

NO OTHER NAME

ACTS 4:12

INTRODUCTION - story of healing of man at
the Gate of the temple. (3:1-10)
so marvelously

I. No other Name can bring salvation, vs. 12

A. The Name of Jesus had brought healing and salvation to the lame man. Greek word for "healed" is the same as the word for "saved."

B. The name of the Sadducees cannot do this. 4:13

1. This name stands for rationalism.

They denied the supernatural and miraculous.

They had turned the Hebrew religion into an ethical system.

They denied the resurrection of the body, laughed at the existence of angels, and scoffed at the idea of spirit.

The whole idea of Christianity was spiritual, and therefore in conflict necessarily with that which was purely material.

2. Today there is the same basic conflict between Christianity and rationalism or materialism.

It is the rationalistic conception of life that is at war with Christianity; it is the most subtle of all foes and the most to be dreaded.

The god of materialism is the most popular and best advertized of all pagan gods in the Western World.

Materialistic prosperity is one of the most dangerous friends that any nation can have.

It led Israel into idolatry again & again. It ate the foundation from under the Roman Empire, and today it is doing the same thing for western civilization.

We have forgotten that it is written that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

A few years ago Recently some ministers in California said:

"Unless we have a revival this country is through, as a nation.

"Otherwise we will lose the great moral & spiritual principles upon which it was founded.

And this would mean the destruction of the nation and the loss of our way of life."

The 20th Century Church has not learned how to deal with this rationalism & materialism.

The average man on the street today senses that "there is something wrong."

But he does not know the reason or where to look for the remedy.

Yet a remedy must be found, for it is becoming increasingly apparent that there is a rapid moral decline and deepening spiritual darkness.

The most disturbing thing about this situation is that there is very little evidence of real spiritual revival in the Christian church today.

~~We noted that on the day of Pentecost the church began with men in the upper room agonizing in prayer. Today the church ends with men in the supper room organizing into~~

~~The church began in a revival.~~ committees

We are ending in a ritual.

They started virile;

we are ending sterile.

Most Christians today seem to be lazy, luxury-loving, loveless and lukewarm.

Many who are well aware of the threat of materialistic & rationalistic communism have panicked into confused thinking.

One evidence of this is that some insist, for example, that we should win the people of the world to christianity, because if we don't, the communists will convert them to communism.

Of course, the real reason we should strive to win the world is because we love God and our fellow man, not because we fear communism.

Another symptom of panic is the despair which is manifested in despondent inactivity.

This despondency has gripped many Christians in our countries.

They feel hopelessly frustrated in trying to gain a 20th Century victory over the false gods of secularism, materialism, rationalism, skepticism & communism.

The early church in the Book of Acts could well have despaired in their situation of almost insurmountable opposition of rationalistic Sadduceeism, legalistic Phariseeism, philosophical gnosticism, & the iron political power of Rome.

But they did not panic or fear.

They knew their opponents were not supermen but sinful men subject to the judgment and sovereignty of God.

Panic and despair find no place in the mind of one who knows that "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

II. NO OTHER NAME CAN SO COMPLETELY TRANSFORM PERSONALITIES AS THE NAME OF JESUS, vs. 13

"When they saw the boldness of Peter & John, and perceived that they were uneducated common men, they wondered; and they recognized that they had been with Jesus."

What a change had taken place in Peter & John in the last 2 or 3 weeks.

Two distinct types --

Peter the practical, and John the POET;

Peter the DOER, and John the DREAMER.

Yet they had one great thing in common; they had been with Jesus.

And now they stood accused before the threatening assembly.

How would they conduct themselves?

Let us carefully observe that which cannot be seen with the eyes of sense.

They were "filled with the Holy Spirit." (See Eph. 5:18)

That means they had clear vision,

absolute certainty, strong passion,

and unflinching courage.

They were unlearned men of the common class,

poor, simple fishermen,

facing the cold, analytical skepticism and

belligerent threats of Sadducean philosophy.

But they had, in this moment,

a boldness of speech that showed not only ^{physical} bravery, but clarity ~~on clearness~~ of statement.

This reminds us of another occasion when Jesus was talking in this metropolitan center of learning, and they said, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" This puzzle was now repeated in the case of Peter and John. They had been educated by the world's greatest Teacher for 3½ years.

"They took knowledge of them, that they HAD BEEN with Jesus."

Notice the mistake they made as a result of their false philosophy.

They spoke of the men as having BEEN with Jesus, in a PAST TENSE.

Was that the actual and whole truth?

Christ was NOW in these men & speaking through them; and the similarity which they detected was not that lingering from contact with a lost teacher,

but that created by the presence of the

LIVING CHRIST.

This, and this alone, explained the holy boldness to answer, when they were commanded to refrain from speaking or teaching in the name of Jesus,

"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot (help) but speak of what we have seen and heard."

And -- think of it!-- this, coming from one who so shortly before had lost his courage and shamefully denied his Lord threetimes, ~~that~~ that shrill

"trumpet of the morn" had crowed twice at the fatal trial!

Rabbi Prinz said, "When I was the rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin under the Hitler regime, I learned many things.

The most important thing I learned --

under those tragic circumstances -- is that bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problems.

The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is SILENCE."

The Name of Jesus can so completely change the morally timid personality that he cannot keep from speaking out for God and righteousness even though it be at the peril of his life. (Acts. 4:20)

III. NOT ONLY IS THE NAME OF JESUS THE ONLY NAME BY WHICH WE CAN BE SAVED AND TRANSFORMED, BUT BY NO OTHER NAME CAN WE BE VICTORIOUS.

NO OTHER NAME THAN THE NAME OF JESUS CAN SO EFFECTIVELY SILENCE OPPOSITION, vs. 14

We have talked about the two apostles - Peter and John - before this dignified assembly of rationalistic judges.

But there was another important witness there -- the man that had been healed at the gate of the temple. vs. 14 reads "....

This was what one great preacher has called

"The Golden Muzzle".

Those who would say ANYTHING if they could,

can say NOTHING of what they WOULD,

when they see before their eyes the cures wrought by the Word of the Lord Jesus.

The gospel is vindicated by its results.

Opposition to Christ is always opposition in spite of conclusive evidence.

There stands the healed, redeemed man before you, you skeptical Sadducees!

It is obviously a good thing that has happened to him!

The whole work of Christ is that of healing, ^(vs. 9) helping, saving.

Why oppose this good that is being done in the world?

Why waste time trying to explain and account for this thing and to persecute those who are responsible for such blessings?

Why not let this thing go on?

The business of the church is not the discussion of theories of politics or economics, not that of indulging in speculations

or formulating philosophies;

it is the business of seeking & saving that

which is lost,

of healing the sick of body & mind & spirit,

and of bringing light to those who sit in darkness.

But, on the other hand, this story reveals the church's secret of power.

The church has no argument unless she has a healed man, and the church that is not seeing people healed, re-made & transformed & redeemed, has no argument for her Christianity.

This reminds me of a group of tourists who were being shown through Westminster Abbey. The tombs of Lord Nelson & others were pointed out. The beautiful architecture was magnificently described. But it all seemed suddenly hollow when someone asked the guide, "Mister, how long has it been since anyone was saved here in this church?"

The unassailable answer of Christianity is the healed man standing there.

Are we halting, fearful, speculating, and attempting to revise our faith so as to meet this materialistic & rationalistic age?

If so, the reason is that there is a dearth of recently-saved converts in the churches.

If we are to face the scientific & technological 20th century with purpose & courage, we must have the unanswerable evidences of twice-born people whose entire lives have been changed because of a personal encounter with the Name of Jesus.

~~The biographer of Wesley tells us that in the course of one of his journeys preaching the word, Mr. Wesley went to Epworth. Having offered to assist the curate on the following day (Sunday), and his offer being refused, he took his stand upon his father's tombstone in the evening, and preached to the largest congregation Epworth had ever witnessed. He did this night after night, and hundreds of people came to Christ. But, instead of rejoicing, their angry neighbors carried a whole wagon-load of the new converts before a magistrate.~~

But when he asked what they had done, there was a deep silence; for this was a point that had been forgotten.

~~Finally someone said, "They pretended to be better than other people, and they prayed from morning to night."~~

~~Another said, "They have CONVERTED my wife."~~

~~Til she went among them she had such a sharp & mean & gossiping tongue; and now she is as quiet as a lamb!"~~

~~"Take them back, take them back,"~~

~~replied the judge, "and let them convert all the women in the town!"~~

Many churches have beautiful sanctuaries, fine choirs & professional singers, solemn rituals & ceremonies, and eloquent sermons on topics of current interest; but where are the evidences of spiritually lame men who have been healed, drunkards sobered, filthy tongues and lives cleaned up, mean & cantankerous tempers tamed & mellowed, sinner converted, and

nominal christians becoming serious about their profession of faith?

If Christianity is no longer producing such evidences, may God have mercy on us and the world.

It is only the Christianity of men & women

filled with the Holy Spirit, knowing the power of the One & Only Name, and bringing people to deliverance through it, which alone can be victorious.

The way to fill the churches is to get people out of the churches. Get the deacons, teachers, officers, and members out visiting in the homes, shops, offices, and streets witnessing for Jesus Christ, winning the lost, and inviting and bringing people into the church. They must get out of the sanctuary and into the avenues of the city and bring the gospel to bear upon the problems with which men and women are laboring daily. People will gladly come to such a church where members really know Jesus and live their faith and witness boldly and have the undeniable evidences of transformed lives and converted sinners.

~~God has highly exalted Jesus and has bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth; and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.~~

~~Phil. 2:9-10~~

~~Jesus obtained a name above all names!~~

- ~~(1) Because of his encounter with humanity~~
- ~~(2) Because of his sacrifice for humanity~~
- ~~(3) Because of his triumph over humanity~~
- ~~(4) Because he guides the destiny of humanity~~
- ~~(5) Because of his appeal to humanity~~

~~No other name can do all this.~~

A pilot came back from the war and told how he was instructed how to use a parachute but had never made a jump and used one. Then one day the time came when he was in combat, surrounded by many enemy fighter planes, when his own plane was hit and burst into flames. "Then," he said, "I knew I had to jump. I couldn't pull the cord at once, because I was surrounded by enemy planes, and I had to free fall several thousand feet, until I fell into the clouds before pulling the cord."

His friend said in amazement, "I don't see how you could do it, never having done it before." The pilot answered, "I could do it because I knew it was my only chance."

That was the mood of the early Christians. And that's the attitude of one who is desperate to find peace with God and peace of mind. Christ is your only chance. It is, like E. Stanley Jones said,

"Christ or chaos."

"There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

* Cent. Ch. Augsburg - 23 May 64 Pasadena B.C. 3/1/87
Boulevard Meth. Ch. - Bing, N.Y. - 23 Jan 66
WAC Chapel 9 Oct 77
New Haven B.C. Coldwater - 29 July 79
Gateway Bap. Ch. Oct. 5, '80
Norwood Bap. Ch. June 1982