

*ACTS

The Continuing Work of Jesus



Martin Luther, Diet of Worms,
April 1521

*We Cannot Not Speak

Acts 4:13-22

¹³ Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and *began* to recognize them as having been with Jesus. ¹⁴ And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply. ¹⁵ But when they had ordered them to leave the Council, they *began* to confer with one another, ¹⁶ saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy ¹⁵miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name."

¹⁸ And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; ²⁰ for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." ²¹ When they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which to punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened; ²² for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

(Acts 4:13-22)

Jesus' Promise...

"...they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake. ¹³ It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. ¹⁴ So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; ¹⁵ for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute."

(Luke 21:12-15)

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A. Reaction of the Leaders

1. They marveled

- at the freedom, clarity and boldness of speech by these untrained commoners
- they recognized that these men had been with Jesus

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A. Reaction of the Leaders

2. They were silenced

- the evidence for the apostles' claim about Jesus was irrefutable
- they never attempted to disprove the apostles' central affirmation – the resurrection of Jesus

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A. Reaction of the Leaders

3. They threatened

- they warned the disciples not to speak or teach at all about Jesus
- they wanted to prevent the spread of this truth in order to protect their power and reputation

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➤ *Implications*

- when people benefit from falsehood, they often ignore the evidence of what is true
- neither logic nor prophetic power necessarily overcomes hard-hearted unbelief

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B. Response of the Apostles

1. They appealed to God's authority

- they claimed that God's commandment supersedes any human authority
- they implied that the religious leaders were acting against God

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B. Response of the Apostles

2. They refused to stop speaking

- they knew that obeying God meant speaking and teaching about Jesus
- they were deeply convinced of the truthfulness and necessity of the gospel

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➤ *Implication*

- the unshakable conviction of the truth of the gospel is what compels us to proclaim it and holdfast to it, even in the face of opposition

What keeps us from speaking about Jesus?