

Armagh Baptist Church
Sunday 28th June 2009 - 11:30am
Acts 4:1-22 'Jesus – the only One who can save!'

Introduction

Last week we saw the **Acts** of the Apostles really beginning in earnest as we came into ch.3 and saw the story of the lame man being healed by Peter and John outside the Beautiful Gate of the Jerusalem Temple.

That miraculous healing caused a great stir, a crowd gathered, and Peter had a golden opportunity to preach his second sermon in Jerusalem.

I finished last Sunday morning by pointing out to you that there was a divided reaction to what Peter had just said:

Broadly speaking the Jewish religious authorities wanted to silence him (v.1-3)

In fact the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and the Sadducees interrupted Peter's sermon (v.1) and eventually arrested Peter and John.

We are told what they were most annoyed about in v.2:

*'They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and **proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead!***

The Jewish Authorities couldn't deny the crucifixion because they had a hand in it themselves. They had handed Jesus over to Pilate to have him executed. But they did object strongly to the idea that Jesus had risen from the dead, and to any kind of preaching that suggested he could raise anyone else from the dead! The Sadducees in particular were a sect within Judaism who denied the miraculous and they certainly didn't believe in the resurrection of anyone!

Nevertheless, the Resurrection was going to be the battleground for the days ahead in the Acts of the Apostles. These apostles were absolutely clear that they had been sent by the risen Lord precisely to be witnesses of his resurrection. That's why they were even prepared to go to prison for it!

And so for the first time, Peter and John are arrested and they find themselves spending their first night in prison for daring to preach the Gospel! (v.3)

Meanwhile, many people, including 5000 men, had now come to believe their message and to trust in the name of Jesus for salvation.

They had come to realise the truth of Acts ch.4:12...

'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 may be more familiar with it in the Authorised Version:

'Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.'

That's a great verse – a powerful verse – but some would say it's a very narrow-minded verse. But it's a great Gospel Text, because it speaks of the One in whom the Gospel is centred, the One upon whom our Salvation rests, and without Him we would have no hope of Salvation whatsoever.

1. The Name (4:12)

First of all this verse talks about a name.

The great thing about true Christianity is that we don't just have to give mental assent to a cold set of doctrines, or merely do our best to keep a certain list of rules and regulations – No, true Christianity is not a dead religion; it's a living relationship with a wonderful person – the Lord Jesus Christ!

He is the most important person we could ever hope to meet.
He is the most important person we could ever get to know.

And yet so many pass him by today, without even a thought!

Notice how important his name is. It's mentioned often in Acts chs.3 & 4.

The early Apostles cherished this name. They saw this name as having tremendous importance. Let's try to see the significance they attached to it:

Look at Acts 3:6 – ***'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!'***

Acts 3:16 – ***'By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.'***

Acts 4:2 – ***'The apostles were...proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.'***

Acts 4:7 – ***'By what power or what name did you do this?'***

Acts 4:10 – ***'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.'***

Acts 4:12 – ***'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 4:17 – *‘But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to **speak no longer to anyone in this name.**’*

Acts 4:18 – *‘Then they called them in again and commanded them **not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.**’*

Acts 4:30 – *‘Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders **through the name of your holy servant Jesus.**’*

These people obviously believed that there was power and authority in the name of Jesus.

Why? What did it mean?

See Matthew 1:21 – it was the name given to him at his birth: Joseph was told by an angel that Mary *‘will give birth to a son, and you are to **give him the name Jesus** – (why?) – because he will save his people from their sins.’*

Jesus (Greek) and **Joshua** (Hebrew) both literally mean:
‘Jehovah is salvation’ or ‘The LORD is salvation’.

So this is not just any old name, this is:

2. The Saviour’s Name. (4:12)

Salvation is obviously a key theme, not just in Acts, but throughout the whole Bible. So let’s take the time this morning to think about God’s Salvation:

‘**Salvation**’ first of all appears in the **noun** form at the start of Acts 4:12. So salvation is something that we can possess.

Back in Matthew 1:21 it appears in the form of a **verb** – a doing word. It is something that Jesus does for his people – He would save his people from their sins. So the work of saving us is something that only God can do. We can’t save ourselves. We need God to save us.

God’s Salvation has past, present and future significance:

2000 years ago Jesus died on the cross at Calvary to deal with the **penalty of our sin**. Since the Garden of Eden, since the Fall of Man, the wages of sin was death. That’s the penalty that had to be paid before anyone could be saved. And that’s what Jesus has done. When he saves us he saves us from **our past**, from **the penalty** that we deserved for all the sins of our past life.

But Jesus also saves us in the **present**. He saves us from **the power of sin** to rule our lives. Sin and temptation are powerful forces that each of us face day after day. The Devil does his best to get us to fall into sin, to give into temptation. But if we rely upon Jesus, and the power of his name, and not try to face the enemy in our own strength, we can know the victory over the power of sin right here and now on a daily basis.

So Jesus can save us from the penalty of past sins.

He can give us power over present sin and temptation.

And he will one day save us from the very **presence of sin** itself, because when he returns he will take us to be with him in Heaven, and the Bible says that *'nothing impure will ever enter it.'* (Rev 21:27). In other words sin will never be allowed into heaven.

So **salvation** is something that we can possess as a free gift from God.

But **saving** us is something that only God can do for us, we cannot save ourselves. When Jesus saves us he deals with our past, our present and our future. It is a complete and a full salvation.

But at the end of Acts 4:12 it appears as an **adjective** as well: **'Saved'**.

An adjective is a describing word – and saved is a word we can use to describe ourselves: if we have trusted in the name of Jesus we are 'saved!'

Now to some people that is the height of presumption, to say that we are 'saved.' But it's important to notice here that 'saved' is a Bible word. It is a term to describe those who are right with God. And we get right with God, not because of anything good in us, but because of something that Jesus does for us. So there is no boasting involved, there is no presumption on our part – it is all of grace and all of God. It's only by the grace of God that we can say we are saved.

But notice it's **imperative** that we get saved (Acts 4:12):

*'...By which we **MUST** be saved.'*

It doesn't say that we ought to be saved, or that we should be saved, or that it would be a good idea to get saved. It says we **must** be saved! We need to get saved.

Last month you had Barrie Clingen preaching for you over a couple of weeks while I was in France with the LIFT Team. Barrie's father, Addison Clingen, and I worked for many years together planting the Baptist Church in Cavan. Addison loved to tell the story of how he got saved, so as we visited around many towns and villages, I often heard his testimony – so much so that I could almost give it myself, word for word!

When Addison was a young man in his twenties, he almost died from a burning accident. He had been filling his cigarette lighter with petrol, and had splashed some of it onto his clothes. He was going to get changed, but as he walked up the yard, he happened to flick the lighter by mistake and he just went up in flames. His clothes caught fire. He ended up in hospital with very severe burns to most of the exposed parts of his body.

The doctors and nurses round his bed thought that there was no more they could do for him, and he had an experience of dying. He said it was as if he felt his soul going down out of his body, and as he went down, he cried out *'Oh God, Save me!'* and in that moment he felt his soul coming back into his body, and a few days later when he came round, his mother and his minister were sitting beside his bed. He was *Church of Ireland* at the time.

As he came round he could see that his mother had been crying, and was obviously up-set, so he said to her, *'Don't worry mother, I'm going to be alright – God has saved me!'* And he could see them responding by pointing at their heads as if to say: 'He's a bit touched' 'It must be the medication' 'He's not himself.' But he said, *'No, it's true – God has saved me!'* – to which his minister leaned over and said, ***'Don't be silly – you don't need to be saved – sure you come from a good family – you're alright the way you are.'***

Can you imagine it – a minister of religion – totally contradicting God's Word in the Bible! Because it clearly says here in Acts 4:12 - ***'We must be saved!'***

We must be saved. We can only be saved, by believing in the name of Jesus.

3. The Only Saviour's Name (Acts 4:12)

It says very clearly in Acts 4:12: ***'Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.'***

This verse is making the exclusive claim that there is only one Saviour for sinners anywhere in the world!

Salvation is found in no-one else!

There is no other name that can save!

No other name under heaven given to men!

- Not Allah, not Mohammed, not Buddha, not Confucious, not Vishnu, not Krishna – no other name can save, but Jesus!

It's because of that, that this must be one of the most hated verses in the Bible by non-Christians! It cuts across all the comparative religion that is taught in our schools. It cuts across all the ecumenism that state governments like to involve themselves in so as to be politically correct. This is an exclusive claim.

(i) There is only one Saviour! – And I'll tell you why:

- Because only Jesus died for our sins on the cross, in our place, taking upon himself God's wrath.

- Because only Jesus rose again from the dead.

Of all world religions, Jesus is the only leader who died and rose again.

All the rest are just dead, and you can go and visit their bones in various

tombs around the world to this day. But where is Jesus' tomb – it's in

Jerusalem – but it's an empty tomb! That's why Jesus is unique. That's why Christianity is unique. Because Jesus is alive from the dead!

(ii) There is only one way to God –

Acts 4:12 – No other name that can save.

1 Timothy 2:5 – No other mediator between God and men.

John 14:6 – Jesus is the only way to get to God.

(iii) There is only one way to be found righteous in God's sight – Phil 3:1-10

It's by being clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ!

'I want to know Christ!' – 'and the power of his resurrection' –

'becoming like him in his death' – 'and so somehow to attain to the resurrection from the dead.' That's the only way to get right with God!

Now some people think that's very narrow-minded of us as Christians to believe that. But it's true – it has to be true – all roads cannot lead to God, because many of them are diametrically opposed to each other!

But if we are being accused of being narrow-minded, then we need to go back to Jesus, who said in Matthew 7:13

'Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.

But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.'

Jesus told us that it was a narrow way, but it's God's way, and that's what God's Word teaches. So we can do no other.

4. The Power of this Name.

The Apostles were discovering that the name of Jesus:

1. Had Power to Save! (v.12) – from their humble beginnings of just 120 disciples in ch.1, they had already seen 3000 get saved as Peter preached in the name of Jesus in Acts ch.2 on the Day of Pentecost. And then in Acts ch.3 following the healing of the lame man, they had seen even more trust in Christ, so that now they had at least 5000 men who were saved! Thousands of lives were being transformed by the power of Jesus' name. He had power to save then, and he still has power to save you now – today!

The Apostles were also discovering that the name of Jesus:

2. Was able to Empower the Preacher! (v.13) – When Peter and John were dragged before the Sanhedrin – the Jewish ruling Council – with all the big wig theologians sitting on it – Peter and John were the ones who had the courage of their convictions (v.13); Peter and John were the ones who were able to argue coherently (v.9-10) and to quote Scripture authoritatively (v.11-12). So much so that these powerful Jewish leaders and theologians had to come to the conclusion, that even though Peter and John were unschooled, ordinary, fishermen from backwater Galilee, the fact that they had been with Jesus, had made all the difference in their lives.

In fact they were the ones who were speechless. (v.14)

Because all the evidence was against them!

The Apostles were also discovering that the name of Jesus:

3. Had the power to change lives (v.14) – The lame man was now healed. The difference in his life before and after was unbelievable – it was irrefutable. So there was nothing they could say. A changed life is the most powerful testimony, not only then, but now as well. I hope your life speaks volumes for Jesus, if you claim to be one of his followers. If not, why not? Are you really saved? Are you really converted, if your life is not backing up your profession?

Conclusion

Do you really know the power of Jesus' Name?

Do you really know the person behind the Name?

Do you know Jesus?

Not just do you know facts and figures about Jesus, that maybe you learned in Sunday School many years ago, but do you really know Him as your Saviour?

You can, right now, this morning: Romans 10:9, Acts 16:31, Acts 4:12.

There is no other name that can save, but the name of Jesus.

So trust him today and be saved

Peter and John were bound over to keep the peace,

and they were told never to preach again in the name of Jesus.

There was no way they could promise that. Instead they said in vs.19-20:

'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.'

I hope that is your attitude too – don't let anyone silence you from talking about Jesus – the only name under heaven, given to men, that is able to save!

