

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
TEACHER'S PACKET

1st Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 36

The Disciples are Arrested

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The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The “Main passage” is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the “reward box” found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God’s Word.

Objective This lesson will encourage students to pray for the persecuted church and to share their faith no matter what using Peter and John’s arrest in Acts 4.

Key Verses

Acts 4:1-31—Main Teaching Passage

Memory Verse - Hebrews 13:3

“Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.”

Hook

Review last week’s memory verse, Acts 3:19.

Have students who brought their Bibles today lift them up and show the class. Ask how many of them had to sneak their Bible in. Have they ever had to lie about owning a Bible to the police?

While these things may sound strange to us, it is illegal to own a Bible in over 50 countries. In fact, there are many countries where it is illegal to be a Christian. This is called persecution. Today, we are going to look at one of the first ever cases of persecution.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

This story takes place immediately following the events of last week's lesson. Peter had just finished preaching when the Sadducees, priests, and temple guards came upon Peter and John and arrested them for teaching that Jesus rose from the dead, since the Sadducees did not believe in resurrection. We also find out that over 5000 people were saved because of Peter's preaching.

The next day, the priests and elders asked Peter and John by what power they had done these things. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and said that it was the power of Jesus that healed the lame man, and that same power was the power to save. The priests realized that Jesus was empowering these uneducated men and they could do nothing to harm them, since everyone was amazed that they had healed the lame man, so they threatened Peter and John and let them go after commanding them not to tell others about Jesus any more. However, when Peter heard this, he replied that they had no choice to tell others about Jesus, for it is more important to obey God than to obey man. The Sadducees realized that they still could not harm these two because of the miracle, so they released them. Peter and John returned to the rest of the apostles and they all prayed for boldness to continue to speak the Gospel. After they prayed, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to preach God's Word.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

Before this point in the book of Acts, everything was going great for the apostles and for the Church. Matthias was appointed, the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, 3000 people were saved, the Church community was thriving, and a lame man was healed. It might have seemed like life as a believer was smooth sailing. However, in today's story, the apostles have their first encounter with real persecution. Persecution refers to when non-believers try to inflict pain or difficulty on Christians because of their beliefs. Persecutors may try lying about believers, physically harming them, sending them to jail, or even killing them. The Sadducees here put Peter and John in jail to try to keep them from preaching the Gospel any more.

Despite this persecution, see how Peter and John responded. They did not give up or reject Jesus. They did not pretend to reject Jesus so that the priests would let them go. They also did not try to escape. Instead, they accepted the trial and continued to tell others about Jesus no matter what the Sadducees might have done. When they went back to the other

LOOK (Continued)

apostles, they prayed for boldness, asking God to help them preach the Gospel no matter what kind of persecution they faced.

In our world today, there are many countries where Christians are persecuted. In these countries, you can be kicked out of your home, lose your possessions, get beaten or thrown in jail, and even be killed just for believing in Jesus. Hebrews 13:3 tells us that we should pray for our brothers and sisters around the world who are persecuted because they are part of the Body of Christ just like us. In fact, the verse says we should pray as if we were the ones who were in prison. I'm sure if we were in prison, we would be praying constantly, so we ought to do the same for our brothers and sisters who are persecuted in other countries.

We might not have to worry about being beaten or going to jail for our faith, but there are still challenges to telling others about Jesus. We could lose friends or be made fun of. Our family members could get uncomfortable. Some might think we are foolish for believing the Bible. Yet if other believers have gone to jail for their faith, we certainly should be willing to pay these costs to tell others the good news of Jesus. We don't have the power to do this ourselves, but neither did the apostles. They prayed for the strength to share the Gospel no matter what might happen, and the Holy Spirit gave it to them. He can do the same for you if you ask.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize Hebrews 13:3.

Ask the class to share a situation when it might be hard to talk about Jesus or share the Gospel. Review how the Holy Spirit helped the apostles to continue to be bold in persecution.

Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit for boldness to tell others about Jesus no matter what difficulties you may face. Pray that God would strengthen believers in other countries who are persecuted.

Family Activity: Look up a country in the world where Christians are persecuted. Commit to praying for the believers in that country every day this week.

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Acts 4:1-31 by David Guzik

Peter and John Face the Sanhedrin

A. Peter preaches to the Jewish leaders.

1. ([Act 4:1-4](#)) The arrest of Peter and John.

Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

a. The **captain of the temple** refers to the "police force" of the temple precincts: The **captain**, together with the priests and the Sadducees, all came together to arrest Peter and John.

b. The **Sadducees** *would* be **greatly disturbed** that Peter and John **preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead**; they did not believe in the afterlife or resurrection at all.

c. They **put them into custody until the next day** because it was illegal under Jewish law to have a trial by night, though this is what the Jewish rulers did to Jesus.

i. From the Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 4.1: "Judgments about money may be commenced in the day and concluded in the night, but judgments about life must be begun in the day and concluded in the day" (cited in Williams).

ii. There was nothing wrong in the way that the Jewish leaders were investigating the matter; it was their responsibility to do so. What they did after they found out the facts was wrong.

d. **The number of the men came to be about five thousand**: Despite the opposition coming against the gospel, the number of Christians keeps increasing, growing to 5,000 from 3,000 at last count ([Acts 2:41](#)). Opposition did not slow the church down at all.

i. In the Western world, Christians rarely face persecution. Satan instead has attacked us with worldliness, selfish pride, a need for acceptance, and status. The martyr can impress unbelievers with his courage and faith; the self-centered, compromising Christian is despised by the world.

2. ([Act 4:5-7](#)) Peter and John are brought before the Sanhedrin.

And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"

a. **Rulers, elders, and scribes**: These Jewish rulers are the same ones who recently condemned Jesus to death. Peter and John, standing before the Jewish rulers, must have thought that the trial of Jesus was going to happen all over again and they would be crucified like their Master, but it didn't seem to matter.

b. The ideas behind **by what power** and **by what name** are virtually the same. In their thinking, the **power** resided in the **name**, because the **name** represented the character of the person.

3. ([Act 4:8-12](#)) Peter boldly preaches to the Jewish leaders.

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

a. He is instantly **filled with the Spirit** again, evident by his supernatural boldness and ability to speak directly to the heart of the matter.

i. The filling of the Holy Spirit Peter experienced in [Acts 2:4](#) (along with other disciples) was not a one-time event; it was something God wanted to keep doing in their lives.

b. The tone of Peter's reply - especially when he says "**If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man**" - shows that he is not intimidated by this court, though humanly speaking, he should be intimidated by the same court that sent Jesus to crucifixion.

i. **For a good deed**: Peter's logic is piercing - why are we on trial for a **good deed**?

c. **By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**: Peter preaches **Jesus**, the Jesus *they crucified*, the Jesus **God raised from the dead**, the Jesus who healed this man.

d. **This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders'**: The quotation from [Psalm 118:22](#) is appropriate. Jesus was rejected by men but exalted by His Father.

e. Peter doesn't merely proclaim Jesus as *a way* of salvation, but as the *only way* of salvation. The idea that there is no **salvation in any other**, and that there **is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved** is an offensive one in our pluralistic, eclectic age; but it is the plain teaching of the Bible.

i. Does this mean that everyone must make a personal decision for Jesus Christ? What about the infant who dies? What about the person who has never heard about Jesus? God will deal with them fairly and justly, and those who are saved will be saved by the work of Jesus done on their behalf, even if they lacked a full knowledge of Jesus. But what about you?

ii. If you wish to believe that all are saved or that there are many roads to heaven or that you can take the best of all faiths and blend them into one, fine, believe so and bear the consequences; *but please do not* claim this is the teaching of the Bible.

B. The Jewish rulers react to Peter's sermon.

1. ([Act 4:13](#)) What they saw in Peter and John's character.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

a. **They were uneducated and untrained men**: Indeed, Peter and John were Galilean fishermen with no for-

mal education, but they had the one essential qualification for ministry - **they had been with Jesus**.

- i. It was as if the Sanhedrin said, "These guys are just like Jesus! We thought we solved the Jesus problem when we crucified Him, but now it is worse than ever!"
- ii. People *should* go to Jesus directly, but often they won't. The only Jesus they are going to see is what shines through us. We must work to make the fact that we have **been with Jesus** as obvious in our lives as it was in theirs.

b. **They saw the boldness of Peter and John:** Because they had **been with Jesus**, they are naturally bold. When you are a servant of the all-powerful God, what do you fear from the courts of man?

- i. "A few men unarmed, furnished with no garrisons, do show forth more power in their voice alone, than all the world, by raging against them." (Calvin)
- c. "It is particularly striking that neither on this nor on any subsequent occasion ... did the Sanhedrin take any serious action to disprove the apostles' central affirmation - the resurrection of Jesus. Had it seemed possible to refute them on this point, how readily would the Sanhedrin seized the opportunity! Had they succeeded, how quickly and completely the new movement would have collapsed!" (Bruce)

2. ([Act 4:14](#)) What they saw in the man who was healed.

And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

a. **They could say nothing against it:** This miracle was examined by doubters and stood up as a genuine miracle. This was not a case where the healing was "lost" in a few hours, as some claim happens today.

b. Previously, this man was completely lame, having to be carried wherever he went ([Acts 3:2](#)), and now he was completely healed. This contrasts many who get up out of wheelchairs at modern "healing services" yet come with a limited ability to walk, but are able for a few moments to walk much better because of the hype, emotion, and adrenaline. Yet they tragically leave the arena in the wheelchair, having "lost" their healing.

3. ([Act 4:15-18](#)) Taking counsel, the Jewish leaders command Peter and John to stop preaching Jesus.

But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them *is* evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*. But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name." And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

a. **They conferred among themselves:** How did Luke ever find out what the Sanhedrin discussed among themselves? Undoubtedly, because member of that Sanhedrin later became a Christian: Saul of Tarsus.

b. **We cannot deny it:** The corruption of their hearts is plain. They acknowledge that a miracle has genuinely happened, yet they refuse to submit to the God who worked the miracle.

c. **So that it spreads no further among the people:** Their fear of the preaching of Jesus was rooted in their own sinful self-interest, not in any desire to protect the people.

d. How did Luke know the private discussions of the Sanhedrin? In all likelihood, there was a dynamic, brilliant young rabbi present among the Sanhedrin named Saul of Tarsus who later reported all this to Luke.

i. Even though Saul himself did not know it, God was working in his heart through Peter and John. They had no idea they were preaching to a future apostle and the greatest missionary the church would ever see. We have no idea how greatly God can use us!

4. ([Act 4:19-20](#)) Peter and John respond to the command to stop preaching Jesus.

But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

a. **Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge:** It is self-evident that they should listen to God instead of man. Peter makes an effective appeal to this truth.

b. **We cannot but speak:** Peter and John *must* speak of the **things which** they had **seen and heard**. They had to, not only because of the inner compulsion of the Holy Spirit, but also because of the command of Jesus: *You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem* ([Acts 1:8](#))

c. They did not originate this message; they merely **speak the things which we have seen and heard**, as reliable eyewitnesses.

5. ([Act 4:21-22](#)) Peter and John are released with threats of future punishment.

So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

a. **Finding no way of punishing them, because of the people:** The Jewish leaders were completely unmoved by an obvious miracle from God, yet they would respond to public opinion. This proves they cared far more about man's opinion than God's opinion.

b. **They all glorified God for what had been done:** This whole situation started out looking pretty bad. Peter and John were on trial before the same court that sent Jesus to Pilate for crucifixion. Satan meant it all for great evil, but before it is all over, see what God did:

- i. Two thousand more people come to believe on Jesus.
- ii. Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit again.
- iii. Peter gets to preach Jesus to the leaders of the Jews.
- iv. Hostile examiners confirm a miraculous healing.
- v. The enemies of Jesus are confused.
- vi. Peter and John are bolder for Jesus than ever before.
- vii. God is glorified.

C. The early church prays for boldness.

1. ([Act 4:23-24](#)) Introduction: They acknowledge their God.

And being let go, they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You *are* God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them."

a. They **reported all that the chief priests and elders had said:** We can just picture Peter and John saying, "They let us tell them about Jesus! They realized we were like Jesus! They told us not to tell others about Jesus!"

b. **They raised their voice:** They prayed *vocally*. It is certainly possible to pray silently in our minds, but we can focus our thoughts more effectively when we speak out our prayers.

i. It isn't that they all prayed, speaking at the same time. One person prayed, and all agreed with that one, so that they were really praying with one voice (**voice** is in the singular).

ii. "With one accord they lift up their voice to God. This does not mean that they all prayed at once. That would have been confusion. Disorder in meetings, a number of people talking at the same time in a boisterous way with outward demonstrations, is an evidence that the Holy Spirit is not leading, for God is not a God of disorder." (Gaebelein)

c. **With one accord:** They prayed in *unity*. There was no strife or contention among them. There wasn't one group saying, "we should pray for this" and another saying, "we should pray for that." They had the same mind when they prayed.

d. **Lord, You are God:** They begin by reminding themselves who they are praying to. They are praying to the Lord of all creation, the God of all power.

i. This word **Lord** is not the usual word for "Lord" in the New Testament; it is the Greek word *despotes*. It was a word used of a slave owner or ruler who has power that cannot be questioned. They prayed with power and confidence because they knew God was in control.

ii. When we pray, we often forget just who it is we are praying to, or worse yet, we pray to an imaginary God of our own ideas. The disciples had power in prayer because they knew *who they were praying to*.

2. ([Act 4:25-28](#)) They pray in light of the Scriptures.

"Who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the LORD and against His Christ.' For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done."

a. **By the mouth of Your servant David have said:** Peter, speaking for all the disciples (remember they were praying *with one accord*), recognized that words of the Old Testament ([Psalm 2](#) to be exact) were really the words of God. God was speaking **by the mouth of [His] servant David**.

b. Why did Peter quote [Psalm 2](#) here? Because he and the other disciples understand what is happening to them by seeing what the Bible says about it. From [Psalm 2](#), they understand that they should expect this sort of opposition and not be troubled because of it.

i. When we pray, we must see our circumstances in light of God's Word. For example, when we are in conflict, perhaps we need to know *we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age*. ([Ephesians 6:12](#))

ii. Seeing our circumstances in light of God's Word also means seeing when there is a sin problem. Then, we should say with the Psalmist, *When I kept it all inside, my bones turned to powder, my words became daylong groans. The pressure never let up; all the juices of my life dried up*. ([Psalm 32:3-4](#), Peterson). Perhaps we are in the same place the Psalmist was, in sin and needing to confess and get right with God.

iii. We also use Scripture in prayer to pray the promises of God. When we need strength, we can pray according to [Ephesians 3:16](#): *That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with*

might through His Spirit in the inner man. God's Word will speak to our situation!

c. Because they saw their circumstances in light of God's Word, they could recognize that the wrath of man never operated outside of the sphere of God's control; these enemies of Jesus could only **do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.**

i. This brings real peace, knowing that whatever comes my way has passed through God's hand first, and He will not allow even the most wicked acts of men to result in permanent damage.

3. ([Act 4:29-30](#)) They ask for more boldness, more power, and (essentially) more trouble!

"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

a. **Grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word:** This request is consumed with God's cause and glory, not the comfort and advancement of the disciples. They ask for things that will lead to *more* confrontation, not less!

b. **By stretching out Your hand to heal:** They do not ask to do miracles themselves. They understand that Jesus heals by His hand, only He does it from heaven through His people.

i. It is a snare to long to be used to do miraculous things. It is often rooted in the pride that wants everyone to see just how greatly God can use *me*. I should be delighted in the power of God, not because He has used *me* to display it.

4. ([Act 4:31](#)) Their prayer is answered.

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

a. **The place where they were assembled together was shaken:** They were given an earthquake as a unique emblem of God's pleasure. We don't know the extent of the shaking; it may have been confined to the house itself.

i. This earthquake is recorded in [Acts 4:31](#). Someone pointed out that the significant 1994 Northridge earthquake happened at 4:31 in the morning!

b. **They were all filled with the Holy Spirit:** They are filled with the Holy Spirit, *again*.

i. The idea that we are "Spirit filled" only at an experience known as the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" is wrong, though there may be a wonderful and first yielding to the Spirit's power. We must be continually filled with the Holy Spirit, and make our "immersion" in Him a constant experience.

c. They received the **boldness** they asked for. "The word *boldness* means lucid and daring statement. In the Greek the word is *parresia*, 'telling it all.'" (Ogilvie)

i. What we need to be doing is *telling it all*. When we try to "hide" some of God's work in our lives from others, we aren't walking in the boldness Jesus would have us walk in.

ii. Their **boldness** was a gift from God, received through prayer. It was not something that they tried to work up in themselves.