

Acts #7 (6.7.20) #20043

Acts 4:1-22

The Annoying Truth

- I. God is alive and well and in charge of human life.** The gospel is God's Good News to humanity. It is God's Word and His Voice to every human soul for all time. But, as we know, many people reject it, don't want to hear it.
- A. The Book of Acts is the account of the spread of this Good News, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria and to the whole world (Acts 1:8).
 - 1. And it did spread like wildfire.
 - B. But it is also the account of human resistance to the good news. The Lord Jesus himself was crucified by the government in Judea, the Jewish and Gentile elites of his culture. He was falsely accused of being an insurrectionist and a blasphemer. He told his disciples that the world would generally treat them no better than it treated him (Matt.10:24).
- II. Background to Acts 3-4.**
- A. Jesus died for our sins, came back from the dead, taught his disciples for 40 more days as the Resurrected Lord and then took his seat at the right hand of God the Father, the new Human/Divine Lord of the whole universe. (Matt.28:18-20)
 - B. 50 days later He poured out His Spirit on the people who trusted Him, birthing a new living organism called the Church.
 - 1. Thousands began to believe in Jesus. The Church was born (or born again).
 - C. His apostles immediately began to do the same things Jesus did, as tangible evidence that Jesus is the risen and saving Lord/Christ.
 - 1. Case in point: Acts 3-4. Peter and John heal a lame man in front of the temple (ch.3) and this causes a major ruckus among the elites of Jerusalem. (ch.4)
- III. Acts 4:1-22. The gospel (the saving Lordship of Jesus) threatens the social elites.**
- A. **The Resurrection of Jesus Annoyed them. 1-6**
 - 1. The issue is the **Resurrection** of the dead. (Jesus' and ours)
 - a) Same thing Jesus himself argued with these guys about. Matt.22:28
 - 2. **Sadducees were annoyed** because they didn't believe in resurrection at all.
 - a) They ran the Temple. Wealthy aristocracy, politically connected with Rome.
 - (1) Religious rationalists. No resurrection, no supernatural
 - (2) A vested interest in the political status quo. Which is why they were against Jesus.
 - 3. **Pharisees were annoyed** because Jesus was resurrected in the middle of time instead of at the end.
 - a) These were very influential, grass-roots, synagogue-based practitioners of the Law. Popular and respected among the common folk.
 - 4. *The resurrection of Jesus is still the controversial watershed issue that sets the gospel apart from all other religions.*
 - B. **The Gospel of Grace Offended them.7-18 (Acts 2:38).**
 - 1. **The question:** In Whose Name? It was the right question for them to ask. But they already knew the answer and didn't like it.
 - a) If Peter had said God (without the resurrected Lord Jesus) that would have been noncontroversial.
 - b) But that would have been **untrue**—*it was God only through the risen Christ Jesus.* 3:13
 - (1) *Talking about God without Jesus is not talking about God at all. Jn.5:22-24*
 - 2. **The Answer:** Jesus Christ is the Cornerstone of God's Kingdom. 8-12 **Ps. 118:22**

- a) The Spirit: Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit ... Lk 21:12-15 (1) *You will have what you need to do what God wants you to do.*
- b) The Stone: rejected by the builders.
 - (1) At first considered the wrong shape to fit the wall I am building ...
 - (2) Later we find He is the capstone/cornerstone ... 1 Peter 2:4-8 **3. The annoying good news: Only One Name.**
- a) Exclusive and available to all. No other name. Jn.14:6

C. **The Confidence of the Apostles Frustrated them. 19-22** 1. The confidence (boldness) of Peter and John.

- a) Greek: Free and Fearless Confidence. It comes from knowledge of reality.
- 2. The evidence of the healed man. (and millions healed and changed since)
 - a) *People who have been changed by Jesus are a standing witness.*
- 3. The wasted warning.
 - a) If Jesus is who he says he is, then his people will talk about him. **IV.**

Thoughts we should think about the True Gospel.

A. It is the most important thing happening in the world. (this annoys people too)

- 1. More important than our cultural traumas, reputations, our worldly success, our very lives.
 - a) Like firemen run toward the flames and soldiers run toward the sound of gunfire, we press into the kingdom priorities however we can.
- 2. Sacrifices are made regularly

B. It does not sound like good news to everybody (at least not at first).

1. Why does it not sound like good news to some people?

- a) Some are Religious: (The world is more religious today than ever)
 - (1) *If Jesus came back from the dead and is the risen Lord of the universe, that means the other religions are mistaken and this fact has eternal ramifications.*
 - (2) People don't want to hear that their traditions, philosophies, religious identities cannot save.
- b) Some are Secularist: (living life as if God and eternal life do not exist)
 - (1) *If Jesus came back from the dead and is the risen Lord of the universe, that means that God is active in the world and we are not safely ensconced in our own autonomy.*
 - (2) Atheism and Agnosticism are this way
 - (3) We will have to answer to God for our lives.
- c) Some are Moralist: (pride themselves on being good people, without "faith in God.")
 - (1) *If Jesus came back from the dead and is the risen Lord of the universe, that means that humans cannot rely on their own moralism or utopian desires for salvation.*
 - (2) Non-religious (maybe even anti-religious), but very aware of their own efforts at goodness.
 - (3) Moralism is a type of self-salvation that keeps people from the awareness that they need grace more than they need advice.
 - (4) Just needing advice keeps us large and in charge of our lives. Desperately needing grace means we are helpless and blind without Jesus Christ.

C. But it is the Power of Salvation to anybody who trusts Christ. Rom.1:16-17.

- 1. One great answer to the human condition? Yes. *This too is annoyingly true.*
- 2. A Word from God will change your destiny and your character from the inside out.
- 3. God's own Mind/Spirit enters you, justifies you based on His own successful human life in Christ, and adopts you into the Trinitarian Family as a true son or daughter. (Rom.8)

V. How to develop confidence in the Gospel

A. Know what it is. The Good News of God's work in the World

1. Jesus is the risen and saving Lord, the Cornerstone of eternal life. Psalm 118:22

a) It is a statement of fact regarding Who Jesus is. B.

Articulate it simply.

1. Jesus is the resurrected Messiah, the saving Lord. Rom.10:9-10

2. Don't let the subject migrate to other controversial issues. C. Expect it to cause some annoyance. Be patient and persistent.

1. Don't water it down. 12

D. Trust the Spirit to communicate it.

1. Peter was filled with the Spirit in order to explain the gospel effectively in this specific situation. **VI.**

What or Who is the cornerstone of your life.

A. The Eternal Cornerstone is a The Man, Christ Jesus, Lord of the Universe the of all those who come to him in repentant faith.

B. Building a life on any other basis than the gospel will fail eternally. Matt.7:24-27