

Acts 4:8-12 “No Other Name” April 28, 2019
St. Paul’s Ev. Lutheran Church, New Ulm, MN

Acts 4:8-12

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 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.”

Introduction

Are you familiar with “brand attachment”? Do you suffer from it? Brand attachment is the emotional connection between humans and brands. It’s much deeper than brand loyalty. For example, if you have brand attachment when it comes to clothing nothing but Under Armor will do. Only one kind of laundry detergent will get your clothes clean. Only one brand of vehicles will do for you. If you’re a farmer, only green machines with a deer on them will plow, plant, and harvest. No other name will do.

Today as we think about Acts 4:8-12, the Holy Spirit through the apostle Peter presents us with a similar concept but on a much greater scale concerning Jesus Christ

“NO OTHER NAME...”

1) ...Gives such power ... 2) Gives such life!

1. No Other Name Gives Such Power

One must watch what they say and do in this time of acute political correctness. In some places to wear a MAGA hat or tee shirt can get you into trouble. No one is wrong anymore; they are differentially logical. Better not question climate change in any way other it’s all caused by humans or you will be in PC prison. At the time of our text one had to be care of talking about Jesus and the resurrection as Peter and John would experience first-hand.

One day, as Peter and John went into the temple in Jerusalem to pray, they met a lame beggar who asked them for money. Peter said to the man, **“Look at us ...Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk (3:4-6).”** Healed, the man went with Peter into the temple courts, walking, jumping, and praising God. People who had known the lame man, wondered how he was healed. Peter told people, **“By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong (3:16).”** Jesus miraculously changed this man’s life.

Many who saw what happened and heard Peter’s explanation, believed in Jesus. But when the priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees heard Peter teaching about the resurrection of the dead in Jesus, they arrested Peter and John and put them in prison. The next day Peter and John appeared before the Jewish ruling council. They asked them, **“By what power or name did you do this (4:7)?”**

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them ... ‘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. (v. 8,10).’”

Wow! Wasn’t this Peter who in the courtyard denied knowing Jesus and being his disciple? Wasn’t this Peter who on Easter hid with the other disciples in a locked room because he was afraid of these Jewish

leaders? What happened to this this denier of Jesus? He doesn't waffle. He doesn't weasel. He doesn't try to come up with some other name or explanation by which he and John did the miracle. Peter says that is by no other name than Jesus that the lame man was healed. What's more he identifies Jesus as the ... Christ or Messiah – the anointed to be the Savior promised in the Old Testament ... whom you crucified – imagine the upset this caused ... whom God raised from the dead – this must have really upset the Sadducees who rejected the idea of a resurrection from the dead. “Red flags” are rising everywhere and creating upset. But there is Peter courageously and pointedly witnessing about Jesus.

What made the difference in Peter? Just as with the lame man, it was no other name than Jesus. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit, who had already worked saving faith in Peter's heart and equipped Peter for the great preaching Peter did on Pentecost, to equip Peter again. Jesus had promised this. Jesus had told his disciples, **“On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. At that time, you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you (Matt.10:18-20).”** This Spirit of the Father is the same Counselor whom Jesus, in John 16:7, said he would send to the disciples.

Jesus - No other name makes such a difference. Jesus has made a difference in you and me. Before Jesus came into our hearts and lives we were dead in our sins and unbelief. We were destined to hell. But through His and His Father's Holy Spirit, Jesus brought us to faith and gave us the forgiveness he won with his holy life and his death on the cross. Through faith Jesus dressed us in his holiness, made us God's holy people, and put us on the way of righteousness on which there is eternal life.

More than we realize Jesus and his resurrection make a difference in our lives every day. Think back just a few days. Jesus is on the cross. He's there suffering for you to pay for your sins and remove your curse. He loves you. Then on Easter he rises to show that he did everything he came to do. Your sins are forgiven. You are now innocent in God's sight. If you die today or Jesus comes, you are acceptable in his sight. You have eternal life. And as Jesus lives he is with you to help you with challenges, to provide for your needs, to protect you, to renew you, and to empower you to live for him.

As Jesus and his Spirit made a difference in Peter enabling him to overcome fear and equipping him to testify to Jesus as the Christ, he can make the same difference in you. You and I are works in progress – strong and mature in some ways and weak and wavering in others. Jesus gives us his Holy Spirit. Being filled or full of the Holy Spirit is the result of regularly using and thinking about God's word, regularly reflecting on your baptism, and regularly receiving Holy Communion. Through these things God's love comes to you and God's Spirit works in you bringing you inner peace, joy, strength, capability and confidence to witness for Christ.

Every day God's Spirit working through the gospel message of Christ crucified and risen gives us power to live for God. The problem is that we often don't stop to think about the difference the power of Jesus' name makes in us. Instead, don't we more often focus on our failures. That's because our conscience doesn't give us a pass on our sins. But it does on the godly things we do. Whether we realize it or not, there are a whole lot more of those things. Not that we are ever perfect in and of ourselves. And the good things we do don't win us favor or earn us heaven. But they glorify God and are a witness to the power of Jesus' name in our lives. So, give thanks for the power of Jesus' name and the good things it produces.

Through message of Jesus crucified and risen, the Holy Spirit gives us a special equipping and guidance for special circumstances. It may be to overcome a weakness. It may be when you need to talk to another Christian caught up in sin about that sin. It may be when a Christian is with another Christian and recognizes the need to comfort and encourage but is paralyzed with fear. It may be when there is the golden opportunity for a Christian to tell a non-Christian that Jesus is the Savior but is concerned about

doing it right. Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to equip with courage and guidance. Jesus makes a difference. No other name can change lives so much.

Jesus is the stone rejected by those building. The spiritual leaders of Israel rejected Jesus as they tried to spiritually build up Israel. But Jesus is the foundation, the cornerstone for faith, forgiveness, and inner fortitude. No other name gives such power.

2. No Other Name Gives Such Life

No other name gives such life. Peter emphasized this to the Jewish Council with these words: **“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”**

Salvation is being saved from death, danger or destruction. The salvation of which Peter spoke is rescue from death and hell, everlasting punishment that we deserve for our sins. It is being free to have God’s love and live for God here in time and to live with God and bask in his glory in eternity. God emphasizes through Peter, that there is no other source of salvation than in Jesus Christ.

This means that while Jesus lived and died for all people of all time – “the world” – not all will enjoy his salvation. Only those who believe in Jesus as the Lord and Savior enjoy this salvation. This, sadly, leaves some people out of God’s kingdom, doesn’t it? As a result, sometimes people challenge the exclusiveness of the Christian faith. They feel that Christians are arrogant and narrow-minded in claiming that all other faiths are wrong, and Christianity is right! In today’s world this is understandable, since the popular opinion is that we all worship the same God and that “all roads of religion lead to God.” All roads of religion, except for one, do lead to the same place – to separation from God forever.

It is amazing the deceit the devil spreads. All other religions either lie and say that God is someone other than who is, or that God is not holy and does not care about whether we are either, or that God simply wants us to believe something and if we believe something we will be saved, or that if we do enough good things we will be right with God and have eternal life.

The God of the Bible however emphasizes that he is the only God. **“Turn to me and be saved all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other (Is. 45:22).”** He reveals he is one but is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God says, **“Be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy (Lev 19:1).”** God tells us that the only way we can be right with God and have salvation is through God’s Son, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. As Jesus said, **“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (Jn 14:6).”** Jesus said, **“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (Jn 3:16).”**

No other religion in the world is like Christianity. All other religions tell us what we must do to get on God’s good side or get close to God or bring God close to us. Christianity tells us we can do anything to get closer to God. Our sin separates us. But Christianity tells how God’s Son brought us close to God. That you and I might be free of the curse of sin, God cut off his Son from himself. God cut off his Son’s life on a cross. But God raised him from the dead to prove that forgiveness and life are ours. Only through faith in Jesus we are free. Only through Jesus are we saved. There is no other name that can change peoples’ lives so much.

Does this bring home to us the urgency of sharing the gospel of Jesus with others ... in our families, our circles of friends, through our church’s ministry, and through our synod’s mission efforts?

Years ago, a young woman from MLC asked if I would do some pre-marriage counseling for her and her fiancé. I agreed. I discovered that the young man was raised in the Mormon faith. While Mormons use terms similar to those of Christianity, Mormons are not Christian. In one session the young man brought the book *Speaking the Truth in Love* that deals with Mormonism and how to witness to Mormons. He asked me if he was a good Mormon, was he going to heaven or hell. This made me pause. Then I witnessed to him about Jesus being the Savior for all and that only through faith in Jesus as the Son of God from all eternity, would he have eternal life. I concluded that if he was a good Mormon he was going to hell. I didn't see the young man after that. My prayer is that through my witness and that of his girlfriend, as well as message of *Speaking the Truth in Love*, he trusted in Jesus and will be in heaven.

When we truly love people and care about their eternal destiny, we respectfully and kindly tell the truth. Sometimes it isn't easy. For Peter, telling the truth was potentially lethal. But not telling people the truth may be eternally deadly. There is no other name by which people can be saved than that of Jesus. Therefore, when the opportunity arises, use the name of Jesus to tell people about God's love and the life it gives. There is no other name that gives such power ... that gives such life ... no other name. Amen.
(DRS)