

AND ON IT GOES

‘By what power or what name did you do this?’ Acts 4:7b

NUGGET – This is, perhaps, a more crucial question than it might seem at first glance. The rulers, including some familiar names from the Jewish trial of Jesus Himself – Annas and Caiaphas – are the ones asking this question of Peter and John. The reason this is such a crucial question is that in this question these rulers equate ‘name’ with ‘power’.

They recognize that by speaking, healing, teaching, eating, walking, anything, *anything* done “in the name” of someone acknowledges the power of that someone.

Name is power because:

- it is identity
- it is the representation of what is named
- it points to authority outside of oneself

And in the nugget verse the disciples are being questioned regarding all of this in relationship to the name of Jesus. The disciples claim no power in themselves, but only in Jesus name. Of course this frightens those who claim power for themselves because this challenges that power.

It also must be noted that some of them may be honestly jealous for the name of God – of Yahweh. They know the ancient power of that name. And the power exhibited by the disciples must be measured against the power of Yahweh. They are seeing the name of Jesus as that rival. That is what makes this question so vital.

It is the core question everyone must face at some point. Am I my own power or is there another to whom I must ‘bend the knee’ in humility and acknowledgment of someone greater?

And in verse 12 they make clear that there is only one Name by which, not only is the crippled man healed, but also by which salvation is granted: in the name of Jesus the crucified whom God raised from the dead. No one can question the result of this because it is standing there right in front them, the crippled man, over 40 years old, is on his feet! And yet still these leaders threaten the disciples to not use the name of Jesus again.

And this is foolishness. For even the leaders acknowledge in verse 21 that the people are praising God, Yahweh, for this miracle. The people are not praising Peter and John, but God. The people see the power of God, not of man, at work in the disciples when they act and speak in the name of Jesus. The combination of miracle and acknowledgement of God at work should give the leaders a reason to consider becoming followers of Jesus. And this just points out for us yet again that it is by God's gift of faith, not reason, is how one comes to follow the name of Jesus for salvation.

APPLICATION -

1. What we see Peter and John do in Jesus name is miraculous. I’m not suggesting that we can approach that. However, no less than them, we too are to live and speak in Jesus name. We easily acknowledge that in our minds, but do we speak that way? Try something consciously, not as a temptation or test, but rather as way to help identify with the disciples: when you get up every morning this week say, I’m going to live in Jesus name today.

PRAY - Ask God the Holy Spirit to be with you for strength when you face ridicule for your faith. Jesus.

GOING DEEPER

When praying the disciples asked only one thing for themselves – to speak in the name of Jesus. They asked for the power to do things in the name of Jesus so that they could speak of Him and His resurrection.