**Transformed: A Survey of the Book of Acts**

**Week 3 (January 23, 2019)**

**Helpful Background**

1**.** In Acts 2, God kept His promises and sent the Holy Spirit to indwell every follower of Jesus and every single person who believed in Him as Lord and Savior. The believers were changed, and truly transformed. This life change began to make them stand out from their Jewish families, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. While initially the changes were gradual, as the followers of Jesus continued to live as Jews, going to the temple to pray, worship and give their offerings. The followers of Jesus did not intend to start something new, but rather were pushed out by those who did not agree with their convictions and practices that demonstrated that Jesus was Messiah.

2. In Acts 3:1-11, Peter and John heal a lame man in a very public place and time. The lame man had been brought daily to a main gate of the temple, which was a prime spot for begging. Peter and John approached the man as they were on their way into the temple, and he asked them for money. When Peter and John looked at the man directly, (not avoiding the encounter as many probably had done,) the man looked expectantly to them for some cash. Peter responded by saying: *“I don’t have any silver or gold for you. But I’ll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up andwalk!”*

3. This miracle caused quite a reaction in the temple that afternoon. The man who had been lame for decades and probably had been a familiar sight begging around the temple was walking, jumping, leaping, and loudly praising God. (Can you imagine?) He was accompanied by Peter and John, who were known to be followers of Jesus and leaders of those who believed that Jesus was/is Messiah. The healed man caused quite a stir, and many were amazed and astounded by this miracle, and suddenly were interested in hearing more about this Jesus from His followers. Peter preached another powerful sermon, and many more put their faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord.

4. The Jewish high council, known as the Sanhedrin, was made up of seventy religious elders representing all factions within the Jewish religious world. The Sanhedrin had been granted authority by the Jewish King, who had been put in place and power by the Roman government as represented by the Roman governor and Roman troops in the region. The Sanhedrin ruled over many educational, cultural, social, and civil areas, and all religious matters.

5. The Sanhedrin was made up of members of the various religious/political parties, including the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Scribes, and others. Some Priests from all different parties, including the High Priest and past High Priests, had guaranteed places on the Sanhedrin, which rotated members every year.

6. The Sadducees did not believe in any resurrection of the dead. They believed that upon death, the body and soul separated, but that while the body slowly decayed, the soul instantly no longer existed. They believed that there was nothing after death, and certainly no resurrection of the dead. (The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection, so they were sad… you see?)

7. Peter and John are arrested, jailed overnight, and then brought before the Sanhedrin. This was the same council that had put Jesus on trial, condemned Him, and handed Him over to the Romans to be crucified just months earlier. Peter again spoke with boldness, courage, and a clear understanding of the scriptures. He unapologetically spoke the truth, courageously faced the highest officials in his nation, and clearly proclaimed that ONLY Jesus the Messiah could heal, save, and be the Lord of all.

8. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, gave a passionate defense of their actions that had been taken in the name of Jesus. He went on to challenge the religious leaders in a very direct way. He and John refused to back away from or stop teaching/acting in the name of Jesus. When the high council could not agree what course of action to follow, they released John and Peter with a strong warning. The apostles promptly ignored the warning, and went on preaching and teaching about Jesus

**Review Questions Acts 3:1-11**

9. (3:1) Why the focus on Peter and John? What were they doing? Why were they going to the temple? What’s significant about the time of day?

10. (3:2-3) Why was the man being carried? Why was he placed next to a gate of the temple? What was his “job,” and how did that reflect the time and culture in which he lived? What did he ask of Peter and John?

11. (3:4-5) What action did Peter and John take before anything else? What did Peter first say to the man? What reaction did the man have to the instructions of Peter? What clarification did Peter make, and what did he “give” the man instead of cash?

12. (3:7-8) What significant action did Peter take next? What happened? Why the details? How did the man react? What did he do? Why is this miracle historic/significant?

13. (3:9-11) What did the crowd first notice? How did they recognize the man? How did the crowd respond? Why was the man holding on to Peter and John? Where did this take place?

**Review Questions 4:1-22**

14. (4:1-4) What had Peter & John done that caused such a stir? How did Peter use the opportunity he had been given in chapter 3? Who reacted badly? What happened to Peter and John? What was the result of this miraculous day?

15. (4:5-7) What’s the high council? Who was present? What did they ask? Why the question about “in whose name?” What about this setting was intended to be intimidating?

16. (4:8-10) What reality made it possible for Peter to be able to stand and speak with courage? How did he address the council? What did Peter say? How did he talk about Jesus?

17. (4:11-12) From where did Peter quote and how did this apply to Jesus? What was Peter’s point? What was his bold statement in 4:12? How is this direct statement both amazing and challenging?

18. (4:13-15) What was the reaction of the council? What confounded them about Peter and John? Why was the presence of the lame man who had been healed a problem for the high council?

19. (4:16-18) What did the council decide to do with Peter and John? Why was this a tricky situation? What was the end result? Why were they being told to stop doing or saying anything “in Jesus’s name?”

20. (4:19-22) What was the responses of Peter and John? What was their argument that they expressed? What was the reality of the circumstances around them? Why was the high council somewhat out of options?

**So What?**

21. Peter and John gave the lame man a gift even before the miracle happened. They gave him respect and attention. Even if we cannot give help, healing, money, or a miracle, what can we give to those who God may put in our path? How can we “love our neighbor,” and how is this even possible?

22. What was Peter able to do when filled by the Holy Spirit? Have you experienced anything similar when filled by the Holy Spirit? How do you know if/when you are “filled” with the Holy Spirit?

23. Do you believe in the Jesus that Peter proclaimed? (Acts 4:11-12) Do your attitudes, actions, and words reflect that Jesus is the cornerstone of your faith and your hope? Why or why not?