

Acts Chapter 4 Con't

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Well, we welcome you to our July 5 class. Thank you for your presence. And this is something that needs to be taken into consideration.

This is the plight of a dear lady, some of you, perhaps your wife, could identify with. Several days ago, as I left the meeting in a hotel, I desperately gave myself a personal TSA pat-down.

I was looking for my keys. They were not in my pockets. A quick search in the meeting room revealed nothing. Suddenly, I realized I must have left them in the car.

Frantically, I headed for the parking lot. My husband has scolded me many times for leaving the keys in the ignition. My theory is the ignition is the best place not to lose them.

His theory is that the car will be stolen. As I burst through the door, I came to a terrifying conclusion. His theory was right.

[1 : 09] The parking lot was empty. I immediately called the police. I gave them my location, confessed that I had left my keys in the car and that it had been stolen.

Then I made the most difficult call of all. Honey, I stammered. I always call him honey in times like these.

I left my keys in the car and it has been stolen. There was a period of silence. I thought the call had been dropped. But then I heard his voice as he barked, I dropped you off.

Now it was my time to be silent. Embarrassed, I said, Well, will you please come and get me? He retorted, I will.

As soon as I can convince this policeman I have not stolen your car. That's the golden years, alright. Okay, I trust that you all have your seat.

[2 : 24] And we are working from page 458 down in the lower left-hand corner. This is Acts chapter 4. And I want to remind you that the bold print that you see at the beginning of each verse is the King James Version.

And then other translations are rendered in there that follow. For instance, after 32, RHM is Rhames Version. The TCNT is the 20th Century New Testament.

MON is Montgomery. MOF is Moffat. And then there is Williams. And then the Berkeley. And then the Rue Translation. This is taken from the 26th Translation New Testament.

And it is, in my estimation, a very valuable volume because it gives you a little bit different rendering of each of those verses. And where one of them perhaps doesn't break through with some light, perhaps another will.

And may I remind you that we are engaged in a study of what has to be the most controversial book in all of the New Testament as regards Christendom.

[3 : 34] because there is more variation in beliefs, denominations, churches, groups, splits, splinters, etc.

And virtually all of them have their own approach to the book of Acts. And it leads to all kinds of different conclusions. Everything from baptismal regeneration for the idea that you cannot get to heaven unless you are water baptized.

And the favorite verse for that, of course, is Acts 2.38. And we've already considered that in some detail. And we will not go back unless there are questions that need to be addressed.

We have seen that Peter has preached this monumental message in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost. And he told them what the meaning of the Spirit of God, the rushing mighty wind, and everyone speaking in languages that they had not learned.

He told them what the significance of that was. And it was simply that this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel. And he is simply recounting a prophecy from Joel 2.

[4 : 47] And he is telling them God is making good on His Word. The promise that He gave to Joel. That's what you are seeing and hearing. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's but the third hour of the morning.

Nine o'clock in the morning. And then, a great number of people respond to Peter's message. And I don't want to split hairs, but I do think it is important to note many regard this as the proclamation of the Gospel.

In Acts 2, it really is not that. Although, no question about it, the focal point of the message is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

However, the substitutionary death of Christ, the efficaciousness of Christ, has not yet been brought out. And Peter isn't bringing it out in Acts 2.

What he is doing, he's not preaching the Gospel, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. What he is telling them is, Jesus of Nazareth really was the Messiah and you missed it.

[5 : 50] You crucified him and you put him on the cross, but God raised him from the dead. So, the emphasis is on the fact that Christ was the Messiah, Israel crucified him, and what we've got here is an indictment.

It's an accusation that is laid against the nation of Israel. And many of these people believe Peter's message because it fits.

They see this fulfillment in Joel chapter 2 and it struck them like a thunderclap. And the text in Acts 2 says they were pricked in their heart.

That means Peter's message and the implications of it were driven right to the very core of their being. They got it. And it stunned them.

And their response was, what can we do now? We cannot go back and undo what we did. Where do we go from here? And Peter said, you can change your mind.

[6 : 52] Do a 180 regarding the person of Jesus Christ, who He was, that He was who He claimed to be. And those of you who refused John's baptism and we know the scribes and Pharisees were among them because we're told in Luke that they received not the baptism of John.

They rejected the counsel of God against themselves not being baptized of John. They didn't believe John and they didn't believe John's message. And then when Christ came with essentially the same message, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, they didn't believe that either.

And now Peter is telling them, fellas, you've got to reverse yourself. You have been wrong all along. Are you big enough to admit it? And we know there were about 3,000 of them that were and it must have been a tremendous time because they came to this new conclusion.

We crucified our Messiah and now they are being water baptized in His name, a baptism that they earlier had rejected.

And as a result of that, there was a new outbreak of spirituality in and around Jerusalem. Everybody was talking about this phenomenal event that had happened there in the temple.

[8 : 14] It was the watchword of the area. And the next day, Peter goes up to the temple along with John. This man is there at the temple gate, beautiful, been there for years and years. That was his official site for begging. And you know the story. Silver and gold, have we none, but such as we have in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up. And Peter yanked on that guy and he came up and stood on two good legs and couldn't believe it, drawing a huge crowd.

And as the crowd gathers, the temple police come on the scene and the Sadducees and they elbow their way up through the crowd. And I suspect there were thousands of people there.

We looked at the physical layout of the temple site and the temple area and how large it is. I want to remind you, it occupies 12 football fields. This is a big area. And the portico of Solomon was huge.

They could accommodate thousands of people easily. And there are no doubt were thousands there. And then Peter is preaching this and telling them that as a result of this man being healed, this is God's manifestation, God's miraculous work among you.

[9 : 23] And he was preaching Christ had been risen from the dead. And then these fellows, when they see that they are talking about Christ having risen from the dead, that angered them. They moved in, confronted them, had them arrested, took them aside, decided what they were going to do. They got among themselves, remember, and said, what are we going to do with these guys? A notable miracle has been performed and we cannot deny it.

And the impression is they would have loved to have been able to deny it. But they couldn't because there were too many witnesses. So let's threaten them and let's tell them there are going to be severe consequences if they continue with this message.

Let's scare the wits out of them. But Peter and John and the apostles were beyond being scared. They knew what they knew and they would not be silenced.

And we pointed out to you in our last session, this becomes one of the sterling examples in all of Scripture for civil disobedience. And this provides the basis for obeying God rather than man.

[10 : 30] Just make sure you're obeying God rather than man. And sometimes that can get a little fuzzy. So, the apostles are in hot water.

They are the topic of conversation all throughout the area. But, those who are in the religious establishment, the intelligentsia, still see themselves as vulnerable and they have a lot at stake and they have got to find a way to silence these guys because this thing could get out of hand.

And we read in verse 32, we've just got to jump in here someplace, but we're in chapter 4 now. And in the upper left-hand corner, verse 32, the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.

And, this is pretty much translated the same way through those other translations, but here, what brought them together was the commonality they had with the person of Christ, his crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection.

These people were really together. They were united because of the person of Christ and because of the events that had transpired in the life of Christ, they were all on the same page.

[11 : 47] I don't know that there's ever been a time for a group of believers to have been more united since because it's pretty hard to get them united today about a whole lot of things. But they are really together on this.

And I want you to note the kind of spirit that prevailed in their midst. And we are told in the balance of verse 32, neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own.

Now, why did this spirit of unity consist of this kind of an extreme behavior? Alright, you're all agreed.

You're all together. That's great. You see eye to eye on these issues. But what does that have to do with pooling your resources?

Where does that come in? They had all things common. We'll see later in this. Well, let's read on. Verse 33.

[12 : 51] And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

It was a spirit of graciousness from God. Goodspeed renders it. God's favor rested richly upon them. Phillips says, A wonderful spirit of generosity pervaded the whole fellowship.

Neither was there any among them that lacked. For, or because, as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostles' feet.

And distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. This was a pure, original form of communism.

There's nothing else to call it. And this is what Karl Marx professed, and his credo was, the essence of communism of course, is from everyone according to his ability to everyone according to his need.

[14 : 13] Communism means having all things in common. It's the basis for communal living. I remember when Barb and I were in Israel in 1990, we were there for six weeks on a historical geographical study tour with Arnold Fruchtenbaum.

And we visited several Jewish kibbutzes or kibbutzim. And this one we visited, I think, if I'm not mistaken, I think it was a fish hatchery.

And everybody worked there in this kibbutz. And the women, of course, cared for the children and took care of the meals and everything. And all of the men went and did whatever they had to do to fulfill their responsibilities.

And they were saving, this was 1990, and this particular kibbutz was saving up to buy television sets.

And he said, the guy who was giving us the cook's tour, and they were all Jewish. Of course, our guide was a believer, a Hebrew Christian.

[15 : 23] But the kibbutz that we were visiting were all Jews. And yet, they were very accommodating and very gracious, and they knew we were Christians. And they said, we're saving up our money so we can buy televisions for everyone.

And it will really be nice here in this kind of like a day room or family room that they had where everybody could kind of come together and where they had their meals in common and everything. He said, it would really be nice to have even a TV here in our dining room so we can see.

And someone asked the question, well, how many TVs is this going to be? And he said something like 35 or 40 or whatever. And someone said, well, why don't you just get the one?

You can put it up here, you know, and everybody could say, oh, no, no, can't do that. We can't buy one TV until we can buy all of them because everybody has to have one.

That's their idea of equalization. Everybody sharing in common. Nobody could have a TV until everybody could have a TV.

[16:33] And that's the basis of this. And some are of the opinion that that's the way it ought to be. Now, what we've got here is an extraordinary kind of situation that is developed.

And it is interesting to note that in talking with some of my friends, particularly most of those of the Baptist persuasion, as I used to be, and hear them insist on Acts being the birthday of the church, and as a result, that establishes the pattern for what the church is supposed to be.

But it gets very sticky when you come to a passage like this. And you ask them, well, have you considered on following? No, it doesn't mean that literally. It just means that this is the spirit that you're supposed to have.

But you're not actually supposed to do it. Well, were these people wrong in doing this? And you could say they were just caught up in the euphoria of what was happening, and they just were overwhelmed with this spirit of generosity, or was there something more behind this?

And I submit that there really was, because, fellas, this has got kingdom qualifications and conditions written all over it. And what they were doing was an expression of their generosity and their gratitude, but it was also an act of, I'm convinced, what they considered to be obedience.

[18:08] obedience. There is a precedent for this. And we've looked at it before, but not for quite some time. So take your Bible and come back with me to Matthew chapter 19.

Matthew chapter 19. And it's a very familiar account of the rich young ruler. I'm sure you all recall it.

And he came to Jesus in verse 16 and said, Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?

Now, I don't want to get sidetracked, but I need to stop here just a little bit. This man was not thinking at all in terms of, I know I'm going to die someday, and what do I have to do so I can be sure I go to heaven?

That's not what he's asking. That was not the Jewish concept of the afterlife at all in the Old Testament. They did believe in the reality of life after death, but they did not have a New Testament connotation of it.

[19:17] Ours is quite different in the age of grace. We view life as eventually coming to an end, and when it does, if you are a believer in Christ, your spirit is separated from your body, and your body is placed in the ground or cremated or whatever, and the spirit that inhabited that body departs the body, absent from the body, present with the Lord.

And that is heaven. That is our concept of life after death, and 2 Corinthians 5 refers to that also. But the Jew had no inkling of that at all.

They knew there was an afterlife. They identified it with Sheol or Hades, and some see Luke 16 as a kind of commentary on that, and the great gulf fixed between Abraham and Lazarus and the rich man Dives, etc.

But they did not have our concept of eternal life. What this young man is asking is this. What do I need to do to assure that I will have a place or position in the future kingdom of heaven when it is established on earth?

That's what this young man is asking, and that's what Jesus is addressing, and later on it becomes even clearer. That's what he meant when he said that I may have eternal life. And Jesus said, Why callest thou me good?

[20 : 54] There is none good but one that is God. That's a study in and of itself, and I've given you a little bit of content on that, but we can't stop there. But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

Now that sounds very legalistic, doesn't it? Keep the commandments. Fellas, this is an Old Covenant Testament setting.

Christ functioned, operated, lived under, worked under the Mosaic Covenant, not the New. The New wasn't even established until later when with his own blood, and the night before he was betrayed, said, This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

And that would not be affected until he actually died on the cross. So what is in effect here is the Old Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant. And he did not come to destroy that.

He came to fulfill it. So we read on, keep the commandments. commandments. And he said unto him, which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal.

[22 : 06] Honor your father and mother, and love your neighbors yourself. The young man said, All these things have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?

Jesus said unto him, If you will be perfect, or if you will be whole or complete, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, that is the kingdom of heaven, and come and follow me.

And we know he went away sorrowful because he had great possessions. And then Jesus said, and this I think clarifies what I said earlier, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And we've taken great pains in the past to explain that the kingdom of heaven, which John the Baptist preached, the kingdom of heaven being nigh, that Christ preached, is not heaven where we go when we die.

It is the kingdom of heaven come to earth. And it is a fulfillment of what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer. And the prayer is for thy kingdom come so that thy will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

[23 : 24] This is the kingdom setting. And in Acts chapter 4 that we are now considering, it is still the kingdom setting. That has not been abrogated at all.

And here is a really major point that I want you to keep in mind. And this is so important, guys. I really want to emphasize this. Many are of the opinion that when Christ died on the cross and Israel crucified their Messiah, that was when the kingdom was set aside.

Because the king was taken out of action, if you will, and all of the promises in connection with the kingdom of heaven coming to earth, they were all put on hold when Christ was on the cross.

cross. And I submit that that is a huge, huge mistake. Because it wasn't until the death of Christ that the kingdom of heaven is eligible to come to earth.

How many times have I told you there are two things, two prerequisites that must be fulfilled before the kingdom of heaven can be established on earth?

[24 : 48] And the first one is the death of the Messiah. Because it is the death of Christ that provides the legal basis, the judicial basis for God being able to lift the curse that He had imposed upon the earth and upon mankind.

And when Christ died on that cross, that balanced the scales. And Peter alludes to this, that the crucifixion of Christ Christ was God doing His part.

And the second thing that has to be accomplished before the kingdom of heaven can be established is that Israel nationally has to embrace their Messiah.

And when Peter preached his message in Acts chapter 2, he is telling the people of Israel those two things, God's already fulfilled one. He's done His part. What's your part?

Get on board. You need to receive Jesus as your Messiah. And then Peter preached the same thing in Acts chapter 3.

[25 : 56] So what I'm saying is this, the kingdom potential and the kingdom promise for Israel did not end with the crucifixion of Christ.

It continues on after Acts 2, Acts 3, and it's still available here in Acts 4. And I submit that these people who are taking their possessions and turning them into money and giving them to everyone as it has need, all they are doing is fulfilling the righteous requirements under the law.

There's no grace in this. Under the law, they are fulfilling the conditions that Christ earlier laid down to the rich young ruler. And nobody has any problem in reading that account of the rich young ruler.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? We'll keep the commandments. We all know, even my Baptist friends will agree, no, that's not our message. We don't tell people that. We tell them, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

Are you telling me that something that Jesus Christ told someone that He had to do for eternal life is something that we shouldn't be preaching?

[27 : 08] How can that be? But it is. Well, then you're saying that Jesus was wrong? No. I'm saying that Jesus couldn't be wrong.

And He wasn't wrong. But He was teaching under a different dispensation. This is still the dispensation of the law. This is still Jewish.

This is still kingdom oriented. What we know as the church and the grace of God has not even come into being yet here in Acts. And this is so important to understand.

So important. So, Acts chapter 2 is not the beginning of the church and Acts chapter 2 is not the pattern that we are supposed to be following. And yet, so many of our brethren say the church's pattern, the kind of church we're supposed to be.

If we just had enough faith, we could do the miracles they did in Acts 2. We would be speaking in tongues. We would be performing miracles. We would be raising the dead. We would be stacking up wheelchairs and crutches and everything.

[28 : 13] But we just don't have enough faith. And that's the common party line today. Roger, you have a comment? Question? After Jesus told the guy to keep the Ten Commandments and the young guy said, I've kept all these, why did he go ahead and ask, what do I lack?

Because it looks like that would have satisfied him when he said, I've kept all those. Yeah, well... Do you have any explanation? Was he feeling something? He wasn't quite whole or on board or whatever?

Well, all I can give you is a wise man opinion. And that is, my suspicion is that this young man in his gut knew that things were not like they ought to be.

be. And, you know, in your heart of hearts, who of us in our heart of hearts thinks that we are all we ought to be? Dan?

When it comes to wealth, and wealth being not a sin, is it the wealth itself or the idolatry and the idolization of the wealth?

[29 : 25] And if that be the case, is this a man interpretation that really detracts from the meaning of this? Well, this is a little bit fresh in my mind because I've just been doing some things on poverty and prosperity.

But just suffice it to say that, well, Paul wrote to Timothy and summed it up very well. It is the love of money that is the root of all evil.

And there are many who would render that, that money is the root of all evil, but it isn't. Money is a legitimate exchange. It is the love of money that is the root of all evil.

And the extremes to which some are willing to go to get it demonstrates they have an unhealthy attitude toward it. But even as a Christian, I think if you had a Lamborghini, it would be very difficult maybe to really stay focused.

And Jesus does when that Lamborghini is sitting in the ground. And yet that's muddy. For me, it's a very unclear, muddy area. Yeah. Well, wealth and prosperity is very much a personal thing, too.

[30 : 37] Some of the most godly men in the Bible were very wealthy men. And Abraham is an example. He's a very wealthy man. And Job was, too. Lost it all and then God gave it back in double portion.

And great wealth does not produce great spirituality. That's for sure. There are very wealthy people who are very spiritual spiritual and really love the Lord.

And there are poverty stricken people who are very ungodly and have no use at all for spiritual things. So, that's really not the issue. But this passage here in Matthew 19 is presenting a comparatively legalistic thing.

There is something that you can do. And under the Mosaic law, there was a lot of emphasis placed upon doing. It is do and thou shalt live.

Under grace, it's live and thou shalt do. It is just a reverse. And when Paul said, writing to the Romans, for we are not under law, but under grace.

[31 : 55] Now, this doesn't mean that because we are in Christ, we are lawless, because we are under a law too. And Romans 8 makes it clear that it is the law of life, the law of liberty in Christ Jesus that has set us free.

That's a law also. But it's the law of liberty. Not to be confounded with the law of Moses, which of course we are not under. And not only that, but fellas, we never were under the law of Moses.

Gentiles never were under the law of Moses and still aren't. And when you come into the Gospels, you find four renditions of the life of Christ, all of which are rendered during the earthly life of Christ, all under the Mosaic economy.

And that is so very clear. So, when you come into the four Gospels, you are dealing with the Mosaic economy, and you are dealing with it as it was delivered to the nation of Israel.

The law of Moses, the whole Old Testament, was never given to Babylon, never given to the Egyptians, never given to the Assyrians. It was given to Israel exclusively.

[33 : 15] And all of the accoutrements that went with it. So, that's very, very important. Now, in Acts chapter 4 that we've been reading about, they're having these things in common.

All they are doing is beginning to meet what they see as kingdom conditions, getting ready for this message, because the kingdom was still very viable for Israel.

The opportunity was still there. And the food is here. So, you go right ahead and serve, and I'll take any questions. Right.

Right. And that, I think, maybe is one of the popular interpretations today, that it's just harder for rich people because they're so distracted by their wealth. What he was saying is, no, it's harder for them to enter the kingdom because they have to put it all in the pot.

Right. Exactly. Exactly. Good point. And take up your cross and follow me. Come and follow me. Pardon me?

[34 : 25] Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Could be an albatross. An albatross around your neck. So, guys, don't go to the Lamborghini dealer when you leave here. Scott?

What do you want to do with mine now, see? Well, yeah, to keep things in perspective, I'm always wanting the Lamborghini, and they are so back, I just want my power back on. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Just settle for electric. Yeah, just settle for that. Yeah. Roger, did you have something? Yeah, and I'm thinking about the rich young guy. He went away sorrowful.

I can't help but feel that that boy changed his mind. I'm basically. We don't know. It could be. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. and he goes away, and I just can't help but feel that he pretended...

[35 : 38] Well, you may well be right. You may well be right. This thing's going to get a lot bigger coming into Acts 5, you're into Ananias and Sapphira.

And we're not talking about chump change, we're talking about real estate. And these people sold land. Sold land. And brought the money and gave it to the apostles.

And you know something? Then, in the interim, what's going to happen is that the kingdom offer to Israel is going to be withdrawn because Israel has provided their final answer to God.

And I personally think that was with the stoning of Stephen and bringing Paul the apostle on the scene. And when Paul goes on his missionary trip and he's over in Macedonia and Achaia, crosses over the hell spawn into Europe, and one of the things he's doing is taking up a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

How did they get poor? How did they get poor? They divested themselves of a lot of their assets. And now they're hurting. So these things will all come into play and it all really fits into this book of Acts.

[36 : 59] Anything else before we call it quits? Okay. Thank you all for being here today. Enjoy your breakfast. End of the day.