

Series: How Jesus Acts Through Us Today; *Sermon:* **Faith under Trial;**
delivered by Josh Moody, senior pastor, on March 22, 2020

Bible text explored: Acts 4:5–22

⁵On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, ⁶with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” ⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰let 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. ¹¹This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹²And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

¹³Now 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. ¹⁴But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, ¹⁶saying, “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. ¹⁷But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” ¹⁸So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But 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, ²⁰for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” ²¹And 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. ²²For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old. [ESV]

Review and application:

1. Which features of our social order that appeared reliably established has the current pandemic thrown into serious doubt . . .
 - . . . our world order?
 - . . . our national, state, and local governing institutions?
 - . . . the adequacy of our scientific knowledge?
 - . . . the stability of our families?
 - . . . the security of our financial resources?
 - . . . other: _____?

In today’s passage, Peter and John were put on trial by a court of religious authorities. What did they do when their faith was put to the test? What should we do as ours is tested during the current crisis?

2. Peter and John stood before a powerful seated tribunal. What kind of courage did this call for? (See *Ephesians 6:10-13*.)
3. But who stood with them, and what effect did that have? (See *verse 14*.)
What are some ways we can stick together during a time of “social distancing”?

4. How did the members of the tribunal account for the boldness of the accused? (See *verse 13*.)
5. What (*verse 8*) enabled Peter to speak up confidently?
How should we pray for occasions to draw on this power?
(See *Luke 21:12-19*.)
6. How did Peter speak clearly (*verse 12*) about the source of healing and salvation?
7. Why is the Coronavirus causing widespread fear and panic?
(See *1 Corinthians 15:26*.)
How can we respond with grace and clarity about the reason for hope?
(See *1 Peter 3:15-16a*.)
8. What was the Council's pronouncement (*verse 18*) to Peter and John?
But to whom (*verses 19-20*) did Peter and John say they must listen?
9. In a time of fear, how can we securely walk by faith, overcoming our doubts by trusting in the promises of God's Word?
(See *Psalms 91:1-6*.)