

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (March 3, 2024)

For Personal or Group Study

In 1919, Congress ratified the 18th Amendment to the Constitution that prohibited the sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages in the United States. The people who supported the Amendment—including the great evangelist Billy Sunday—meant well. They truly believed that by outlawing liquor, they could improve society. Many people called it “the Grand Experiment.” It didn’t work, largely because Americans by the millions chose to flout the law by patronizing bootleggers and speakeasies. In 1933, the 21st Amendment repealed the 18th Amendment and the Grand Experiment was over. If people want to drink, all the laws in the world aren’t going to stop them. Our greatest need today is not for more government or more laws or political power but for the power of the Holy Spirit. Political power can change leaders but it can’t change hearts. It can win an election but it can’t save a life unto eternity. It can pass righteous laws—or repeal unrighteous ones—but it can’t make us righteous. Politics cannot change the way people think because it touches the outside of life. That’s why we need the Holy Spirit. He can take the gospel we preach and use it to bring men and women to repentance of sin and to faith in Jesus Christ. He can replace their old hearts with new ones and give them a hunger to live for righteousness. Only the Holy Spirit can change hearts, restore families and save nations from destruction.

Arresting the Gospel

SERMON PASSAGE: Acts: 4:1-22 (ESV)

4 And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ² greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴ But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand. ⁵ On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, ⁶ with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹ if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰ let it be known to all of you 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 is standing before you well. ¹¹ This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” ¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵ But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, ¹⁶ saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” ¹⁸ So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” ²¹ And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. ²² For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What roles did the priests, the captain of the guard and the Sadducees play in the ministry of Jesus?
2. Why would the Sadducees oppose the disciples teaching?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3. When, if ever, do you feel that Peter's response to the leaders would be appropriate for a Christian today?
4. How do you reconcile this passage with Romans 13:1-4?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

5. What is the most persecution you have faced due to your faith?
6. How has knowing Jesus shaped your character so that people will notice you have "been with Jesus?" vs 13.

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