

## WHEN TWO PREACHERS FACE A COURT, WHAT SHOULD THE CHURCH DO?

**TEXT:** Acts 4:23-31:

***23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the Chief Priests and Elders had said unto them.***

***24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, "Lord, Thou art God, which hast made Heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:***



***25 Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?***

***26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ.***

***27 For of a truth against Thy Holy Child Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,***

***28 For to do whatsoever Thy Hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done.***

***29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy Word,***

***30 By stretching forth Thine Hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the Name of Thy Holy Child Jesus."***

***31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness.***

Christ has been crucified, resurrected, and the Holy Spirit poured out on the Church. About three thousand people were saved at the very first service.

Then all hell broke loose. When the devil begins to roar and snort, you may rest assured the Spirit is moving on the Church. God is twisting the devil's tail.



The next incident is that Peter and John were going to a dried up and dead prayer meeting.

They were going to the Temple, but thank God **they were on fire in spite** of all the coldness and prayerlessness of the congregation.

### **And God sent a revival.**

Yes, in spite of all your indifference, perhaps prayerlessness and worldliness - brother, sister - God is going to give a Holy Ghost revival.

A man was there at the gate of the temple, lame from birth.

#### **Acts 3:6-8:**

***6 Then Peter said [to the lame man], Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.***

***7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.***

***8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.***

The crowd got all disinterested in the dry meeting and came out to see what was happening outside.

We read in Acts Chapter 4 that a great persecution broke out. As they spoke to the people, the priests and captain of the Temple were grieved that they taught the people. The apostles preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. The Priests and Sadducees laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the Temple prison unto the next day.

However, many of them which heard the Word believed (**v 4**) **and the number of the men was about five thousand.**

**Acts 4:5-6:**

**<sup>5</sup> And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,**

**<sup>6</sup> And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John [probably a famous Rabbi of that time], and Alexander [the very bunch that put Jesus to death], and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest [a family affair with all his kinfolds], were gathered together at Jerusalem.**

The devil stirred them all. They were chewing their bits at two little preachers of the mighty Gospel of Christ.

**Acts 4:7: And when they had set them [Peter and John] in the midst, they asked, “By what power, or by what name, have ye done this [miracle on this lame man]?”**

In Acts 4:8-12 it says:

**<sup>8</sup> Peter is filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, “Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,**

**<sup>9</sup> “If we this day be examined of the good deed done [healing] to the impotent man [the lame man], by what means he is made whole;**

**<sup>10</sup> Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom ye crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole.**



**(Jesus Christ of Nazareth Crucified)**

**<sup>11</sup> This is the Stone which was set at nought of you builders [cornerstone set aside], which is become the Head of the Corner.**

***12 Neither is there Salvation in any other: for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”***

### **Some Preachers Today**

You know, saints, most of the preachers and Gospel workers have a sweet potato vine running up their back for a back bone, today. They are spineless as Jell-O, worthless as a filthy rag. They are mostly interested in being polished, having their hair combed just right, and their ties fixed just so, and their shoes shined and suit pressed like a model. And they are about as dead as a model, too.

These things are not wrong in themselves, but when the outward beauty is prepared and not the inner man, and the outer interests are greater than the soul beauty, then it is in vain.

***Acts 4:13: Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.***

### **An On-Fire Preacher**

Brother and sisters, when I see a man rise in the pulpit and there is nothing engaging in his person, nothing musical in his voice, nothing winning in his manners; he has no reputation for genius, learning or wisdom; no illustrious ancestry, secular sources of influence of power or authority; but when he opens his mouth, the door to his soul is revealed!

As you analyze his speech, it is neither spectacular, nor anything new in thought, but there is something in it that arrests the soul.

- ➡ The guilty find his preaching sobering, the worldly feel he is a fool; and the sinner shudders as if brought to the mouth of Hell.
- ➡ The saints resolve to live more near to Christ.
- ➡ The preacher who had preached for fame and popularity turns pale.
- ➡ The whole crowd trembles in the presence of God.

What is the difference? This preacher has been alone with Jesus and has wrestled in prayer and prevailed with the Son of God. He has received his commission anew and has a fresh anointing from the Holy One.

He did not tell you all about his consecration and surrender, but you can feel it. You can detect the odor of the divine ointment and the smell of divine fragrance. The words sink into your heart with power as the very Words of God.

### **Pray for Our Response**

Saints, pray that the Lord will help us unload the wisdom of the world and the traditions of men. We must sit at His Feet and learn of Him Who is meek and lowly in heart. Jesus speaking:

***Matthew 11:29: Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.***

***1 Corinthians 1:27: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;***

Let no flesh shall glory in His presence.

***Acts 4:14-18:***

***14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.***

***15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they [the Temple leaders] conferred among themselves,***

***16 Saying, "What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.***

***17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this Name."***

***18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the Name of Jesus.***

So Peter and John, to be law abiding citizens, and not desiring to offend anyone's feelings, agreed to the commands and stopped preaching in Jesus' Name, because it caused too much trouble and confusion amongst the church officials of the First Church.

This was Not the Case:

***Acts 4:19-20:***

***19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.***

***20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."***

Then, after the threatening, they let the preachers go who went to their own company and rehearsed the whole matter.

Right in the middle of this big court battle, what is the Church going to do? When the Church heard all this,

***Acts 4:24: And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, "Lord, Thou art God, Who hast made Heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:"***

Did they pray? - 'Lord, please give us a more quiet religion and a peaceful spirit so we can get along with everybody. We would be more cautious. Oh, make us wise as serpents and as harmless as doves?'

**NO!!!**

They prayed, 'Oh, Lord! Grant unto Thy servants more of this power of the Holy Ghost that got us into all this trouble. We want to preach the Gospel with great boldness. Let us have more of Your Spirit to declare the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.'

Read your Bibles, saints. The great tragedy of this hour is that God's children are filled with the traditions of men and are living a life of convenience to their own taste, and not according to the Word. Many of you do not know your Bibles, and I speak this to your shame.



For many of you, the amount of Bible you have studied and prayed and wept over - if turned into nitroglycerin, it would not even blow off the front foot of a mosquito.

### How did THEY pray?

Lord, keep Your servants from becoming weaklings and soft. There's a great crowd out there who has threatened, warned and forbid us to preach, but Lord stand by us and:

***Acts 4:30: By stretching forth Thine Hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the Name of Thy Holy Child Jesus.***

Brothers and sisters, the Lord will hear that kind of praying. In this next verse:

***Acts 4:31: And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness.***



The Saints of God who are really true to Jesus are hungry for the Gospel in the Power of the Spirit. The worldly are not. They hate the Gospel and do not want the Gospel and the Truth.

Noah preached about 120 years and the world was not hungry for the Gospel. Elijah preached it and the backslidden children of God alone were melted and turned to the Lord, but the 450 prophets of Baal moved not a peg.

Jesus told the people of His day that they had killed the prophets and stoned those that were sent to them.

The multitudes followed Jesus because He fed with them the loaves and fishes, but they forsook Him when (in the 6th chapter of John).

***John 6:26-27: Jesus answered them and said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.***

***<sup>27</sup> Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto Everlasting Life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed."***

Finally, they crucified Him. And since that day they have threatened and beaten those who truly preach the Gospel of Christ in the power of the Spirit. Paul was thrown out of every town he preached during his missionary journeys.

**The world does not want the truth.** It does not want the Gospel, for it is nauseating to the world. But you can get a red toenail, bare-legged, bare-back, hand-painted, hard-boiled, sun tanned, cigarette sucking, dog loving, cat kissing, beer guzzling peroxide blonde female out of Hollywood, bring her to town, and she will get the key to the city, and a crowded auditorium with folks **to watch her pour on her lustful charms.**

The world is not under the domination of Christ. The world is the devil's. When we invade his territory he will raise a persecution so mean and lowdown that, but for the power of God in the church, it would have been swallowed up long ago.

Christ is a preserver of the church. When He's moving on us, then He is moving the lost to us.

When the church becomes self-satisfied and cooled off, when it loves to talk about the good old days and crawls into a cell, it does not bother the world, and the world does not bother it.



**But a spirit fulfilled church is aggressive and goes out where the world is, to preach Christ to them.**

Peter and John met this great experience out of doors. Brother and sisters, do you have outdoor religion? Or, is yours all wrapped up in a napkin, snugly covered by the four walls of the church house? God pity you if you have this kind of miserable religion.

When we are filled with the Spirit, it is witnessing for Christ that will be the evidence.

A Woman in Alice, Texas:

Many of you have consoled yourself with tongues, but some of you are badly fooled. Just like a woman in Alice, Texas, who is living a useless miserable life of profession, claiming to be a Pentecostal. She was as rebellious to the Word of God as a sinner, and as crooked as a dog's hind leg. She was a stumbling block to the church. She used her tongue for the devil. Then she tried to tell me she was not worried about her chances of going to Heaven because she still talks in tongues.

Tongues is not the test of your walk with God. Never! Walking in the light and having a pure heart is the test. Jesus did **not** say, "These signs shall follow the tongue talking people." The devil has tongues in the counterfeit church. Be sure you know what spirit is giving you utterance. I believe in the tongues that the **"Holy Ghost gives utterance"**; and brother, it is backed up with a clean, godly life: and with signs and demonstrations of the Spirit confirming the Word.

False worship first began operating against the apostles of Christ and the Church. It has been going on ever since. It will continue going on unto Jesus' Coming.

**If you're going to be in a Spirit filled church you might just as well make up your mind that you're going to have to move up. Brother, Pentecost stirs up the devil. There maybe some Ananias and Sapphira die here before things get going good for Jesus.**

### **Back to the Church in Acts:**

Little did the church know what was going to take place after they prayed for more power and boldness to preach the Gospel! The very first thing to follow was a shocking experience with two church members.

**Brother, when the church is week-kneed, thin-skinned, and spineless in its devotion and in its surrender to Christ, it does nothing, feels nothing, sees nothing, and is nothing.**

Why should we care if we are scoffed at and ridiculed by the sanctimonious on-lookers? Look what happened that day at the temple when the lame man, healed in the Name of Jesus, came bouncing into the Temple shouting and praising God. The crowd gathered and said: "Say, look there. There's that old cripple, jumping around!" Did they praise God for this deliverance? No. They marched Peter and John off to jail thinking – 'The very idea of hopping and hollering at our church, and breaking up the holy service.

Brother and sisters, many a service needs breaking up and then souls will get to Jesus. So it was on this day.



About 5000 got saved.

Praise God!

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