

Guest Speaker Rodger Burnett

The Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth

1. The early Christian church faced severe opposition. Discuss why the religious leaders might have been “greatly disturbed” by Peter’s message (v. 1, 2). For two clues, look at Acts 3:13-15 and 5:28, then 3:26. Personal application: When someone brings us face to face with our own sin or challenges us doctrinally, do we respond with humility and a teachable spirit, or with pride and anger?
2. What does Peter say in verses 10-12 about true salvation? Can we allow anyone or anything other than Jesus to have the priority in our lives or church if we are to remain faithful to the unchanged and unchanging Word of God?
3. Do verses 18-20 encourage “civil disobedience”? If so, how? Be sure to consider Romans 13:1-7, I Peter 2:13-17, and Acts 5:29 before you answer. How will developing a balanced view of this biblical truth help us in times of religious persecution, either on an individual or nationwide basis?
4. Prayer accomplishes so very much, yet it is something we easily forget or neglect to do. What did the disciples do in verses 23 and 24 in response to Peter and John’s account of their persecution? get discouraged? give up? decide it wasn’t worth it? In fact, what did they pray for in verse 29? Obviously they were motivated because they had been with Jesus, had performed miracles, etc.; but the principle is the same. Discuss why we should also ask for the same thing (v. 29).
5. When the working of God was evident among the believers, how did they respond (v. 32-34)? When we see growth in the church and in individual lives, do we recognize it as the work of God? Do we respond like these first century Christians responded, or is it “church as usual”? *God’s desire is that we act like these NT disciples (unified and loving sacrificially), and He will surely empower us to accomplish great things for Him, right here and right now.* Spend a moment praying as a class for a heart of unity and selflessness in our families and here at Blair Ridge, beginning in our own hearts.
6. If you have time, look at the progression of these believers’ prayer in verses 24-30. Remember, they had just learned about the high priest’s threats to Peter and John (v. 21). In verse 24, what did the disciples acknowledge? What did they “pray back to God” in verses 25 and 26? In verses 27 and 28, they admitted that God knew what? And in verses 29 and 30, even to risking their own lives, what did they pray for? Compare this prayer to the average believer’s prayer today; what’s more, compare it to your own prayers. Look at verse 31; did God answer their prayers?

¹Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, ²being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

⁵And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, ⁶as 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. ⁷And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"

⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: ⁹If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, ¹⁰let 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. ¹¹This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' ¹²Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

¹³Now 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. ¹⁴And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. ¹⁵But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, ¹⁶saying, "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. ¹⁷But 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."

¹⁸So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But 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. ²⁰For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." ²¹So 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. ²²For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

²³And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. ²⁴So 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, ²⁵who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? ²⁶The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the LORD and against His Christ.'

²⁷"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 ²⁸to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. ²⁹Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, ³⁰by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

³¹And 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.

³²Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. ³³And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. ³⁴Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, ³⁵and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

³⁶And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, ³⁷having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.