

## THE ONCE AND FUTURE CHURCH

### #6: We Cannot Help Speaking

#### March 4-6, 2006

<sup>1</sup>The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. <sup>2</sup>They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. <sup>3</sup>They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. <sup>4</sup>But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand. <sup>5</sup>The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup>Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. <sup>7</sup>They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" <sup>8</sup>Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! <sup>9</sup>If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, <sup>10</sup>then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. <sup>11</sup>Jesus is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.' <sup>12</sup>Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved." <sup>13</sup>When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. <sup>14</sup>But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. <sup>15</sup>So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. <sup>16</sup>"What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. <sup>17</sup>But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name." <sup>18</sup>Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup>But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! <sup>20</sup>As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

*Acts 4:1-20 TNIV*

Introduction: Having learned already that our primary mission is to be "witnesses" to the transforming life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, what motivates us to speak boldly in Jesus' name. In the end, nothing more than that the true believe cannot help speaking about what he or she has seen and heard.

- I. They Couldn't Help Being Disturbed
  - A. Peter's sermon and the commotion surrounding the healing of the lame man drew the highest officials of the temple guard.
  - B. What disturbed the religious officials was that the Apostles were preaching about Jesus' resurrection (the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead).
  - C. Many who heard the Apostles' witness recognized the truth and became believers.
  - D. Religious law prevented a trial at night, but the most powerful religious leaders brought Peter and John before them the very next day to ask by what authority they taught.
- II. They Couldn't Help Speaking
  - A. Because Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, he could not simply let his actions speak for themselves, but had to offer a verbal witness for Jesus Christ.
  - B. Peter reiterated Jesus' death and resurrection, proclaiming him "the rejected stone," an Old Testament prophecy referenced by Jesus himself (Mark 12:10-11)

The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. The LORD has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad. *Psalm 118:22-24*
  - C. Peter was clear in stating that relationship with Jesus was the only way to salvation.
- III. They Couldn't Help Being Impressed
  - A. The religious officials had to receive the witness of the Peter and John because:
    1. The Apostles spoke courageously.
    2. Someone's life had been visibly changed (this was undeniable).
  - B. These ordinary men—without religious education—bore an extraordinary witness to the power of Jesus Christ.
- IV. They Couldn't Help Speaking
  - A. Then as now, those threatened by the Gospel had one goal in mind: "to keep this thing from spreading any further."
  - B. When the officials commanded the Apostles not to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Peter and John insisted that they must be obedient to God rather than man.
  - C. In the end, the believers witnessed because they could not help it; there was no other option.

Conclusion: We proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ because we can't help it. Because we are obedient to God and full of the Spirit, we have no other option. Courage and changed lives still speak!