Conclusion

A. Does darkness still reign?

B. Prayer and the proclamation of the Word reduce the enemy to powerlessness.

LIVE THE STORY

We must not only love the Gospel Story, we must begin to live the Gospel Story, indeed, to have the Central Character live in us.

- What fears do you think Peter and John would have been tempted with when confronted by the same crowd that arrested Jesus in Gethsemane?
- ➤ In light of the probable fears, how do we explain the boldness of 4:13? Does the surrounding text help us explain this?
- What are the power structures that threaten God's people today, that threaten to silence the Word of God today?
- ➤ How does Peter's declaration in 4:12 summarize declarations made in Isaiah and apply them to Jesus? What is the apparent effect of this proclamation on the rulers?
- What clue do we have in the account that the Lord had rendered these rulers powerless?
- Compare the prayer of the believers in 4:24-30 to the prayer of Hezekiah in Isaiah 37:15-20. What might we learn from this?
- What do we learn from this text about the reign of darkness? Is this still darkness's hour (Luke 22:53)? How do we live as if it is noon, when the world seems to be midnight? How does Acts 4 call us to engage the darkness of this world?
- What are some practical applications you can make based on the clear truths of this text? How should you pray? How should you prepare yourself?

Proclamation and Prayer in the Conflict of the Ages

Jerry Cisar — June 29, 2014

Text: Acts 4:1-31

Introduction: A Conflict Story

I. Power (4:1-4)

- A. Peter & John have seen these guys before. (Luke 22:52-53)
- B. Does darkness still reign?
- C. Conquest Has Begun (4:4)

II. Proclamation (4:5-13)

- A. The Powers the Be
- B. The Declaration of Jesus Christ (4:12)
 - i. Peter goes on the offensive with this declaration.

- ii. Peter summarizes Isaiah's declarations and applies them to Jesus.
 - Isaiah 42:8
 - Isaiah 43:10-11
 - > Isaiah 45:17-18, 21-24

- C. They saw the "courage" (the boldness) of Peter and John.
 - i. They are filled with the Spirit and speak the Word of God boldly.
 - ii. See Act 4:29, 31

III. Powerlessness (4:14-22)

- A. The **powerlessness** of these power-brokers.
 - a) v14 they can say nothing
 - b) V16 They can't deny the miracle.
 - c) V17 They **acknowledge they can do nothing** to stop the spread of the Gospel
 - d) V19-20 Peter and John refuse to heed their warning.
 - e) Vs 21-22 **they can't decide** how to punish them, and therefore do nothing.
- B. In contrast to their powerlessness, is the power of Christ.
 - i. V21: All the people are praising God!
 - ii. Acts begins with the enthronement of Jesus Christ... who now sets out dethroning the idols of the nations by reclaiming the worship of the nations.

IV. Prayer (4:23-30)

- A. Acts 3:1–4:31 began with prayer and ends with prayer.
 - i. Proclamation is powerless without prayer.

Paul Tautges: "Prayerlessness is the most subtle disclosure of our independence and our depraved heart's own declaration of sovereignty..."

- ii. Prayer as the air-war; preaching as the ground war.
- B. They use Psalm 2 in a quote and apply it to their present circumstances. (25b-26)
 - i. Psalm 2:4-8
 - ii. Psalm 2 is used in such a way that all who reject Christ are lumped together as enemies of God—the nations of the world. Yet, the nations of the world become His inheritance. All are excluded in order that they can be included through faith in Jesus.
- C. The Place Shaken (4:31)
 - i. Judges 5:4-5 **God is on the move**...He is leading this prayer-committed army in the the war for the worship of the nations through the Gospel.
 - ii. Isaiah 64:1-2 **God has come down...** in the Holy Spirit. He will make His name known.
 - iii. This is the very thing the temple rulers feared!