

A summary of Acts 4:1-14

- 1. What are the prerequisites to preach the gospel? (Acts 4:8,10,12).** Why were about 3000 and 5000 people saved in Acts 2:41 and 4:4? In chapter 1, we see that 120 some disciples prayed for ten days, in one accord (1:13-14). The Bible does not say what they were praying, but as we read the first few chapters, we see a chain of events that unfold, based on corporate prayer. After the ten day prayer in chapter 1, the Spirit was poured out in chapter 2 and the gospel was preached, resulting in the salvation of many. The end of chapter 2 gives us a window into the dynamic church life in Jerusalem, consisting, among other things, of corporate prayers (2:42). Chapter 3 begins with Peter and John going to the temple to pray, followed immediately by the restoration of the lame man and another preaching of the gospel by Peter. Prayer and the gospel seem to go hand in hand. Thus, we may submit that the 120 disciples in chapter 1 were praying for the preaching of the gospel. Without prayer, there cannot be any preaching of the gospel. Then, when they preached the gospel, it was not because of their speaking but because of the divine power. We see this in Luke 9:1 and 10:1-2, when the Lord sent out His disciples to preach the gospel and gave them power (Greek word *dunamis*). This is not the disciples' power but the power of Jesus' death and resurrection (Philippians 3:10). Their prayer and their speaking were in the name of Jesus, in the power of His death and resurrection, and they were thus filled with the Holy Spirit. What about us? Do we want to preach the gospel? Maybe we go out Sunday afternoon to distribute gospel tracts and talk to people. Do we join the corporate prayers of the church? Are we filled in Spirit? Are we one with the Lord Himself (that is, in His name)? We may want to see people saved. Are we saved first? How can we be saved? Through prayer. Praying with the brothers and sisters will cause us to deny ourselves, not to depend on ourselves, but to depend on the Lord Himself. This is our salvation. Then, we may be qualified to preach the gospel to others so they may be saved. But even their salvation is entirely because of the power, the name and the person of Jesus, and not our ability.
- 2. What was the environment in which the apostles preached the gospel, and what may be our environment today? (Acts 4:1-6).** When Peter and John preached the gospel in chapter 4, the religious people objected. What about now? Why do we not preach the gospel that often? Often, someone may object, but not deliberately intending to oppose us. On the contrary, the intentions may be legitimate and valid. For example, we may want to go out to distribute gospel tracts on Sunday afternoon. However, some of our friends may invite us to go out with them. Or our family may want us to stay with them and keep them company. Some may feel that we have already spent four plus hours during the Sunday morning gathering, and it is now time to be home with the family! These are legitimate reasons and cannot be faulted. Yet they may constitute obstacles to our preaching of the gospel. Why do we not go out more often to preach the gospel? Today, in the environment in which we live, there may not be much public opposition from the outside. Most of the opposition may come from our closest friends and relatives. Eventually, we may end up not preaching the gospel at all because there never seems to be a good time to do so.
- 3. How may we overcome to preach the gospel and follow the Lord in such an environment (Acts 4:14).** When the high priests saw the healed man standing next to Peter and John, they had nothing further to say in opposition. The healed man was a living witness beside the two apostles. We need such a witness and we even need to be such a witness. Many "object" that they have an exam on Monday morning, and so they cannot come to the Sunday morning gathering. This is an absolutely valid objection. Yet if they do not come, there is no blessing to the church. However, if they see a witness or witnesses standing next to us, they may not have any more objections. For example, we have brothers and sisters who are witnesses in Montreal. During their high school and college years, they had many exams on Monday and Tuesday, yet they did not miss a Sunday morning gathering, nor were their grades affected. This is to be a witness or a testimony. However, this should never become a law or a regulation. When we fellowship with brothers and sisters or family and friends who may object to the Lord's leading and blessing, we must be very gentle and understanding. It is not easy to raise up witnesses, nor is it easy to become one.
- 4. We have been saved in order to build up the church, the Body of Christ (Acts 4:11).** Why have we been saved? Why do we pray? Why do we preach the gospel? In order to build up the church and the churches (the Body of Christ). Each one of us a builder (v.11). Jesus Christ is the foundation and the cornerstone. Our salvation is not just so we can have eternal life, but it is in order that the testimony of the church may be visible to the whole world. Building up involves the growth in life of the brothers and sisters, resulting in the raising up of pillars that can spread the testimony of the church to many cities on the earth.