

I. Introduction

- A. *"Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)*
 - B. I grew up in a club where kids memorized Bible verses. That club is called Awana. One of the first Bible verse I ever memorized was this one. I was eight. This verse has stuck with me ever since.
 - C. In our summer series, we are listening to God here in this Book of the Bible called Acts. I'm calling this series Our Turn because the work of God was begun in Bible days, and it's our turn to keep in going.
 - D. Here's my title today. From our verse today, I invite you to think with me on this topic:
 1. **Our Turn to Stand for Unpopular Truths**
 - E. The words of our verse were spoken by the Apostle Peter. He had just healed a man in the name of Jesus Christ. Word spread like wildfire. The whole town was soon in an uproar. This included the authorities; they were in an uproar too, and... they were not only political authorities; they were religious authorities too. They demanded to know by what authority Peter and John healed this man.
 - F. Peter looks at them in stunned disbelief. Who are you idiots? Who are you?
 - G. Instead of rejoicing with this man who has struggled with disability since he was born, instead of being happy for him, they're angry.
 1. These enemies of Jesus could not deny the miracle. The whole town saw it. They could not deny the miracle.
 2. But they could not *accept* the miracle either. They could not allow themselves to trace out its implications. They would not let themselves follow out that if this man was healed in the name of Jesus, then there might be other things possible in the name of Jesus, like, say, forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation. And if that were the case, everything that stood for would crumble. So no, they could not accept the miracle either.
 3. This is the pickle they're in, and so is today's culture too. They could not deny the truth. They could not accept the truth.
 4. Anyone who will not be guided by plain facts will always be perplexed and confused as to what to do. They create their own confusion. They do it on purpose.
 5. And the only way out is to invent a lie. Actually, an absurd lie. They command the apostles not to speak in the name of Jesus.
 - a) *"So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus." (Acts 4:18)*
 6. **If you can't deny the truth. And if you can't accept the truth. Then all that's left is to silence the truth.**
 - a) Welcome to America, the decayed and deceived part of America, where truth is cancelled so that absurdity can reign.
 7. Almost a hundred years ago, a Scottish preacher named Alexander MacLaren commented on this Scripture. He wrote...
 - a) **"Logic after all is stronger than authority; and if the representatives of authority commit themselves to absurdity, they give the game into the hands of the rebels [the Christians]."**
 - H. We live in a time when Christians are the rebels. Just like the early church.
 1. I'm good with that. If speaking unpopular truth makes us rebels, let's be rebels!
 - I. It is always the last resort of weakness to try to silence the free declaration of obvious facts.
 - J. To say in one breath, "We cannot deny it" and "You cannot talk about it" is...
 1. ...futile, because truth keeps coming back at you,
 2. ...absurd, because you can't break God's truth, you can only break yourself against God's truth, and we are witnessing a culture where souls are fractured and fragmented and frightened because they have battered themselves against truth.
 3. ...violent, because if the truth gets out, it brings the whole demonic house of cards crashing down on itself... and the powers that be will never allow it to happen.
 - K. So the authorities say, we can't deny it, but you cannot speak about it.
 - L. And the Christians say, "Whatever the cost, we plan to obey God rather than you. Have a nice day."
 1. It's our turn to stand for unpopular truths.
 2. And notice, they weren't jerks about it. They were calm. They were direct. They didn't insult. Look, here's the truth. If you don't like it, your argument isn't with us, it's with God.
 - M. Peter answers...
- II. *"If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well," (Acts 4:9)*
- A. He's saying, do you people hear yourselves? You are mad at us for healing this man because you didn't like how we did it. What is wrong with you?
 1. We want to make people whole, and you hate us for that?
 2. We want to protect the vulnerable and weak, and you hate us for that?
 3. We want to lead people to eternal life, and you hate us for that?
 4. We want to comfort broken hearts, and you hate us for that?
 5. We want to bring people to a place of love, joy, peace, patience, meekness, goodness, gentleness, and self control, and you hate us for that?
 6. We want to break the power of addictions and heal the pain of dysfunctions and restore the losses of sin... We want to encourage purity and support marriages and stand up for families and teach people to read and think... and you hate us for that?
 7. We want to help the hungry, homeless, alone, and afraid find new life and wholeness in Jesus Christ, and you want to hate us, marginalize us, cancel us, and shut us up?
 - a) Can you hear yourselves? Do you realize what you sound like?
 8. Just know this... we ought to obey God rather than you... and we'll just keep doing our thing...

- a) Because it's our turn to stand up for unpopular truths. In the workplace, the market place, the campus, the sports team, the workshop, the playground, bus route the church, and wherever else God gives us a voice.
- B. Peter continues...
- III. *"let it be known to you all, 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 stands here before you whole." (Acts 4:10)*
- A. There's a lot here. But this man was made whole by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. They all knew who Jesus was. They had heard about him.
- B. In fact, these very people who are now so upset at a man's healing... these very people are responsible for crucifying Jesus. Peter takes a giant spotlight and shines it directly on their guilt. You crucified him. You did that. You messed up royally.
- C. But God is bigger than our mess ups... so Peter says... God raised him from the dead. He's saying...
1. You better think long and hard because you're on the wrong side of this equation.
 - a) If you doubt that, look at the resurrection. And... If you doubt that, look at this man standing here whole.
- D. We are here today, all together, to proclaim a living Savior! He is alive.
- E. **We serve a living Savior.**
- F. The same Jesus whose dusty sandals tramped the hills and valleys of Palestine so long ago, that very person sits today exalted on the throne of God. There is no one like him. There is no one beside him.
1. He offers redemption. He offers remission of sin. He offers regeneration.
- G. No one but such a Savior as this could have ever saved even one sinner.
- H. Peter said, by Him this man stands before you whole.
- I. Then he directed their attention to a passage in Psalm 118:22. This was a prophecy of Jesus a millennium before he ever lived.
- J. Jesus had actually quoted this verse as a prophecy about himself before he went to the Cross.
- IV. *"This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'" (Acts 4:11)*
- A. I'm quoting from a preacher and a scholar almost a hundred years ago.
1. "The Jews had their own explanation of this verse. It is only a legend, but it is very illuminative. The story goes that when the temple of Solomon was in the course of construction all the stones sent up from the quarry below were practically of the same size and shape.
 2. "One day a stone was found different from all the rest, and the builders said, "There is no place for this stone. There must be a mistake." So they rolled it to the edge of the cliff and tumbled it down into the valley of Kedron below the temple area.
 3. "As the years went on (Solomon's temple was seven years in building) they were finally ready for the chief cornerstone; so they sent down the order for it. They were told "You must have it there; we sent it to you long ago." Their search proved fruitless, until an old workman said, "I remember now. There was a stone different from the rest and we thought there was no place for it and tumbled it down to the valley below."
 4. "So, the builders went down to the valley of Kedron and there they found the stone, now covered by lichens and debris-the very stone they had rejected. So they had to hoist it to the top of the cliff, then back to the platform and put it into place. It fit perfectly. The stone the builders rejected had become the headstone of the corner." (Harry Ironside on Acts)
- B. Every listener to Peter that day knew that story. He knew what Peter meant.
- C. Whatever God is doing, whatever God is building, whatever God is accomplishing is represented by that temple.
1. **Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone of the edifice of eternal salvation.**
- D. And the one thing that makes it work and holds it all together is that chief cornerstone.
- E. They all knew it.
1. And Peter stands before them, points to Jesus Christ, and says, he's the stone that was rejected — you crucified him.
 - a) Why did they reject him?
 - (1) Because he shattered their self-made worldview, so they rejected him. They tried to silence him. But he wouldn't be silenced, so they tried to permanently silence him.
 2. And then Peter says the stone that was rejected has now become the chief cornerstone because, your hatred, and your scoffing and mocking cannot overwhelm the determined plan of God. God raised him from the dead.
 3. And just as this formerly disabled man stands today physically whole, so you and me and everybody can stand spiritually whole before God. It just needs a power from outside ourselves to do it. And that outside power is this very same Jesus Christ.
- F. So now Peter drives it home:
- V. *"Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)*
- A. When Peter heals the disabled man, the enemies of the gospel stand Peter before their religious court, and they say, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" (Acts 4:7).
- B. Peter says the name is Jesus, and the power is his. There is no other name. There is no other power.
- C. It is Christ or nothing, Christ or judgment, Christ or Hell; no other way to be saved except through Christ.
- D. I wish I could shout that loudly enough to be heard from one end of the earth to the other! None but Christ; God's only Savior! His precious atoning blood is the only remedy for sin, redemption from brokenness, rescue from hell, reversal of death, and reconciliation with God.
1. Confucius says, I know a way. Buddha says, I show a way. Mohammed says, I make a way. But Jesus says, I AM the way.
 2. Science says, I know a truth. Atheism says, I show a truth. Postmodernism says, I make the truth. But Jesus says, I AM the truth.
 3. The world says, I know a life. The devil says, I'll show a life. The flesh says, I'll make a life. But Jesus says, I AM the life.
 - (1) No one comes to the father but through me, says Jesus. No other name by which we must be saved, says Peter. No other foundation can anyone lay, says Paul. I am the Lord, there is no other, says God.

- E. When Peter said it, it was massively unpopular. Roman society was highly pluralistic.
 - 1. The Romans had their gods, and they worked for the Romans.
 - 2. The Egyptians had their gods and they worked for the Egyptians.
 - 3. The Jews have their God, and he works for the Jews.
 - 4. And here come the Christians to say, You're all wrong, and your gods aren't gods.
 - 5. Of all the unpopular truths that we can stand for, this is the one that wins the Unpopularity Trophy.
 - 6. There are two opposing views.
 - a) **Universalism... all roads lead to god [ultimate reality]**
 - b) **Particularism (Exclusivism)... Only those who come to God through Jesus Christ, by name, can be saved.**
- F. In his classic study of the history of evangelism, Michael Green examined the earliest generations of the church. He wanted to know what inspired such a radical devotion to spread the fame of Jesus. Green concluded:
 - 1. *"On whether men declare themselves for [Jesus] or against Him depends their eternal destiny. Entry into the kingdom of God depends upon relationship with [Jesus]. Always we meet this religious dualism. It is one of the most objectionable elements in the gospel to modern man. No doubt it was to men of the first century. The scandal of Christ's particularity has always been the supreme obstacle to Christian commitment. But those early Christians believed implicitly that Jesus was the only hope for the world, the only way to God for the human race."* [Evangelism in the Early Church, p. 23]
- G. The earliest followers of Jesus got the message. They stuck out as particularists in a pluralist world. Their neighbors thought they were nuts. But it didn't matter. They took Jesus at his word, and turned the world upside down.

VI. Only One Way

- A. I have spoken many times about the exclusivity of salvation. The gospel of Jesus Christ excludes every other approach to God. There is no other name by which we must be saved.
- B. And we must be saved. It is not optional. It is a life or death necessity.
- C. So many times I come to this topic and I feel a need to defend it. Make sense of it. Soften the harshness of it. Like I said, I've taught on that a lot.
- D. Today, I just want to say two things about the exclusiveness of salvation.
 - 1. **Our faith is informed by biblical revelation, not human opinion.**
 - a) The way of salvation is not up for a vote. It doesn't matter if we like it or don't like it.
 - b) If the Bible says it, that settles it. And the Bible says it.
 - c) You cannot have an honest reading of the Bible without coming away with the overwhelming message that Jesus is not just a Savior, he's the Savior.
 - d) It's not a question of if we like it or not. Peter's audience didn't like it, but he said it. And when he said it, he said it to all the world for all of time.
 - e) We've got to quit soften the hard stuff. God knows what he's doing and he knows what he's saying. Leave the hard stuff the hard stuff.
 - f) A while back a pretty popular pastor made a pretty astounding claim. He said that Christians should stop saying "the Bible says..."
 - g) He argued that there's so much hard stuff, so much unpopular stuff, in the Bible that if we keep referencing the Bible, we're going to turn off the people to the Bible. And I quote, "the problem with 'What the Bible Says' is everything else the Bible says."
 - h) Since when is it our job to make Jesus palatable to the people in our culture. Have you seen our culture?
 - i) It's not our place to soften God's message. It's not our place to make it palatable. Sinners have a ruined palate. Whatever is true, whatever is good, whatever is holy will always taste rotten to a deceived, evil, unholy world.
 - j) Until a person is born again, the gospel is foolishness to them.
 - k) Peter stood up that day... and he said, "The Bible says..." and he showed where the Bible pointed to Jesus Christ as the one and only Savior of the World.
 - l) Now, it's our turn to stand for unpopular truths.
 - 2. **No one else but Jesus could do what had to be done to reconcile us to God.**
 - a) Peter said there is no other name, and he said that because there is no other person. No other person given among men and women under heaven. Search the whole human race, search all the history books, search all the religions, and you will never find a Savior like Jesus. Not even close.
 - b) That's because of the equation of salvation.
 - c) Salvation equals a God who is exalted and a human who is fallen being brought together for time and eternity.
 - d) Only Jesus — the person that he is and the work that he did — could do this. Only Jesus fills our need.
 - e) This equation has a moral component through and through.
 - (1) **Salvation equals a God who is morally exalted and infinitely perfect and a human who is morally fallen and hopelessly sinful being brought together for time and eternity.**
 - (2) Only Jesus fills our need without compromising God's character.
 - f) We needed a death for sins, so Jesus died the death.
 - g) We needed a blood atonement, so Jesus shed his blood.
 - h) We needed a cleansing, so Jesus washed us white as snow.
 - i) We needed a payment, so Jesus ransomed us, so you are free.
 - j) We needed a transfer of ownership, so Jesus redeemed us, and you are bought with a price. .
 - k) We needed a satisfaction of justice, so Jesus is the propitiation for our sins.

- l) We needed a perfect righteousness, so Jesus is God who justifies the ungodly.
- m) We needed a helper, so Jesus does for us what we could never do for ourselves.
- n) We needed a new life, so Jesus makes us born again.
 - (1) Only Jesus fits the profile of what we need. Only Jesus can solve the equation of salvation.
- o) We needed a friend, so Jesus is a friend of sinners.
- p) We needed a guide, so Jesus is the Good Shepherd.
- q) We needed a mediator, so there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.
- r) We needed a purpose for living, so Jesus makes us fishers of men.
- s) We needed a confidence in dying, so Jesus promised we will never perish.
- t) We needed victory over death, so Jesus rose again.
- u) We needed triumph over Satan, so Jesus cast him down and cast him out.
- v) We needed liberation from demons, so Jesus put them to open shame and sent them to flight.
- w) We needed heaven, so Jesus qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.
- x) We needed peace, so Jesus made peace through the blood of his Cross.
- y) We needed relief, so Jesus said Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.
- z) We needed love, so Jesus loved us with an everlasting love, so that when we're at our worst, Jesus stays at his best, and his love for you doesn't even flicker.
 - (1) Whatever is the problem, Jesus is the solution. Whatever is the need, Jesus is the answer.
 - (2) Whatever is the heart's deepest cry, Jesus solved it, provided it, fixed it, purchased it, gave it, and paid for it all till he cried out IT IS FINISHED.

(a) Every need that tugs at the human heart, every deficit that our souls can't deny, every missing piece of every puzzle of life, is met and surpassed and abundantly supplied in one man, this man, this God man... his name is Our Lord Jesus Christ, AND THERE IS NO OTHER NAME.

- aa) He sees you and he knows you and he's calling you to a life of service for the everlasting gospel. What else is worth giving your life for? Who else is worthy of your allegiance?

3. Jesus

- a) Jesus said he was the Bread of Life, so that bakers can understand.
- b) He's Vine, so that farmers could understand.
- c) He's Living Water, so that plumbers could understand.
- d) He's the Cornerstone, so that builders can understand.
- e) He's the Light of the World, so that electricians can understand.
- f) He's the Hidden Treasure, so that bankers can understand.
- g) He's the Door, so that carpenters can understand.
- h) He's the Good Teacher, so that educators can understand.
- i) He's the Great Physician, so that medical professionals can understand.
- j) He's the Lily of the Valley, so that gardeners can understand.
- k) He's the Rock of Ages, so that geologists can understand.
- l) He is the Righteous One, so that judges can understand.
- m) He is the Way, so that mapmakers can understand.
- n) He is the Truth, so that politicians can understand.
- o) He is the Life, so that biologists can understand.

4. There is no one like him. Not in a million lifetimes or a billion galaxies or a trillion philosophies.

- a) Who is Buddha? Who is Mohammed? Who is Confucius, Odin, Zeus, Jupiter, Zarathustra, Baal, Molech, Pele... name them all... who are these mice scurrying around in the shadow of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah?

5. To say that he is the only Savior, and to say that he is the Only Way, and to say that no one comes to the Father but by him, and to say that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be say...

6. ...to say all that is to say the only thing that makes sense of this peerless, perfect, unparalleled person, our precious friend and only Savior Jesus.

7. Here's Jesus. Is there any other name?

E. It's our turn to stand for unpopular truths.

F. He sees you and he knows you and he's calling you to a life of service for the everlasting gospel. What else is worth giving your life for? Who else is worthy of your allegiance?

- 1. If your husband doesn't have Jesus, then he doesn't have salvation and he must be saved.
- 2. If your wife doesn't have Jesus, then she doesn't have salvation and she must be saved.
- 3. If your children don't have Jesus, then they don't have salvation, and they must be saved.
- 4. Ditto your employees, or boss, your colleagues, your teammates, your teachers, your classmates, your enemies.
 - a) Oh, won't you say a word to them of Jesus, the one who shed his blood for you?
 - b) Might it be unpopular? Yes. But the stakes could not be higher.
 - c) We are mobilizing an army to fulfill the Great Commission. Are you in? Men... women... young men... young women... kids...
 - d) There is no other name given among men by which we must be saved... so let's be the people who keep saying that name.