jesus is being preached.

We must make sure that the name of Jesus is being lived out. And we must be sure that not only do we preach the gospel, but we must show God's love.

[23 : 05] for the world. Question is, do we live out this declaration in our lives?

You know, today, I ask myself one simple question. Are we concerned with people? Are we? You know, I was just sharing in a church in the morning.

Of course, I was using Mandarin. But my challenge for the church today is that you are discovering that maybe the church that we are today is no longer the church that Jesus Christ intended it to be. What do I mean by that? Take a look at the people around you. Take a look at the people beside you. All so well-dressed. All so prim and proper.

All so middle class. Agree? What do you think the church was like during Jesus' time? The church was really a place for all those who were downtrodden.

[24 : 22] The church was a place for the poor. The church was a place for the downcast, the people who were being looked down by society.

the church is a place where people went for their needs. But take a look at our church today. It's so middle class. My challenge for the church, for the other church this morning was when somebody walks into church today not looking like us, what is our reaction?

If a person is smelly, dirty, in rags coming into the church, what is our reaction?

Do you think the church is for people like that? What do you think? Vincent, what do you think?

What do you think? What do you think? Of course he's going to say yes, isn't he?

[25 : 40] But do you realize that maybe the church, our church, or the churches we have today are really not for people like that anymore. so my challenge to the church today really is are we living out the declaration that Jesus is the only name that mankind can be saved?

If that is truly our declaration, then the church must be different. the church must be open to all who need Jesus.

You know, I was sharing again my experience a couple of weeks ago. I went to meet up with a pastor of a Kiwi church in Onehonga.

It was a New Hope community church. In Onehonga, I went into, well, he gave me the address and I went into it.

I didn't even know it was a church. I didn't know it was a church. And I went up to his office and had a discussion and realized that we had a lot of things in common and that we might actually have met in 1989 when I went to China.

[27 : 04] And after a long conversation, he said, oh, let me take you around my church. I said, sure, where is it? He said, it's here. I said, what? He said, where is it?

So he took me downstairs and we walked through a door into this hall looking place but it's not so beautiful. It was very simple.

It was stacked with plastic chairs but what caught my eye was that around the church what I saw was boxes and boxes of bread, boxes and boxes of milk, boxes and boxes of groceries.

Why? Because the highlight of the church is not Sunday. The highlight of the church was during the weekdays when the church was able to reach out to the community and was able to make sure that everyone who had needs could come to the church and said you know what?

We've got stragglers coming in, people who have not bathed for ages. During the winter, it's cold, they come in to take refuge. What if somebody today like that comes into the church to take refuge?

[28 : 25] He says we allow them to sleep over, we allow them to use our toilets, we allow them to take a shower.

Would we allow somebody like that to use our church premises? And there are people who come in and start stealing things and when they are discovered, the church leaders will say, you don't have to steal.

Tell me what you need. My challenge to the church today is that are we living out our declaration? Because this is crucial on what sort of testimony do we have in our community? is this church a church that Jesus established?

Is this a church that reaches out to different people with different needs? Or is this a church only for middle class people? Are we living out this declaration?

[29 : 46] generation? Are we involved in making sure that the name is spread near and far? The fourth and the fifth time the word name appeared was in verse 17 and verse 18 when the disciples were warned to speak no longer to anyone in this name.

You see how fearful the world is of this name? they're warning to the people, to these disciples to speak no longer to the people in this name.

Don't do it anymore. more. And the sixth time the name appeared is in verse 30. In the disciples' prayer after they were released, when they defiantly prayed to God to stretch out His hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of Jesus.

When we are being persecuted, when we are being laughed at, when we are being stopped in our tracks for talking about Jesus, do we go out defiantly to face the opposition.

You know, my prayer today is that we are and we will be defiant. Why? Because there's no other name given under heaven that men can be saved.

[31 : 15] Indeed, the name of Jesus is a powerful name. Amen? It is a powerful name. You know, by this name, people are healed.

Verse 10, by this name, people are saved from eternal damnation. By this name, the people become courageous and empowered.

Verse 13, you know what was amazing? The people in the Sanhedrin were saying, these men were with Jesus. Do you see how important that Jesus?

They recognized that this is a group of people who have been with Jesus. Where did their power come from? This is a group of common men, unschooled, ordinary.

But they have become giants for God. Why? Because of this name. And in verse 14, the people are dumbfounded.

[32 : 16] But this guy was crippled. But yet, in this name, he was healed. And we, you know, they even declared, we cannot deny it.

Verse 16, we cannot deny what has been done. You know, the people who oppose Christ, the devil who oppose Christ, is also fearful of this name.

Do you know that? That's why they insist that they must stop this from spreading. Speak no longer to anyone in this name.

Verse 17, do not speak and teach in this name anymore. But what is remarkable is that through this name, all believers will be one heart and mind.

I know we just read to verse 31, but I want us to go on and finish up chapter 4 because in verse 32, it tells us that all the people were in one heart and one mind to make sure that Jesus was being preached.

[33 : 28] How powerful is that? They gathered together as one. Why? Because it was so important that the name of Jesus be spread. And you know what is also remarkable?

That through this name, not only the gospel was preached, but through this name, the people in need were being cared for.

In verse 34 and 35, you know guys, let this name not only be uttered through a word of mouth, let this name be lived out.

You know because of this name, no one should go hungry. Amen? Because of this name, all the downcast, all the marginalized people, all the widows, all the orphans should be taken care of.

Amen? You know, I just want to sidetrack a little bit here. You know, I'm always amazed after having emigrated to New Zealand.

[34 : 44] I don't know whether you thank God every day that you're here. How many of you do that? How many of you thank God? God, look at this place, what an awesome place. What have I done to deserve God allowing me to emigrate to this place?

How many of you do that? Only me. Those of you ungrateful fellas, go back to where you came from. But let me tell you this, I still remember telling people like Gary, people who were in Maclean's College, I remembered when my children were young, I drove down to Maclean's College, sending them to school every day, and I come to this beautiful scenery, the sea.

And my prayer is, God, what have I done to deserve this? Every day. Because this is such an awesome place, isn't it?

But do you realise something else besides New Zealand is such a blessed place, not only in terms of scenery, but do you realise that things that are happening in the world doesn't seem to affect New Zealand very much?

How is our COVID situation compared with some other places? Doctor, how is it? Not as bad. I think we are great.

[36 : 02] Is it because government policies are fantastic? I think not. But we have just been so blessed. You know, nothing seemed to hit us as hard.

And, you know, amongst my friends, amongst the pastors, amongst the leaders, we have always been discussing what is so different about New Zealand. And of course, I came to the conclusion that, you know, we are living off the goodness of previous generations.

What do I mean by that? Do you know that New Zealand was the biggest missionary country sending, a missionary sending country in the world in the 60s and the 70s per capita, if you understand what I mean?

Per population size, New Zealand sent out the most missionaries. And we are living off their legacies because they have done something that God was so pleased with that God was going to bless their subsequent generations.

But you know what is even more amazing? There was another leader who told me, do you know what, there's something else. I said, what? He said, we are one place that look after the weak, the downtrodden, the marginalized.

[37 : 25] Of course, for us, who are all Asians here, we complain every day. Isn't it? Why are we giving away so much money? Isn't it? Are we? How many of us complain? You mean I'm the only one complaining?

Come on, you are not telling the truth, man. Why are we giving away so much money? These guys need to work themselves, isn't it? These guys need to get a better life for themselves.

How can we continue to give money to these people? You know, they are what? Sucking the system dry. How many of us say that? Am I the only one?

All of you are saints, man. But you know that Christian leader told me that may be exactly why God is continuing to bless New Zealand.

Because New Zealand, though the government is not perfect, is still looking after these people who need help, and that is God's heart. Don't underestimate that.

[38 : 30] If we are truly holding up this name, then surely we can be in one heart to be serving the people in our community.

Amen? So powerful. my question in closing is, do you know this name?

Please listen to my question. Do you know this name? I'm not asking whether your parents know this name.

I'm asking you whether you know this name. You know what is interesting is that if you go back and search the word know, K-N-O-W, the word has sexual meaning to it.

You don't even know that, right? Please go back to the word because when it spoke about Adam and Eve, can I say this? I don't know. Oh, you guys are too young.

[39 : 47] The Bible used the word Adam knew his wife Eve. That word knew, knew, has a sexual meaning to it, but it is more than a sexual meaning.

What it means is that he completely knows her, understands her, has been with her, and from top to bottom, he knows her.

So my question when I ask all of us here, do we know this name? I'm not saying a cursory knowledge.

I'm saying do we really have an in-depth relationship relationship with Jesus? Have you experienced what this name can do?

Do you know how powerful this name is? And do you know that this name, if we really know it, will change our lives forever?

[40 : 53] another? This is a challenge I am putting in front of all of us today. The name of Jesus is a powerful name.

But more importantly, do we know this name? Let us pray. Father, how awesome it is that we are able to go through Acts chapter 1, 2, 3, and 4.

And how wonderful it is that we are able to extract this word and this phrase, the name, the name of Jesus.

And Father, how powerful it is after having gone through the entire chapter. How powerful is that name? Father, my prayer this evening is that for those of us who do not yet know this name, I pray that one day we will know this name.

For those of us who claim to be Christians, Father, I pray that we would have been intimate with this name in our lives.

[42 : 12] We would have a relationship with this name name, because this name will change our lives. Father, my prayer for the church is that we will not remain what we are, being different from

who you intended us to be.

My prayer for all of us here is that we will go back, we will go back to the word, and go back to what God you have originally intended for us to be.

we are to be the light and salt of the world. We are to be light and salt to everyone, especially those who need you.

Father, may we be such a church, and may we be such a people, because that is what your name, if we truly know it, do to our lives.

Father, speak to us, convict us, challenge us. Amen.