



STUDY SPEAK FOR JESUS

Background

Peter healed a lame man and explained how this pointed to Jesus. In this passage we continue the story. We see the start of opposition from the Jewish religious leaders.

but they think it will only happen at God's final judgment. They don't think Jesus rose from the dead. They put Peter and John in prison. But more people believe in Jesus.



READ verses 5-12

Read



READ Acts 4:1-22 two or three times.

Try to summarise the story in your own words.

Verse 6: "High priest" – the most important of the Jewish religious leaders.

Verse 12: "Salvation" – rescue from God's anger at sin.

Understand



READ Acts 4:1-4

Verse 1: "Priests" – some of the Jewish religious leaders.

Verse 1: "Temple guard" – the temple police.

Verse 1: "Sadducees" – a Jewish group who were some of the religious leaders.

- How do the Jewish leaders feel about the apostles' teaching? Why?
- So what do they do?

The religious leaders of the Jews are very annoyed about what the apostles are teaching. The apostles are teaching the people that Jesus rose from the dead. Some of the leaders believe in the resurrection,

- Who is at the meeting in verses 5-6? Why do you think Luke tells us about all these people?
- How does Peter answer their question in verse 7? (See v8-12.)
- What does Peter say about salvation in verse 12?

All of the important religious leaders meet together. Peter and John could easily be afraid. But Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit. This means Peter can answer boldly. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would do this (Luke 12:11-12). Peter repeats what he said in chapter 3. The man was healed by Jesus. The leaders killed Jesus, but God raised him from the dead.

Peter quotes Psalm 118:22. This is about the king of Israel. It uses the picture of a stone that is thrown away. That stone is then put in the most important place: It becomes

the capstone, or cornerstone. The person who was rejected is now put in the highest place. That is what happened to Jesus.

This means that salvation (forgiveness of sins) is through Jesus and no one else. There is no other way to be made right with the holy God. Peter wants to talk about Jesus—not about the healing.

READ verses 13-22

Verse 13: "Unschooling" – not trained in religion.

Verse 15: "Sanhedrin" – the ruling group of religious leaders.

- How do the Jewish leaders respond to Peter and John?
- What do they decide to do?
- How does Peter answer?

The leaders are amazed at the courage of Peter and John. They cannot tell them they are wrong because the man is healed. They discuss the problem together. They can see that a miracle happened. But they do not want the message about Jesus to spread. So they command Peter and John not to speak in the name of Jesus.

Peter and John refuse. They will listen to God—not to the leaders. They must speak about what they have seen and know about Jesus. The leaders cannot do anything

because everyone knows an amazing miracle happened.

Find the main point of the passage

- What does this passage tell us about the religious leaders?
- What does this passage tell us about Jesus?
- What does this passage tell us about speaking for Jesus?

The religious leaders want to stop the message about Jesus from spreading. But Jesus is the only one who can save us. The apostles know that everyone needs to hear about Jesus.

So the main point is that we must speak about Jesus.



PLAN

Main point of the sermon

A sermon explains the passage, and applies the passage to the hearers. Look at the main point of the passage. Write what this main point will mean for your hearers.

It will be something like this: We must speak the truth about Jesus and tell people that Jesus is the only way we can be saved from our sin. We must speak even when people are against us.

Sub-points

- Read the main point again.
- Read the verses again.
- What sub-points will help you teach this passage?

The passage divides into verses 1-4 about the opposition; then verses 5-12 about Peter's reply; then verses 13-22 about the Jewish leaders' response and Peter's reply.

Think of a heading for each sub-point.

For example:

1. Expect opposition to Jesus (v1-4)
2. Speak the truth about Jesus (v5-12)
3. Obey God, not people (v13-22)

Illustrate

The main point is about speaking the truth about Jesus, even when people are against us. Give examples of people who were brave in speaking about Jesus. For example in China, Iraq and Indonesia many pastors continue to speak the truth about Jesus even when they are told they will go to prison if they don't stop.

Apply

Do not be surprised if people oppose the truth about Jesus. Do not be afraid to speak the truth. God's Spirit can help you and make you bold.

Remember to obey God, not people. That may mean speaking about Jesus even if we are told not to. Ask God to guide you about what is right to do.

We must tell people that forgiveness for sin is only found in Jesus. We must do that even when people do not agree with us. That means we must know the truth ourselves. And we must be wise and loving.

Review

Check the main point is clear and that you keep to THIS passage.



TEACH

Start

This passage is about speaking the truth about Jesus. Begin by talking about speaking for Jesus in your situation. It may be against the law of your country. People may feel afraid to speak the truth about Jesus. Use your illustration.

Explain

Expect opposition to Jesus (v1-4)

Explain the response of the religious leaders in verses 1-3. This is the start of opposition and it will get stronger. The message of Jesus tells us truth, which some people will not like. So there will be opposition.

Speak the truth about Jesus (v5-12)

Explain that perhaps Peter and John felt afraid. Show how the Holy Spirit gave them strength to speak. Peter is not afraid to speak about Jesus. He tells people what they need to know. Peter says that the leaders killed Jesus, but God raised Jesus from the dead. Peter knows for sure that Jesus is the only Saviour. Everyone should turn to trust in the name of Jesus.

Obey God, not people (v13-22)

Explain the reaction of the leaders. The leaders do not want the message about Jesus to spread. So

they command Peter and John to stop talking about Jesus. But Peter and John will obey God, not the leaders. There are times when we should disobey leaders. We must disobey them when they tell us to do something which disobeys God.

Apply

We must not be surprised if the message about Jesus brings opposition. Some people will be against those who speak the message of Jesus.

We must tell people the truth about Jesus even when they do not want us to. We must obey God, not people. That may mean speaking about Jesus even if we are told not to. Sometimes it is right to disobey our government to speak about Jesus.

Jesus is the only way to be saved. So we must keep on telling people the good news about Jesus.

End

Jesus is the only way to be saved. We must speak about him.

Pray

Pray that you and your church will be bold to speak about Jesus.