

Witnesses to Christ
Studies in the Acts of the Apostles

Great Power, Great Grace, Great Fear
Lesson 4
Acts 4:5-5:11

Trinity Bible Church Sunday School
January 24, 2016

The Acts of the Apostles

- ▶ A major transition in world history – 29 years
- ▶ Not new! Acts 15:11; Galatians 3:6-9; Hebrews 11
- ▶ Definitely new!
 - Israel removed from center stage
 - The beginning of the Church age
 - The ministry of the Holy Spirit
 - The work of Christ revealed with clarity

The Acts of the Apostles

- ▶ Ascension and commissioning
- ▶ Pentecost and empowering
- ▶ Summary Sections – describing
- ▶ Confrontation and opposition

Great Power, Great Grace, Great Fear

- ▶ The Apostles on trial (4:5-22)
- ▶ The Church in prayer (4:23-31)
- ▶ The Church in action (4:32-37)
- ▶ The Church in fear (5:1-11)

The Apostles on Trial (4:5-22)

- ▶ The Sanhedrin
- ▶ Two conflicts
 - Christ v. Satan
 - Law of Moses v. the Church
- ▶ Reason for arrest: teaching the resurrection in Jesus
- ▶ A challenge to human authority – by Jesus Christ
 - 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30
 - Acts 3:19-20, 23, 26

Peter's Response (4:8-12)

- ▶ Filled with the Holy Spirit
- ▶ How was this man made well?
- ▶ The Name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene
- ▶ “. . . you crucified . . . God raised from the dead.”
- ▶ The rejected stone is the chief cornerstone
- ▶ No salvation in any other
- ▶ “They would kill Him by silence.” Lenski (1864-1936)

The Verdict (4:13-22)

- ▶ Amazement – linked to Jesus
- ▶ Reality – a noteworthy miracle
- ▶ Warning and threatening – must not teach or speak in the name of Jesus
- ▶ The supremacy of Divine Authority
- ▶ God glorified – heard message and believed (4:4, 21)

The Church in Prayer (4:23-31)

- ▶ Theology of prayer
 - “O Lord” – “despot” – supreme authority; owner and controller
 - Creator – absolute power and wisdom (Proverbs 8)
- ▶ The comfort of scripture (Ps 2:1-2)
 - David spoke by the Holy Spirit – absolute authority
 - An assault upon God
 - The reversal theme (D.A.Carson). See: 2:23-24; 3:13-18; 4:10
- ▶ The request
 - Not a request for personal protection or deliverance
 - Boldness to speak the Word of God
- ▶ An answer
 - Physical evidence of the Holy Spirit
 - Speaking the Word of God with boldness

The Church in Action (4:32-37)

- ▶ Summary descriptions of the Church in Acts (1:14; 2:42-47; 4:32-35; 5:12-16; 6:7; 9:31; 12:24-25; 19:18-20)
- ▶ The main characteristics of the Christian community
 - Unity of heart and soul – the prayer of Christ
 - Love for one another – care for physical needs
 - Faithfulness to the Truth – giving testimony to the resurrection
 - Great grace upon all – the strength of God (2 Cor 12:7-10)

The Church in Fear (5:1-11)

- ▶ The example of Barnabas (4:36-37)
- ▶ The deception of Ananias and Sapphira
- ▶ Compare with “kings” and Sanhedrin
- ▶ Great fear
 - The enemy without v. the enemy within
 - The great work of the Church is sanctification – Eph 4:11-16; John 17:17
 - Job 28:28 “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.” Wrath here is a lesson for the Church
- ▶ A lesson for the Church
 - Proverbs 14:26 – in the fear of the Lord, there is strong confidence
 - Acts 9:31 – the character of the church
 - Isaiah 11:1-5 – a word used about Christ – Fear of the Lord

Lessons for the Church

- ▶ Great power – God’s power at work – only seen by faith
- ▶ Great grace – God’s power to transform
- ▶ Great fear – “worship the LORD with reverence” (Ps 2:11)