

Movement Gains Traction
Week 6: It's slippery out there

This is the final week of this series. We will pick back up with Acts after advent.

Review the healing from chapter 3.

- Peter and John on the way to the temple at prayer time
- Lame man sitting at the Gate Beautiful
- But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" 3:6
- He starts running and jumping and praising God which draws a crowd.

Peter's response in the temple courts...

- Why are you amazed?
- **It wasn't from us**, but from the God you worship here who sent Jesus.
- You chose a murderer over the author of life. You are **guilty**.
- Repent of your sins.
- It is this **Jesus who will restore everything** that God spoke to you in the prophets.

- His last statement of chapter 3..."God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

So we have this wild scene at the temple, which is God's home on earth. It, literally, for these Jews was the place where **heaven and earth meets**. It's where God's presence lives. **It's here that this all happens and at the busiest time of day.**

Let's read what happens next.

And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ² greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴ But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

Of the religious leaders, there were Pharisees and Sadducees. **The Sadducees** didn't believe in the resurrection, not just Jesus, but the faithful being resurrected before entering eternity in heaven.

⁵ On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, ⁶ with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "**By what power or by what name did you do this?**" ⁸ Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, said to them, "Rulers of the people and

elders, ⁹ if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰ let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ (Not his last name but, "the Christ" or messiah, promised king and deliverer) of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. ¹¹ This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, **the builders**, which has become the cornerstone. ¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. Acts 4:1-13

Tell the rest of the story 14-21...

- **They try to decide what to do with these men.**
We can't deny that a sign has been done here and many have seen it and more will see this man walking around.
- **Since we cannot deny it happened, we will try to package it differently.** "Ok, you can go, but you can't give Jesus credit for healing him."
- Peter and John say thank you, but no. We will obey God over you.

Since this all started **after Jesus gave them the Great Commission** and the **day of Pentecost** when they received power and Holy Spirit, **this movement has been gaining**

traction. That has to happen early or it will fizzle out. They have been **adding to that original 3000** daily of people who have believed and being baptized. **But to this point the culture around them** hasn't really pushed back much. As you can see, that **honeymoon is over.** It's back to the real world where not everyone is cheering for you.

This is the point of this new movement find themselves. **Gaining traction means handling the first slippery spot.**

Remember way back in chapter 2?

43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common... And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Hannah walking into church at Hillside in Springfield spinning in her dress and no one notices. She was the first child born to a pastor in years at Columbus West, therefore she was the darling of our church. She was used to being gushed over. But here she didn't have anyone running over to see her.

There was a **college professor** who said that she had to start keeping tissue in her office because students were so emotional when she told them that their work wasn't good enough.

It's that moment when not everyone around you thinks that you're wonderful. It's the first slippery spot.

Boxer Mike Tyson quote...“Everybody has a plan until you get punched in the face.”

The thing about slippery spots is that they cause us to doubt what we have previously seen and experienced. We forget how Jesus did things. That's when we have to remember. Remember that God uses ordinary people.

Let's look again at verse 13. **Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. Acts 4:13**

- **“Uneducated”**...unschooled could mean illiterate but better translated.
- **“Common”**...ordinary “a person who has not acquired systematic information or expertise in some field of knowledge or activity” **layman** or **amateur**. 153

They recognized that these men were uneducated and common and yet there were speaking with the kind of authority that Jesus spoke with.

By the way, they said the same things about their master, Jesus. **The people were surprised when they heard him. “How does he know so much when he hasn't been trained?” they asked. John 7:15 NLT**

“Trained” is the same as the word “uneducated” in 4:13. Their surprise at Peter and John are the same surprise they had here at Jesus’ teaching.

Peter and John knew scripture, particularly that which is a part of the gospel of Jesus; add to that the filling of the spirit and you get boldness and speaking with authority.

Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world’s eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. ²⁷ Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. 1 Corinthians 1:26-27

Remember when God called you, he didn’t need you to be wise, powerful, or wealthy. His power, The Holy Spirit, would give you all the resources you need. And why would he use regular people like you? Because his power will be visible.

So when you are at a slippery spot, when there is resistance, doubt, failure, first remember that God used and still uses regular people.

The next part is really hard for Americans. It seems to go against what much of what has been preached and promoted. **Suffering comes with following Jesus.**

It’s a package deal. The wealth and prosperity gospel preaching is simply not biblical because it ignores that Jesus suffered and was rejected. Why would we escape

all of that? **Do we expect everyone to cheer us when we follow Jesus?** If so that's not what you signed on for. **Actually, the life that is full that Jesus promised is only possible through suffering.**

Not simply because you are human, but because you are a Christ follower.

- **Paul connects suffering with both the spirit filled life and the justified life.** Romans 5:3-5 & 8:17-39

³ We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us **develop endurance.** ⁴ And endurance **develops strength of character,** and character strengthens our **confident hope of salvation.** ⁵ And this hope **will not lead to disappointment.** For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the **Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.** Romans 5:3-5

The end result of problems and trials is hope, not disappointment, and being filled with love.

As Americans, we tend to view **God's power** when he takes away a problem, the illness, and the loss, and he absolutely can. **But there are more times than not it is that he wants to walk through this with us in order to transform our lives into something that more closely resembles Jesus.**

I recently jumped on a website that tracks persecution of Christians around the world. It is called **opendoorusa.org.**

When the slipperier spot came for these people, they had to understand that this was a part of choosing Jesus and that he would be glorified through it. And it's no different for you and me.

When this new movement hit the first slippery spot where things weren't going their way they had to **remember that God still wanted to use regular people like them and that suffering was a part of choosing to follow Christ.** But most importantly, they had to know who to call out to in this crucial time. **There's only one name to call out.**

Let's read again one of the most significant verses in the bible. **Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. ¹¹ This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:10-12**

Jesus is uniquely qualified to be the first name that we call out when we are in trouble.

He is the only way...

- **To becoming the person I was created to be.**
- **To eternal life.**

- To peace.
- To solving my sin addiction.

There is only one name or way.

There is no other name that we must call out if we want to be saved.

Have you done this? Have you called out, knowing that you need to be rescued and there's only one name that will work?

If his is the only name to call out to be saved, then his should be the only name we call out when we are slipping, when things are hard, when we are being persecuted.

Is it arrogance to say this in reference to other religions? 166

"To accept the gospel is to admit that we cannot help ourselves and that Christ alone can help us. In other words, to accept the gospel we must rid ourselves of arrogance. When we find this salvation, we are filled with gratitude to God for what he has done. Arrogance focuses on oneself while gratitude focuses on someone else. We dare not say that we are better than anyone else, for we know that we do not deserve salvation. But we dare to say that Jesus is the only way because we know that he can perform the impossible task of saving unworthy person like us." 166

So what happened next for this movement that is experiencing the first resistance? Two of their leaders have been arrested. They aren't the darlings of Jerusalem anymore. The people in power have them in the crosshairs.

**And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.
Acts 4:29-31**

The place was shaken again, even in the midst of suffering and persecution. Do you believe that the place can only get shaken when things are going well?

They are even stronger after this first slippery spot where things could have gone sideways.

Remember that God uses regular people...suffering is a part of following Him...there is no other name to call out.

What is God saying to you today? How do you need to be obedient to what he is saying, how can you align your life with what he is saying?

Steps of Obedience

Affirm His Name daily...Acts 4:10-12

If this name is so powerful, then let's start using it straight from God's Word. Let's challenge one another to read this verse daily, either have it the last thing you put in your mind before sleeping or the first thing in the morning.

Let's practice saying this together this morning.

let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. ¹¹ This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:10-12

If the power of his name is in front of us as we go out into each day, maybe we will be more likely to have his name to be the first we cry out when resistance comes.

Confess my tendency to call out other names.

Have you called out the name of your **parents**...your **spouse**...the hope of what your **kids** could become...**your own name** because you can save yourself...

Have you slid off the path because things got tough, there was resistance or maybe you just weren't getting the cheers that you thought were a part of

following Jesus? Today is the day, start getting some traction.

I want us to continue gaining traction in becoming a disciple making church. We believe God is calling us to be a church of disciples who make disciples to the third and fourth generation, not a church that has programs that we hope will, by default, make disciples. I was at the National Disciple Makers Forum in Nashville. I felt like this is a very important year in our transition. I want to ask for 10 people who will this week fast and pray for God to direct us in these next steps.