



Approaching God

Read this portion of Psalm 7 and begin with an opening prayer

O LORD my God, in you do I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and deliver me, lest like a lion they tear my soul apart, rending it in pieces, with none to deliver. My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. (Psalm 7:1-2, 10)

Cush was likely a follower of King Saul who ruthlessly slandered David's character & Psalm 7 is David's prayer in response. David certainly hated to be misrepresented and misunderstood (who wouldn't?!), but his deeper concern is what those voices are doing to his "soul" (vs. 1). Are there any places in life, any relationships, where you have felt misrepresented or misunderstood? Run to your Shield God today in prayer so that he can protect you and breath new life into your soul.

Acts 4:1-22

Passage Introduction:

In Acts 4, Luke gives us our first glimpse of the division brewing between the people and the Jewish leaders. This division ultimately emerges from two things: (1) The apostles' preaching of the gospel, and (2) one specific aspect of the content of their preaching: namely, the resurrection from the dead.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Use the space in the margin to jot down notes, or themes/ideas that stand out as important.

Acts 4:1-22 - **1** The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. **2** They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. **3** They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. **4** But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

5 The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. **6** Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. **7** They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" **8** Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! **9** If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, **10** then know this, you and all the people of

the “cornerstone”

In the first-century Jewish world, the cornerstone was an ornamental stone that designated a building and gave it a particular dignity. The chief cornerstone identified the building, made it distinctive, and gave it meaning. Here Peter is quoting from Psalm 118, a Psalm about the temple.

Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. **11** Jesus is “‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’ **12** Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. **14** But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. **15** So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. **16** “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. **17** But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.” **18** Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. **19** But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! **20** As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” **21** After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. **22** For the man who was miraculously healed was over 40 years old.

Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What is the flow of events in this passage? Why are Peter & John suddenly in trouble and how do they react?
- Are there any words, phrases, or themes that stand out to you as important or related?
- List all the things you discover about Jesus in this passage.

Close in Prayer:

In a world that prides itself on the tolerance and acceptance of all belief systems and religions, ask God for the courage and wisdom to obey and witness to the grace of God in Jesus Christ.