

Bible Stories for Adults

Apostles in Prison

Acts 4-5

Opening

Gathering: What ways are Christians stopped from witnessing today?

Today's Focus: Peter and John continued to witness boldly despite being arrested, beaten and told to stop.

Key Verses: *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12*

*Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."
Acts 4:19-20*

Opening Prayer

Lesson

The Beginning of the Church (Acts 2)

How many of Jesus' disciples were true believers together in Jerusalem after He ascended?

Acts 1:15

What happened 10 days after Jesus ascended that empowered and initiated the growth of this group?

Acts 2:1, 4

How did this event significantly impact the spread of Jesus' gospel?

Acts 2:5-6, 14, 37, 41

How did the infant church operate?

Acts 2:42

Where did the infant church meet? Did they quickly form a building committee?

Acts 2:46

The Evil Deed (Acts 3)

What horrible thing did two leaders of this faith do in last week's story?

Acts 3:1-3, 6-7

How do we know this wasn't a plant or an act?

Acts 3:9-10

How did Peter respond to the sudden attention for his miraculous power?

Acts 3:12, 16

Stopping the Evil (Acts 4:1-4)

Besides the local worshippers, who else came to check out the commotion?

Acts 4:1

Why did Luke identify that some of the priests who came were of the ruling Sadducee religious party?

Acts 4:2

What had Peter said about resurrection?

Acts 3:15, 21, 26

What did the Jewish leaders decide to do to stop this evil in the temple?

Acts 4:3

Had they stopped this evil act in time?

Acts 4:4

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The Court is Gathered (Acts 4:5-6)

Who gathered to determine how to respond to these trouble-makers?

Acts 4:5-6

What other meeting of this group had taken place just a few weeks earlier?

Matthew 26:57, 59

How did the previous meeting turn out?

Matthew 26:62-66

Did they see any connection between the earlier trouble-maker and these new ones?

Acts 4:13

The Charge (Acts 4:7)

What did the Sanhedrin understand to be the purpose of this gathering?

Acts 4:7

Why did the Sanhedrin feel this was the important question?

Deuteronomy 13:1-3

What were they to do with those who were found to be trying to lead people away from God?

Deuteronomy 13:5

The Defense (Acts 4:8-12)

Did Peter and John have any warning that they would be treated like this for being Jesus' witnesses?

Luke 21:12

Why would God allow this to happen to the ones who would bring His message of salvation?

Luke 21:13

Knowing this could happen, should Christians prepare answers to defend themselves?

Luke 21:14-15

Did Peter and John remember this and respond with the Spirit's words as Jesus had instructed?

Acts 4:8-10

Was Peter careful not to offend this group who could imprison him or even have him executed?

Acts 4:11

Was Peter trying to accuse these men of murder, or did he remember the purpose of his persecution?

Acts 4:12

Note: Greek word for "saved" is same word used in v.9 for "healed"

The Verdict (Acts 4:13-22)

How did the Sanhedrin respond to these defiant words by these associates of the blasphemer Jesus?

Acts 4:13-14

What did they decide to do with Peter and John?

Acts 4:15-18

Did Peter and John thank them for the "probation" and leave quickly before they changed their mind?

Acts 4:19-20

Did this cause the Sanhedrin to change their mind and take stronger action?

Acts 4:21-22

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The Believers Respond (Acts 4:23-31)

How did the other believers respond when Peter and John told them what had happened?

Acts 4:23-24a

Did they thank God for protecting Peter and John and ask for help to witness without getting caught?

Acts 4:24-30

How did God respond to this prayer?

Acts 4:31

Philip Brooks: *Do not pray for easier lives. Pray to be stronger men and women.*

Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks.

Powers in Actions (Acts 5:12-16)

Did God continue to provide His power to the believers and did they remain open in their ministry?

Acts 4:33; 5:12

Did the trouble with the Sanhedrin and the power of God scare off any people?

Acts 5:13

Were all scared away so that the church stopped growing?

Acts 5:14

Was this work only seen and known by the locals in Jerusalem?

Acts 5:15-16

Arrested Again and Again (Acts 5:17-26)

How did the Sadducees feel about these trouble-makers preaching Jesus' resurrection in the temple?

Acts 5:17-18

How did God intervene in a way that further challenged the beliefs of the Sadducees?

Acts 5:19

Were the apostles to leave town or to stay in hiding since they would be fugitives?

Acts 5:20-21a

Did the Sanhedrin find out about the escape soon after it occurred?

Acts 5:21b-24

Did they immediately send out a search party with directions to recapture them by force?

Acts 5:25-26

Another Trial (Acts 5:27-33)

What charge did the Sanhedrin pose to the apostles?

Acts 5:27-28

How did the apostles respond?

Acts 5:29-32

How did the Sadducees respond to Jesus rising from dead, sitting in heaven & sending the Holy Spirit?

Acts 5:33

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Cooler Heads Prevail (Acts 5:34-39)

What kept them from immediately taking these blasphemers outside and stoning them?

Acts 5:34

Gamaliel was the most famous Jewish teacher of his time. Who was one of his students?

Acts 22:1-3

What did Gamaliel want the Sanhedrin to consider?

Acts 5:35-37

Why did Gamaliel bring up the cases of Theudas and Judas?

Acts 5:38-39

Did his speech have any effect?

Acts 5:40

The Apostles Respond (Acts 5:41-42)

Did the flogging help strengthen their point and deter the apostles from talking further about Jesus?

Acts 5:41

Did this arrest and flogging help get the apostles to quiet down about this Jesus fellow?

Acts 5:42

What guidance did Paul give us about how to be like Peter and the apostles?

Colossians 4:5

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When I do an act of kindness, do I bask in my pride or give the glory to God?
(Acts 3:12, 16; 4:8-12; 5:1-11; Jeremiah 9:23-24; 1 Cor 10:31; Galatians 6:14; 1 Peter 4:10-11)
2. How has God worked through me beyond my personal abilities?
(Acts 4:13-14; 1:8; Exodus 3:10-4:17; Isaiah 6:5-9; Jeremiah 1:4-10; 1 Cor 2:1-5; 2 Cor 12:7-10)
3. How likely am I to speak about Jesus when it is culturally inappropriate?
(Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-29, 40-42; 1 Kings 22:6-8, 13-14, 24-28; Romans 1:14-16; Philippians 1:12-14; 1 Peter 3:15-16)
4. What about my relationship with Jesus can I not help but speak about?
(Acts 4:19-20; Job 32:17-20; Jeremiah 20:9; Luke 19:37-40; 1 Corinthians 9:16)
5. When have I asked God to make me bolder and stronger for Him?
(Acts 4:24-31; 14:3; 28:31; Psalm 138:3; 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; Ephesians 6:19-20)