

Sunday 22nd April 2018 In the name of Jesus
Acts 4:5-12 1 John 3:16- 24 John 10:11-18

Intro

Start of the account we heard from Acts 4 was in chapter 3

Peter & John were going to the temple TO PRAY

Man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate - Beautiful - to beg from those going into the temple courts

Ques - would people think to come to the church car park to beg because they knew they would receive?!

As the man asked for the money Peter & John eyeballed him and said they had no money but they would give what they had

They spoke the name of Jesus over him and commanded him to walk

Que - the song that many of may have learnt as a child...

*Peter and John went to pray;
they met a lame man on the way.
He asked for alms and held out his palms,
and this is what Peter did say:*

*"Silver and gold have I none,
but what I have I give to you.
In the name of Jesus Christ
of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"*

*He went walking and leaping and praising God,
walking and leaping and praising God.
"In the name of Jesus Christ
of Nazareth, rise up and walk."*

In last weeks reading the 'people' (crowds of locals) came running, **astonished and surprised** to see what had happened

Then we pick up this weeks reading where the priests, captain of the temple guard and the sadducees came up **greatly disturbed**, seized Peter & John and had them put in jail
Interesting the different responses to the same event by the different groups of people!

Why were they greatly disturbed?

Because the apostles were teaching and proclaiming Jesus and in 4:4 we read that about 5000 men now believed!

The group of people listed at the start of the reading were members of the Jewish Council, those that had condemned Jesus to death (Luke 22:66)

They were the wealthy, intellectual and powerful men of Jerusalem

They wanted to know by what POWER or NAME Peter and John had done this life changing act

Peter, who we are told was filled by the Holy Spirit, replied very clearly that it was not in their own power but, as the words of that children song reminded us, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth

Aside:

Name of Jesus has power! Don't mis-use it

One of 10 commandments is not to use the Lord's name in vain (blaspheme)
(Rwanda? Radio/TV? Sally on phone?)

Peter made it clear to those who were questioning him, as he did to the crowd in last weeks reading, that it is in the name of Jesus that the lame man had been healed
And that it is in Jesus name and through Jesus ONLY that we can receive salvation
'There is salvation in no-one else' Acts 4:12

Jesus gave everything for us. We are in the season of Easter when we celebrate that He laid down His life for us

Jesus told us that He would do this In John 10:11 from this mornings Gospel reading
John the apostle records Jesus saying to the Pharisees "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

In John's letter he then challenges us to do the same
'the son of God laid down his life for us - and we ought to lay down our lives for one another' 1John 3:16

John calls us to not just belief but action also
Peter & John were witnesses to Jesus teaching, life, death and resurrection
But their belief did not stop there
They put what they knew and believed into action

John says in vs 23 of his letter
'And this is his (God's) commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded'
Believe AND love which involves action

Peter and John knew the potential risk of behaving, acting, continuing The Ways of Jesus but did it anyway, out of love, believing in the power and hope of The One they had been called to follow
They put the truth they knew into action and shared the love and power of Jesus with the lame man

Jesus lay down His life for us, His sheep
Salvation; life everlasting, relationship with our God and Lord, life and life in all its fullness comes ONLY THROUGH JESUS
No-one else has done for us and the world what Jesus did that first Good Friday and Easter morning

Do we KNOW and BELIEVE that?

Then let us live that out in love through ACTION so that others may know this and have their lives transformed by Jesus too

The lame man, who had been begging at Gate Beautiful leading into the temple courts, had his life turned around through the action of Peter & John, through the power of the name of Jesus

May we too share in that action as we love others with the love of Christ in us

Story to end with - Chinook story from Spring Harvest

Some years ago SAS were sent into Sierra Leone to save a group of civilians who had been taken hostage there

When they got into the room where they were being held the civilians were understandably shocked and frightened

One of the marines said

“LISTEN TO ME! Get up and follow me”

They got up and followed them outside to where the Chinook helicopter was waiting for them (2 blades take off at an angle)

The SAS guys got the civilians into the helicopter

The SAS climbed in one after as the helicopter was preparing to take off at an angle

The last Marine was shot by the rebels

He was hauled in to the helicopter and laid down at the upper end, dead from his gun shot wounds
As the helicopter took off, his blood ran down to the lower end where the civilians were sitting and formed a ring round them

They KNEW the cost of their freedom!!!

May we always remember the price paid for our salvation.