

No Other Name - Acts 4:1-22
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

“And there is salvation in no one else.” What we have in Acts 4:12 is a clear declaration that is echoed throughout the Scriptures that salvation is available to all people, yet it is only available in Jesus Christ. The doctrine of the exclusivity of Jesus is the singular belief that is probably the most offensive to our culture, and actually to every culture. As we read through Acts and continue the story we will see how the early church has a missionary zeal to take the Gospel to the Jews first, but eventually to the entire world. They are doing this because they fully know and believe that the Gospel of Jesus is the only hope for a lost world. Jews must turn to Christ as Messiah to be saved and included in the true people of God, turning away from the self-salvation journey of keeping the Law to please God. Romans are commanded to repent and turn from their idols in order to place their faith in Jesus. Both the religious and irreligious would fully accept these early Christians if they would keep their belief in Jesus and His resurrection to themselves or if they would worship Jesus as one of the multitude of gods in the Roman pantheon. But to claim exclusivity, now that will get you in trouble.

Our time is no different. Many of us have had (or fear) someone asking this question, “Are you telling me that you honestly believe there is only one way to God, and if I don’t accept your religion I will end up in hell? Can you already feel yourself pulling back into bushes like Homer Simpson trying to find a way out. Or maybe you have actually embraced the pluralism of our day, deciding that Jesus works for you, but others have their own path to what they call God. And who are we to tell others that their journey is invalid? The quickest way to get cancelled in our culture is to believe something exclusively, and to seek to push your beliefs on others. Unless, of course, what you believe is that all religions are equal and this must be pressed on all others (maybe the concept of plurality and tolerance is not so tolerant and plural after all). Yet, Peter does not mince words or stutter. He declares boldly and plainly that Jesus is the only way and that His name is the only name under heaven by which people can be saved. Isn’t this arrogant and divisive.

We are in a difficult place, yet our call is also to a humble witness of the exclusivity of Jesus as the sole way to redemption and salvation. Yet, we are not making the claim that Christianity is the best of all world religions. Rather, the Gospel is the announcement of the insufficiency of all religions (even Christianity) to deliver the goods it is offering. Peter is looking at the All-Star team of religious performance and rule keeping in Judaism. They brought in the big guns for this one, the equivalent of the Pope and College of Cardinals or Supreme Court. If anyone could be acceptable based on adherence to a religious system it was these guys. When followers of Jesus proclaim the exclusivity of Jesus and the Gospel message we are not offering the world the best of all religions, we are offering a door to salvation that is something all together different. All religions are based on a few basic premises. First, there is some sort of god. These deities may be monotheistic like the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim God. Or they may worship a pantheistic divine which is more of an energy source that is all of creation. Or they may be polytheistic, worshipping many gods. But all religions begin with some kind of deity and they also affirm our existence. We live and breathe. Yet, they all know that life in this world is not as it should be because some sort of problem exists in our human experience which is keeping us from experiencing all that their god has to offer. Religion then says come to us and we will give you the path to our god, the way to get to him and find salvation. They then give us a system, a series of steps, a doctrine of rules and laws. These 3 premises is the foundation of all religions - there is a god, there is us and we have a problem, come to us and we will give you the solution. This even happens in many, many Christian churches. If some kind of man-centered belief in Jesus is just the best of all paths, then we are arrogant to suggest ours is better. This is not the claim of the

Gospel, and it is not what Peter is declaring. The Gospel does share the core premises. There is a glorious God who has revealed Himself in creation and in the redemption story. He made us, so here we are. We were made by Him and for Him, yet our experience is far short of what we know should be true. And the reason is that there is a problem. The problem is our sin and rebellion, our unwillingness and inability to leave sin and come to God. The Gospel though, is not a system where we can bridge the gap between us and God. In fact, it is the pronouncement that we are utterly hopeless and lost, completely alienated from God with no human remedy to solve it. Yet, and this is the Good News, God did not leave us here, He came Himself, bridged the gap between God and man by coming Himself. Religion seeks to build a bridge whereby we can get to God. The Gospel pronounces that God came to us, and this is the only bridge that can truly save. Jesus is the open door to salvation because He came, died for our sin, and then rose again. But the open door is the only door by which we must be saved.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
2 Samuel 13	2 Samuel 14	2 Samuel 15	2 Samuel 16	2 Samuel 17	2 Samuel 18	2 Samuel 19

Reading from this past week: Acts 4:1-22

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Acts 4:23-31

Family Worship

Song - *God the Uncreated One*

<https://youtu.be/rswH9CSyWHk>

Gospel Project

Unit: A Pattern of Disobedience

Story: The people kept sinning

Big Picture Question: What is the fair payment for sin?

Answer: The fair payment for sin is death.

Scripture: Judges 2

New City Catechism

Question #17: What is idolatry?

Answer: Idolatry is trusting in created things rather than the Creator.

Verse: Romans 1:21,25

Scripture

Acts 4:1-22

- What were Peter and John preaching that got them into trouble with the religious leaders? Why do you think people despise the preaching of Jesus?
- When Peter proclaims that there is salvation in no one else, what exactly is he declaring to this council?
- How does the doctrine of the exclusivity of Jesus make you feel? Do you believe that Jesus is the only way or one of many paths to God? Why is this important?
- How would it affect the way we live in the world if we truly believed that Jesus is the only hope for salvation for all people?

Prayer

*Pray that God would give us loving boldness to believe and proclaim that there is salvation only in Jesus.

*Pray our Church Picnic this Saturday.