

Subject	Lessons from Acts Series	4404
		Acts 4
Title	7 Lessons from Acts 4	
Proposition	To study Acts 4.	
Objective	To consider seven lessons which Acts 4 helps me to consider and appreciate and apply in my own life.	

7 Lessons from Acts 4

Introduction:

1. In this chapter we find the persecution from the Jews beginning.
2. Peter and John are arrested for preaching about Jesus rising from the dead.
3. Rapid growth is taking place from the efforts of the apostles and others of the Jerusalem church, NOW NUMBERING 5,000 men.
4. Peter and John give their defense before the Council.
5. The BOLDNESS of the two apostles was noticed by all.
6. The POWER of the signs produced by the apostles was doing its work of CONFIRMING their word.
7. In verse 20 we find a great truth that needs to be memorized and practiced by every gospel preacher Acts 4:20 **For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.**
8. There is no question but that the early church believed in the POWER OF PRAYER.
 - 1) Their prayer was NOT to avoid suffering,
 - 2) But rather to have the necessary BOLDNESS to continue spreading the saving message.
9. They were a sharing and caring group.
10. We have in this chapter the first mention of BARNABAS, who sells some land and lays the proceeds at the apostles' feet.
11. So we open up OUR history book to learn a few lessons from Acts 4.

DISCUSSION: Acts 4 Helps me in that it—

I. Presents One of the #1 Subjects of the Early Church's Teaching/Preaching Efforts and the Response (4.1-2).

Acts 4:1-2 And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, (2) Being **grieved** that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

1. **GRIEVED here means:** 88.190 διαπονέομαι: to be strongly irked or provoked at something or someone—'to be irked, to be provoked, to become angry.' διαπονούμενοι διὰ τὸ διδάσκειν ὑποῦς τὸν λαόν 'being provoked that they were teaching the people' Ac 4:2; διαπονηθεὶς δὲ Παῦλος 'Paul became provoked' Ac 16:18.¹

¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 762.

2. **These Sadducees were GREATLY DISTURBED by the powerful teaching of the apostles.**
 - 1) **How could they be anything except greatly disturbed?**
 - 2) **The message preached included the most amazing good news ever heard.**
 - 1- **Jesus of Nazareth had conquered death.**
 - 2- **He had arisen from the grave!**
 - 3- **This DID NOT fit into the theology of the Sadducees.**
 - 4- **It was not a message they wanted to hear.**
 - 3) **The strangest thing about it is that rather than listening to the preaching in a genuine search for truth, these Sadducees tried to silence the preachers.**
3. **Actually, it was good that they were disturbed.**
 - 1) **The very fact that they were so upset about the gospel.**
 - 2) **Combined with the fact that they made no attempt to refute their claims.**
 - 3) **Indicated that they well understood the claims being made.**
 - 4) **The thing that was NOT GOOD was the response they chose.**
 - 5) **They chose to oppose the truth which they could not refute.**
4. **TODAY, we should seek to DISTURB THE THINKING of our lost friends and neighbors in a similar way!**
 - 1) **If their thinking contradicts plain Bible teaching, they have a need.**
 - 2) **Their need is to be exposed to truth.**
 - 3) **They need to hear that which they have not heard so as to have the opportunity honestly to accept or reject God's truth.**
5. **We serve a RISEN LORD, and we should never leave that fact out of our teaching efforts!**

Acts 4 Helps me in that it—

II. Sets forth one of the MOST CRUCIAL Questions regarding spiritual matters (4.7).

Acts 4:7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

1. **What a great question!**
 - 1) **Do you think this would have been a difficult question for the apostles to answer?**
 - 2) **NO!**
 - 3) **They would have been strongly desiring that this very question be asked of them.**
 - 1- **They knew that they had the HIGHEST authority available for the message they were proclaiming.**
 - 2- **They had no fear that some greater authority might object to their Source of authority!**
2. **Notice verse 10... Acts 4:10 **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.****
 - 1) **Peter wanted everyone everywhere to know by what authority he was preaching the message he preached!**

- 2) He was seeking opportunities to explain WHY he preached the message he preached.
 - 3) He had all of the answers because he had the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
 - 4) There was nothing lacking in the knowledge the apostles had been blessed with on Pentecost Day of Acts 2!
3. Today there is no reason for you and me to have any less confidence in the message the Lord has asked us to deliver to the world!
- 1) We have the completed written revelation from God.
 - 2) It is the identical message that was preached in Jerusalem in the 1st Century.
4. Our message and our confidence in the message comes from the very same Source the apostles of the 1st Century had—THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD.

Acts 4 Helps me in that it—

III. Shows HOW the Sanhedrin actually helped to confirm the resurrection! (4.15).

Acts 4:15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

1. Coffman points out that *what the Sanhedrin DID NOT DO is of EPIC SIGNIFICANCE.*
2. Of course, what they did NOT do was to deny the resurrection of Jesus.
 - 1) Now Peter had just preached the resurrection in their hearing!
 - 2) Why did they not deny it?
 - 3) They would have lost all credibility because many had seen the resurrected Jesus.
 - 4) They could not deny the resurrection.
 - 5) They could not deny the miracle that had happened before all of these witnesses when the apostles healed the lame man!
3. The ONLY thing they could do was to do what they did was was: **THEY CONFERRED AMONG THEMSELVES.**
4. Can anyone believe that those unscrupulous unbelievers would not have denied the resurrection if there had been any rational basis for doing so.
5. And so, here is one of the places we can turn in our history book and find support for the **FACT OF** the resurrection of Jesus, courtesy of the Sanhedrin!

Acts 4 Helps me in that it—

IV. Presents open defiance of any power claiming to be ABOVE God (4.19-20).

Acts 4:19-20 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.

1. Is there a message worth dying for?
2. That is basically what is being said here by the apostles.
3. They are commanded not to speak any longer in the name of Jesus— Acts 4:18 **And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.**
4. This was an open and dangerous defiance of the power of the Jewish authorities.

- 1) It contained a direct appeal to their OWN CONSCIENCES.
- 2) They are saying they would not be able to live with themselves if they disobeyed the Lord in order to obey the Sanhedrin!
- 3) The apostles were NOT willing that their silence should be construed in any what whatsoever that they were obeying such a command.
- 4) They spoke in such a manner as to be distinctly understood.
 - 1- There are some preachers who speak in ways that can be taken differently, according to what you want to hear.
 - 2- The apostles had no such problem speaking plainly and boldly and at whatever the cost!

Acts 4 Helps me in that it—

V. Shows the tremendous VALUE of Christian fellowship (4.23).

Acts 4:23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

1. The BOLDNESS of the apostles in defending Christianity before the Jewish authorities is easily seen here.
 - 1) However, we should not think that such confrontations as this were without stress.
 - 2) It would have been immensely stressful to be called before the authorities to answer their questions.
 - 3) These were the most powerful men in the city.
 - 4) They were feared by all.
 - 5) Such a confrontation as we read about in this chapter should not be taken lightly.
2. BUT, God had provided for just such circumstances.
 - 1) Our Christian family—OUR OWN COMPANY is such an amazing blessing to us.
 - 2) It certainly was a blessing to the apostles and teachers of the 1st Century, as well.
3. Just think of what a refreshment it would have been to Peter and John to get back amongst the people who loved them and wanted them to succeed in getting the saving message out.
4. What did they do when they got back among their own company?
 - 1) Acts 4:24-31 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.

- 2) The apostles were greatly blessed by being able to come into the presence of precious fellowship with those who shared the same purpose with them.

Acts 4 Helps me in that it—

VI. It shows early Christians had placed THINGS in their proper perspective (4.32).

Acts 4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

1. The fact is that it ALL belongs to God— Psalms 50:10 For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.
2. These saints had a genuine and loving concern for one another.
 - 1) They DEMONSTRATED that feeling by their willingness to share what they possessed.
 - 2) They cared enough to share what they had.
3. Matthew Poole made an interesting observation here, observing that this practice was only carried out as far as we have record in JERUSALEM: ...it was the rather practiced there, that believers might show what credit they gave to our Saviour's prediction concerning the destruction of that place, in which they did not care to have or retain any thing.
4. Having the correct understanding of the place of wealth and possessions has always been and will always be a great challenge in Christian living.
5. If we can partake of the spirit these early Christians demonstrated here, we will certainly be blessed and be able to bless others.
6. I still am of the opinion that COVETOUSNESS will be the sin most responsible for brethren losing their souls on JD.

Acts 4 Helps me in that it—

VII. Shows the FRUITS of Persecution.

These 5 points come from an old sermon of Andrew Connally, in his book: *Great Lessons from Acts.*

1. **Driven to God in prayer**— Acts 4:23-24 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:
2. **Cried Out to God for Boldness**— Acts 4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,
3. **Bound Together by their Common Faith and Persecution**— Acts 4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of

them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

4. **Led into Unselfish Service—Acts 4.32.**

5. **Resulted in Great Grace upon Them— Acts 4:33** And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: **and great grace was upon them all.**

Conclusion:

1. **The importance of studying history has often been demonstrated.**
2. **Especially is that the case when we are speaking of the HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.**
3. **How blessed are we to have the record we have from the pen of the inspired Luke!**
4. **Let's be sure to study it seeking its multitude of lessons for our daily lives!**