New Hope Global Sermon The power of Jesus’ Name 4 25 21

**Introduction:**

When something is done in someone’s name, it implies that it was done in his or her power – with his or her authority and permission commissioning. It is a power invested in one who will faithfully represent the interests, goals, intents and purposes of another person or country or firm. And so Jesus commissioned his disciples to carry on His work after He ascended by giving them His power through the Holy Spirit. He calls us to be His ambassadors, representing Him in the world and authorized to speak and act in His name.

**In His name**

And that phrase “in His name” is a key phrase that is repeated eight times in Peter’s explanation of the healing of the lame beggar in Acts 3 and 4. In those three simple words Peter acknowledged how the lame man was healed, why he was healed, where the disciples’ authority came from to do such a healing, why the disciples chose to disobey the mandate of the religious rulers to no longer speak or teach about Jesus, and how miraculous signs and wonders would continue to happen as evidence of Christ’s reigning authority as Lord and Savior of the world.

Peter and John were both unlearned, uneducated fishermen so their audacity, wisdom and evident power to represent Jesus and heal and preach in His name confounded the religious rulers. Acts 4:13 says the rulers were “astonished.” But multitudes witnessed the miracle and thousands more believed when Peter preached to the crowds who flocked to see and hear what had happened to their resident lame beggar. As a result, at this point in the story, the rulers could only threaten Peter and John but could neither deny nor falsify the miracle that Jesus’ followers had just performed.

“In His name.“

Hear one of the passages where Peter uses this phrase with great effectiveness. This is his answer when he and John are questioned by the very rulers who had sanctioned Jesus’ death and had the power to kill Jesus’ disciples as well. Acts 4:9-12:

Are we being put on trial today for doing an act of kindness by healing a frail, crippled man? Well then, 10you and everyone else in Israel should know that it is by the power of the name of Jesus that the crippled man stands here today completely healed! You crucified Jesus Christ of Nazareth,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+4%3A9-12&version=TPT#fen-TPT-8380a)] but God raised him from the dead. 11This Jesus is ‘the stone that you, the builders, have rejected, and now he has become the cornerstone!’[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+4%3A9-12&version=TPT#fen-TPT-8381b)] 12There is no one else[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+4%3A9-12&version=TPT#fen-TPT-8382c)] who has the power to save us, for there is only one name to whom God has given authority by which we must experience salvation:[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+4%3A9-12&version=TPT#fen-TPT-8382d)] *the name of Jesus*.” Passion.

Here’s how the Message translates this same passage:

8-12With that, Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, let loose: “Rulers and leaders of the people, if we have been brought to trial today for helping a sick man, put under investigation regarding this healing, I’ll be completely frank with you—we have nothing to hide. By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the One you killed on a cross, the One God raised from the dead, by means of his name this man stands before you healthy and whole. Jesus is ‘the stone you masons threw out, which is now the cornerstone.’ Salvation comes no other way; no other name has been or will be given to us by which we can be saved, only this one.”

v. 10: “by the power of the name of Jesus this crippled man stands here today completely healed!”

v. 12 “only one name to whom God has given authority by which we must experience salvation” – “no other name has been or will be given to us by which we can be saved, only this one.”

Verse 8 of chapter 4 starts Peter’s defense-turned-offense with: “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit.” That’s the key to how Peter was able to speak these powerful words and perform a powerful miracle on a man who had been lame from birth for over 40 years and was well know by all who came to the temple for worship.”Filled with the Holy Spirit.” Christians call this the anointing of God and it is the intention of God for all Christ’s followers. This is why Paul could urge the Ephesians Christians not to be “drunk with wine but be filled continuously with the Holy Spirit.” 5:18. The Passion translation adds this footnote explanation to being filled: “Be inebriated in the Spirit’s fullness.” Interesting understanding of the Greek meaning! If any of you have ever been drunk or witnessed others who are “inebriated” you know that they have given up all their control and are pretty totally under the influence of the alcohol in their system. It is the very reason why people fear to give God that control – because they don’t want to lose their own control over their lives and their choices and their actions. But when we are filled with the Spirit, this is the very time when the very best things God has planned can be realized in and through us! This is application one from the text. There’s power in the name of Jesus for those who are filled with the Spirit.

**The Wedding of Attending to Human Need and Proclamation of the Truth**

But there are two other applications Ajith Fernando stresses. Ajith, the Asian wise leader who has a powerful global ministry also wrote the *NIV Application Commentary on Acts*. I listen to Ajith because of his integrity, his excellent cross-cultural experience and understanding, his powerful work in his home country of Sri Lanka in the midst of the civil war that has torn the country apart for decades. and the honesty and depth of his teaching and writing ministry. (His book *Jesus Driven Ministry* is one of the most practical and powerful books on discipleship on the market today!)

Ajith emphasizes the importance of holistic ministry. He says:

The ministry of Peter and John, along with Paul and Stephen, exercised a threefold ministry of apologetics, evangelistic preaching and healing. Often today different churches major on different aspects of the evangelistic challenge. Some are strong on miracles and weak on persuasion through the truth of Christianity. Others are excellent on theology and apologetics but weak on praying for the needs of non-Christians and presenting the miraculous power of God as an attractive feature of the gospel. Would that there were more scholars in the church who also exercised some of these sign gifts. This would help avoid the unhealthy extremes of arid and dull scholarship on the one hand, and fiery, uncontrolled sign-mania on the other. . .It is said that Thomas Aquinas (1225-1275) once called on Pope Innocent II when the latter was counting out a large sum of money. The Pope remarked, ‘You see, Thomas, the church can no longer say, ‘Silver and gold have I none.’ Aquinas replied, ‘True, holy father, but neither can she now say, ‘Rise up and walk.’ (Fernando, Acts Commentary, p.p.147, 149).

When the church is large and is supported by material wealth, it is still unbalanced in God’s eyes if the miraculous signs and testimonies to God’s work are lacking.

**Testimony and Evangelism**

But testimonies do not always mean proclamation of the gospel. Ajith also makes a very helpful distinction between testimony and evangelism that is particularly relevant to our current situation at New Hope Global Fellowship:

We must always distinguish between testimony and evangelism. Testimony is a powerful tool in evangelism. The healing of the cripple helped the witness of Peter and John by being evidence of what God had done. . . It is difficult to argue against (v. 14, 16), and it opens doors for the proclamation of the gospel. But testimony is not the gospel. The gospel primarily has to do with what Jesus did in history for the world and how it can impact us today. Note that people of other faiths may be able to have experiences similar to ours, but in no other faith do we find Christ. Roy Clements says, ‘Testimony is telling people what Jesus has done for me in my personal experience, but evangelism is telling people what Jesus has done for the world in history.” (Fernando, Acts, Ibid, p. 162).

This past year at our zoom gatherings of New Hope Global we have been greatly encouraged by the testimonies of one another, as we share what God is doing in and through their lives. But the piece we haven’t emphasized is how, when we tell these stories to others outside the church, we combine our testimonies with the larger message of who Jesus is and what He has done as the Author of Salvation for the whole world. A needed point of balance to remember.

In conclusion, the Acts story of Peter and John and the healing of the lame beggar has three very important lessons for our lives today. First, the power of Jesus’ name and what it means to speak and act with His authority and kingdom agenda. Note, though, that in applying this lesson, that authority was given to Peter and John and the other disciples because “they had been with Jesus.” Nothing can short circuit that way to speak and act in His Name. Second, we need to be holistic in our witness so we are combining deeds of kindness done in Jesus’ name and power with clear explanation of the salvation Jesus has made available for all who turn to Him. And, finally, let’s be more intentional to combine our testimonies with that full proclamation of the gospel. In our church the latter is understood and a given. But when we share our stories outside the church with those who have not accepted Christ as the Author of life, let’s be sure to put those testimonies in the larger context of what Jesus’s death, resurrection and ascension can accomplish in their lives and communities and nations throughout the world when people turn to Him as Savior and Lord.

In His Name and for His sake. Amen. Dr. Mary Lou Codman-Wilson 4 25 21

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