



— INTERNATIONAL —
ORALITY INSTITUTE

Sample Lesson

Acts 4

Witnessing
Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin
Acts 4:1-21

Acts 4

¹The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. ²They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. ³They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. ⁴But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

⁵The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. ⁷They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, ¹⁰then know this, you and all the people of Israel: 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. ¹¹He is

" 'the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the capstone. ¹²Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

¹³When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. ¹⁴But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. ¹⁵So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. ¹⁶"What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷But 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."

¹⁸Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. ²⁰For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

²¹After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened.

Study Questions: Witnessing Acts 4:1-21

Introduction:

Peter and John had gone up to the temple to pray and as they entered, they healed a man that had been crippled from birth. After using that opportunity to tell people about Jesus and the power in His name, they were put in jail for what they had said. However, jail just gave them an opportunity to tell the rulers, elders, teachers of the law and the high priest's family about Jesus.

Today, we can also face opposition for telling people about Jesus, yet it is the message that our world needs to hear. Whether it is through trials or times of praise, each and every circumstance can convey Jesus Christ's work in our lives. Our purpose on earth is not only to know Jesus, but also to tell those around us so they may know Him. Peter's message to the leaders is clear, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."

Goals:

Knowledge

- To know that the Lord gives everyone who believes personal experiences of God that others need to hear.
- To understand that resisting or ignoring the work of God is opposing God.

Attitude

- To have kindness and courage as we testify about Jesus.

Actions

- To use every blessing and trial in life to tell people about the greatness of God.
- To obey God rather than men when people try to silence the Gospel of Christ.

Memory Verses:

Matthew 10:19-20 "But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."

1 Peter 3:15-16 "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."

Scriptures for Further Study:

Matthew 10:19-20; 28:18-20; Acts 1:8, 2:22-38; 14:1-7; Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-6; 1 Peter 3:15-16

Questions about the Story:

1. What is strange about being arrested for healing someone and preaching about Jesus in the temple? (Acts 4:1 The temple is where people should come for healing, prayer, and talking about what God has done. It should be the most welcoming place.)
2. Why did the priests and the captain of the temple arrest Peter and John for **speaking about Jesus**? (Acts 4:1-2 These same leaders were the ones that had crucified Jesus. They were greatly disturbed because they were proclaiming Jesus' resurrection. To them, preaching that Jesus was the Messiah, seemed to go against everything in their religion.)
3. What type of **opposition** did Peter and John face? (Acts 4:3, 7, 18 The leaders of Jews put them in jail, had them face trial and commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus.)
4. What was it about the **message** that caused such a response? (Acts 4:10-12 It was Jesus, whom they had crucified, denied and rejected that was raised from the dead. It was Jesus as the Messiah and the power in

His name that they did not believe. It was the exclusive claim that salvation was found in no one else.)

5. What was the **response** from those in the crowd who had heard the message and proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ? (Acts 4:4 Many who had heard the message believed and added themselves to those who were already of the faith.)
6. How did the rulers, elders, teachers of the law and high priest's family **respond** to the message? (Acts 4:13-17 They were astonished at Peter and John and their confidence. They were left speechless by the fact that the man who had been healed was standing there. They were confused about what to do with them. They were unwilling to believe even though they recognized it as an outstanding miracle that they could not deny and they were defiant by commanding Peter and John to stop speaking in Jesus name.)
7. What types of **power** are being referred to? (Acts 4:7-19 The leaders are wondering where the healing power came from. Peter responds in the power of the Holy Spirit. The healing was done in the power of the name of Jesus. The leaders tried to use their power to stop Peter and John, but God's power or authority was above all.)
8. Why did Peter direct the attention and glory for the healing to Jesus? (Acts 4:10 Since it was not Peter that healed the man, he could not take any credit for the healing. Since it was Jesus that healed the man, Peter should not have been credited for the good that was done.)
9. What was behind Peter and John's question of whether they should obey God rather than the religious leaders? (Acts 4:19-20 It was the responsibility of the priests and elders to be the intercessors between the people and God. Instead, they had become the roadblock. They were unwilling to acknowledge that this outstanding miracle was from God.)

Application Questions:

1. What strange things do we face in telling people about Jesus? (Acts 4:1 We can find strong resistance in our homes or with our families. We can also find receptivity from some of the most unlikely people and the strangest of places.)
2. What is the **message** that we have to proclaim to the world around us? (Acts 4:2, 12 The message of the good news of Jesus is needed in the whole world. It is in Jesus that we have forgiveness of our sins, the hope of resurrection, salvation, and healing.)
3. How can you share Jesus Christ with those around you?
4. What positive response have you received from those opportunities?
5. What type of **opposition** will we face as we share Jesus? (Acts 4:3, 7, 18 Like Peter and John, many Christians face threats, jail, punishment and trials.)
6. What will be the **response** of the world around us when we share the Gospel of Jesus Christ? (Acts 4:1-4 The response of the world will vary widely. Those whom the Holy Spirit has been working in will come to salvation and stand in awe at the love and grace of Jesus Christ. Those who are resisting the work of God will be disturbed by the Gospel and respond negatively.)
7. Why do we have no reason to fear when we are questioned for our faith? (Acts 4:8 Because we have the **power** of the Holy Spirit living in us. We are serving the Almighty God who has all authority in the earth. Matthew 10:19-20 says He will give us the words to say at the right time.)
8. How can we be a witness for Jesus when we are questioned about our lives and what we are doing? (Acts 4:10-11 We can serve as a witness for Jesus even when we are questioned and endure hardship by pointing people back to Jesus Christ and giving Him the glory from our lives. We must always be ready to give an

answer for the hope that we have. 1 Peter 3:15-16)

9. Why does God use simple and ordinary men to show His glory? (Acts 4:13 God uses simple men to do His work so that it is obvious that it is not by man but by the Lord Almighty.)
10. What should our response as Christians be when the Lord has told us to do something that the world opposes? (Acts 4:19-20 As Christians, we should choose to listen to the Word of the Lord over the words of man as God ultimately is the One who has control not only of this present life, but also of the life to come.)
11. What are some of the things that the Lord has been telling you to do? What has been your response?