

They Had Been With Jesus

In Acts 4:1-12, Peter responds to a question from the Jewish leaders, "And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"(Acts 4:7). To which Peter tells them in the name of Jesus they healed a lame man and in His name they were preaching of salvation, "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. "This is the 'stone, which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."(Acts 4:10-12).

It is at this point the leaders made the following observation. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13). Indeed, these men had spent three years following Jesus as He called them to be His disciples. They saw Him turn water into wine, John 2; walk on water, heal the sick, feed multitudes with a few loaves of bread and some fish. From the sermon on the Mount to the last week of Jesus' life and even after His resurrection they heard Him teach. These men had their faults, but they had learned at the feet of the Master Teacher for three years.

One of the things the leaders said about these men were, "uneducated and untrained" (Acts 4.13a). What they meant was, they did not go to one of the schools of rabbis and received a formal education. But these were not ignorant men. They owned a fishing business, one was a tax collector, all of them grew up learning from the scriptures. They also received the gift of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 2.2-4). Which meant they had perfect remembrance of the things Jesus spoke to them. "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (John 14:26). By direct inspiration they were preaching the Gospel of Christ.

I think more was meant by “having been with Jesus” as observed by the Jewish leaders. These men were not intimidated or afraid of the counsel. They spoke boldly and plainly concerning the just performed miracle, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. They boldly laid the unlawful death of Jesus at their feet. (Acts 2:23). They were not watering down or sugar coating the message to be pleasing to the crowd. They were seeking to do what the Holy Spirit came to do through them. “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” (John 16:8).

The evidence presented to the council was miraculous in nature and undeniable. Thus, they confirmed the message being preached, the message of salvation in and through Jesus, was confirmed through the healing of this lame man. “And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.” (Acts 4:14). The Apostles had the right message and by now at least eight thousand people obeyed.

These men also spoke about Jesus. The Gospel is centered on Him, “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). While that was not the totality of their teaching, it was the basis of all their instruction.

What do people say about us? Do they know we have learned from the Master Teacher?

Are we bold and confident in teaching the Gospel of Christ? I do not imply we should be obnoxious or rash, but do we rest upon the word of God despite our individual deficiencies? “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (1 Corinthians 2:1-2). Knowing the power of the Gospel should give us reason to proclaim it boldly.

Are we knowledgeable of God's word? Timothy was told to give himself to reading God's word, 2 Timothy 2.15, to mediate upon the things he had learned. (2 Timothy 4.15). We are to learn and live that word.

Do we speak about Jesus? Which reminds me of an old story of a young man who obeyed the Gospel just before leaving home to work in a logging camp. The preacher told him, those camps tend to be hard places, and once the people find out you are a Christian, they will make it harder. He left and came back home after a time. To which, the preacher asked if the people made it hard on him once they learned he was a Christian? The young man said, no sir, I never let them know. Are we letting people know we are living the Christian life? Do we ever mention Him? -- Dennis Tucker