

# Keeping the Fire Burning

1. A couple of weeks ago we looked at the 7 different aspects...to Peters second sermon...a sermon that focused on different aspects of Jesus
  - a. This week...scripture is going to show us...how persecution can follow...when you talk about Jesus
  - b. This is an important lesson this morning...because...I think this same kind of persecution is coming to our churches...in the not too distant future
  - c. Scripture takes the time to record Peter's persecution...because this same kind of persecution...that can also come upon us...when we talk about Jesus
  - d. What we will see in our study this morning...are the 2 different reactions to the gospel of Jesus Christ
  - e. Some will accept Jesus...about 2000 men do...not including women and children...but the hard hearted will reject Jesus and His salvation
2. Acts 4:1-4, 1 While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. 2 These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. 3 They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning. 4 But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of believers now totaled about 5,000 men, not counting women and children.
3. Slide...The great commission will cause great persecution

- a. Remember from our teaching from a few weeks ago...Peter healed the lame man...which wowed people...
- b. And while the people are rejoicing...excited about the move of God...this is when Peter takes the opportunity to preach the gospel
- c. And what we will see this morning...is the temple leadership...isn't liking it at all...the question is why
- d. This is where...if we were watching a movie...there is a flash back in time...so we understand what is going on
- e. We know from our Bible...how in history...after Joshua...Israel started to worship other gods...
- f. In the book of Kings we see good kings and bad kings...while Israel fell further and further away from God
- g. In response...the Lord God let other nations concur Israel as a form of discipline
- h. Some of these nations who concurred Israel...forced all of Israel to worship pagan gods...
- i. While other different concurring nations allowed Israel to worship the Lord God...as long as there order...and wasn't an uprising...or any trouble
- j. The concurring nation before Rome...was Greece...still under Alexander the Great...
- k. Although...Israel was allowed to continue to be a nation...under Syrian based rulers... and were not allowed to practice Judaism

- l. At this time in history...is when Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple by sacrificing a swine on the alter of God
- m. This is when the Maccabee's revolted and re-claimed the temple...in which the Jew's now celebrate Hannukah
- n. But there still was no peace in Israel and Israel was about to be concurred by the Greeks again...so catch this
- o. They asked Rome to come in and rule them...so the Greeks would not attack them again...and Rome said sure...why not
- p. Part of the condition for Rome coming in was...that Israel was free to worship the Lord God...as long as there were uprising...or trouble
- q. It was then...that Roman government...would appoint positions to Jewish people to be in power...as long as they could maintain the peace
- r. So these Sadducees were appointed by Rome...in order to keep the peace
- s. Which is why they killed Jesus...in effort to keep the peace...even though they knew better...and this is why they are now putting Peter on trial
- t. So understand...the Sadducees are very pollical...and they sided with the Romans...in order to keep their appointed positions as religious leaders
- u. The Sadducees were the liberals in their day...they did not believe in the spirit world...miracles...angels...and they rejected the resurrection
- v. So they are religious people...trying to maintain peace with the Romans ...and here comes their Messiah...ushering in the new covenant
- w. So they kill Jesus...thinking this would be the end
- x. And now here comes Peter...with the gospel of Jesus...so they arrest Peter

4. Acts 4:5-7, 5 The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met in Jerusalem. 6 Annas the high priest was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest. 7 They brought in the two disciples and demanded, "By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?"
  - a. This question they ask...is a loaded question
  - b. They asked...by what name they did you heal
  - c. Here is why they asked that question...
  - d. In the Old Testament...anyone who leads people away from the name of God is a false prophet and is to be stoned to death
  
5. Deut 13:1-5, 1 "Suppose there are prophets among you or those who dream dreams about the future, and they promise you signs or miracles, 2 and the predicted signs or miracles occur. If they then say, 'Come, let us worship other gods'—gods you have not known before— 3 do not listen to them. The Lord your God is testing you to see if you truly love him with all your heart and soul. 4 Serve only the Lord your God and fear him alone. Obey his commands, listen to his voice, and cling to him. 5 The false prophets or visionaries who try to lead you astray must be put to death, for they encourage rebellion against the Lord your God, who redeemed you from slavery and brought you out of the land of Egypt. Since they try to lead you astray from the way the Lord your God commanded you to live, you must put them to death. In this way you will purge the evil from among you."
  - a. They asked Peter in whose name did you do this miracle...why...so they could kill Peter and John...based on the premises that Jesus is not God

- b. Which is hypocrisy...because they didn't even believe in miracles
6. Slide...These are the same people who tried Jesus
- a. When these same guys found Jesus guilty of blasphemy...then they took Jesus to the Romans...or Pilot...to be executed
  - b. When Jesus was being tried by these same guys...realize Peter was outside the house denying knowing Jesus 3 times
  - c. Now...through the working of the Holy Spirit...Peter is emboldened...and now facing the same trial as Jesus did
  - d. Jesus warned His disciples...that this kind of persecution would come...and to not worry...because the Holy Spirit would help them speak
7. Luke 12:8-12, 8 "I tell you the truth, everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, the Son of Man will also acknowledge in the presence of God's angels. 9 But anyone who denies me here on earth will be denied before God's angels. 10 Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. 11 "And when you are brought to trial in the synagogues and before rulers and authorities, don't worry about how to defend yourself or what to say, 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what needs to be said."
- a. A few weeks ago...Peter denies even knowing Jesus...and now through the working of the Holy Spirit...Peter is emboldened...he is a changed man
  - b. What Peter does next...or what the Holy Spirit does...is turn the tables back on the Sadducees by accusing them of a greater crime...murder

8. Acts 4:8-11, 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of our people, 9 are we being questioned today because we've done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? 10 Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. 11 For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says, 'The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.'
9. Slide...Persecution should create a boldness to call out sin...and preach the truth of the Lord Jesus the Christ
  - a. Peter asks...are we on trial for doing something good for a lame man...and yet you go unchecked for murdering Jesus...the Messiah
  - b. Jesus who is still alive...or resurrected... is still doing miracles today
  - c. You remember Jesus...don't you...the one you murdered
  - d. I can't help but wonder what was going through these guys hearts
  - e. They had to feel something...a burning in their hearts when Jesus was standing in front of them...listening to His words...now Peter's words
  - f. A few weeks ago we read in John's gospel...that they knew who Jesus was...and thought killing Jesus would end it
  - g. And yet Jesus is still doing things...only now...through His followers... which is still happening today
  - h. Peter...who is emboldened by the Holy Spirit...puts them on trial...he accuses them of Jesus's murder...

- i. They had to feel something inside...most likely conviction...the same feeling as we do when we sin...just like when we accept Jesus as Lord
- j. They hardened their heart...in spite of all the evidence and denied the working of the Holy Spirit...or blasphemy of the Holy Spirit
- k. They didn't believe in Jesus ...they didn't believe in the resurrection...and they didn't believe in miracles...and yet they are faced with all 3
- l. The presence of the Holy Spirit in Peter...which they will comment on in a minute...a miracle of faith just happened in the lame man
- m. And Jesus is the resurrection...and truth...because He is alive and still doing miracles
- n. Peter does something else we won't catch unless we take the time to look up the scripture
- o. Peter uses scripture to back up His claim that Jesus is still alive...by using
- p. A Messianic prophecy...showing that Jesus was going to be killed...and rescued by the Father
- q. By quoting a Psalm...the builders who reject Him...will become the cornerstone of the age of grace...or the church age

10. Ps 118:1-4, 1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever. 2 Let all Israel repeat: "His faithful love endures forever."3 Let Aaron's descendants, the priests, repeat: "His faithful love endures forever."4 Let all who fear the Lord repeat: "His faithful love endures forever."

- a. 3 groups mentioned...Israel...or spiritual Israel...those who truly love the Lord God...and in the new testament...believe Jesus is Lord

- b. Aaron's descendants...the priestly line...which these guys are not...because they were appointed by Rome
- c. And lastly...the gentile church...or all who fear the Lord
- d. David is writing about His experiences with God...but is also prophesying of the things the Messiah would experience

11. Ps 118:5-18, 5 In my distress I prayed to the Lord, and the Lord answered me and set me free.6 The Lord is for me, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me? 7 Yes, the Lord is for me; he will help me. I will look in triumph at those who hate me.8 It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in people.9 It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. 10 Though hostile nations surrounded me, I destroyed them all with the authority of the Lord.11 Yes, they surrounded and attacked me, but I destroyed them all with the authority of the Lord. 12 They swarmed around me like bees; they blazed against me like a crackling fire. But I destroyed them all with the authority of the Lord. 13 My enemies did their best to kill me, but the Lord rescued me.14 The Lord is my strength and my song; he has given me victory.15 Songs of joy and victory are sung in the camp of the godly. The strong right arm of the Lord has done glorious things!16 The strong right arm of the Lord is raised in triumph. The strong right arm of the Lord has done glorious things!17 I will not die; instead, I will live to tell what the Lord has done.18 The Lord has punished me severely, but he did not let me die.

- a. Jesus is still alive...the Lord punished His Son for our sins...but He still lives...and is now the only way...or the only gate...to the Father



12. Ps 118:19-26, 19 Open for me the gates where the righteous enter, and I will go in and thank the Lord.20 These gates lead to the presence of the Lord, and the godly enter there.21 I thank you for answering my prayer and giving me victory! 22 The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.23 This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful to see.24 This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.25 Please, Lord, please save us. Please, Lord, please give us success.26 Bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.

13. Acts 4:12 There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."

14. Slide...Old Testament scripture proves Jesus is the Messiah

15. Acts 4:13-14, 13 The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus. 14 But since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them, there was nothing the council could say.

- a. Peter nailed them with scripture...which amazed them...and they realized Peter was speaking like Jesus...through the Holy Spirit
- b. They had the miracle of Jesus standing before them...and they didn't know what to do

16. Acts 4:15 So they ordered Peter and John out of the council chamber and conferred among themselves.

17. Slide...Some people will know the word of God, but will miss knowing the God of the word

- a. Here is what they come up with

18. Acts 4:16-18, 16 "What should we do with these men?" they asked each other.

"We can't deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and everybody in Jerusalem knows about it. 17 But to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in Jesus' name again." 18 So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.

- a. In verse 16...it says...they performed the miracle...when Peter says Jesus performed the miracle...again denying Jesus
- b. This is the goal of the enemy...to get us to stop talking about Jesus
- c. This is what the Sadducees command the disciples...to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further...
- d. They commanded the apostles to never again to speak...or teach...in the name of Jesus again
- e. Have you ever noticed that you can talk about God...religion or church all you really want to... but as soon as you say Jesus...people will freak out
- f. It is the name of Jesus...from which the power comes from...
- g. A church that isn't focusing on the truth of Jesus...is not a threat to Satan
- h. The goal of the enemy...is to get people to stop talking about Jesus
- i. The method the enemy uses to stop people...is to persecute the people who do use the name of Jesus

- j. The enemy has no power to stop Jesus...to stop Jesus from continuing to do miracles...or giving the gift of salvation to those who have faith
- k. But the enemy will try to stop us...or the church from using the name of Jesus...because there is power in the name of Jesus
- l. The attack on our churches...is to attempt to remove Jesus from the church ...and not teach the truth of the Bible in the church
- m. This is happening in the spiritual realm already...but soon it will be a government order
- n. Oh we will let you have church service...as long as you do it our way
- o. This same exactly what the Roman government did...appointed religious yes men...who would deny Jesus...and His gospel
- p. This is exactly what the Sadducees are saying...you can have church...but without Jesus
- q. Compromising in order to have a church service...lacks the power of Jesus and takes the Holy Spirit out of the lives of the people
- r. This same thing is happening in our churches today...and the government is soon going to get in the mix also...it is the same enemy
- s. This is the goal of persecution...but at the same time...through the Holy Spirit
- t. There can be a boldness that comes with knowing Christ...because really...what can mortal people do to those who are in Christ
- u. We don't really die...we only move to be with the Lord of Glory

19. Acts 4:19-22, 19 But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? 20 We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard." 21 The council then threatened them further, but they finally let them go because they didn't know how to punish them without starting a riot. For everyone was praising God 22 for this miraculous sign—the healing of a man who had been lame for more than forty years.

- a. Peter is appealing to a higher court...the super supreme court...God's judgment seat
- b. The problem the Sadducees were having...is they couldn't do anything about the man that was healed
- c. The enemy will try to stop us from using the name of Jesus...but Jesus is still changing hearts and lives
- d. With our testimony...we say I used to be one way...but now I am another way...because of Jesus

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