

Intimidation

- Intimidate = To make timid or afraid
 - Especially to prevent someone from doing something good
- What intimidates people?
- What good actions might be stopped because of intimidation?
- Where are you experiencing intimidation?
- What is God's message for us when we are intimidated?
 - Or when we are the ones intimidating others...

Unstoppable **Acts 4:1-22**

Chinese: page 176
 Spanish: page 1388
 Brown: page 1093
 Green: page 745



Acts 3-4

- Day 1**
- 3pm: Peter & John go to the Temple to pray
 - Heal lame man: over 40, and had never walked in his life
 - Instantly: walking and leaping and praising God
 - Peter preaches to the crowds
 - Evening: Peter & John are arrested
 - Spend night in jail
- Day 2**
- Next day: trial
 - Peter preaches to the Jewish Council
 - Threatened but not harmed, then released
 - Report to friends
 - Christians pray for boldness

Acts 4:1-22

- 1-3:** Authorities: upset, arrested Peter and John
- 4:** • The problem:
- 5-7:** • Apostles were teaching “the people” (Israel)
- 8-12:** • Proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead
 - If they had credible counter evidence, certainly it would have been presented!
- 13-14:** • This was a turning point for “the people” of God
- 15-17:** • Who are the spiritual leaders?
- 18:** • Who speaks for God?
- 19-20:**
- 21-22:**
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Acts 4:1-22

1-3: Authorities: upset, arrested Peter and John

4: The people: thousands believed in Jesus

5-7:

8-12:

13-14:

15-17:

18:

19-20:

21-22:

Acts 4:1-22

1-3: Authorities: upset, arrested Peter and John

4: The people: thousands believed in Jesus

5-7: Authorities: trial and intimidation

- 8-12: • Sanhedrin: highest Jewish authority
 • High priests: highest human authorities

13-14: • The same people and court that condemned Jesus
 15-17: to death

18:

19-20:

21-22:

Same issue with Jesus...

One day as Jesus was **teaching the people in the temple courts** and **proclaiming the good news**, the **chief priests** and the **teachers of the law**, together with the **elders**, came up to him. “Tell us **by what authority** you are doing these things,” they said. “Who gave you this authority?”

Luke 20:1-2

Acts 4:1-22

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18: • Couldn't intimidate Jesus

19-20:

21-22:

Intimidating the Apostles...

Then seizing Jesus, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. **Peter** followed at a distance. And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, “This man was with him.”

But he denied it. “**Woman, I don’t know him,**” he said.

A little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.”

“**Man, I am not!**” Peter replied.

About an hour later another asserted, “Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean.”

Peter replied, “Man, **I don’t know what you’re talking about!**” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, **you will disown me three times.**” And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Luke 22:54-62

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 15-17: to death

18: • Couldn't intimidate Jesus

19-20: • During Jesus' time, apostles were easily intimidated

21-22:

Acts 4:1-22

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5-7: Authorities: trial and intimidation

8-12: Peter: Jesus Christ of Nazareth (whom you killed)
 is the only means of salvation anywhere for everyone

13-14: • "Jesus is the inescapable decision point

15-17: for salvation"

18: • "You are rejecting God's only means of salvation"

19-20: • From prophecy: "You are God's enemies"

21-22: • They were not intimidated!

• "filled with the Holy Spirit"

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 is the only means of salvation anywhere for everyone
 13-14: Authorities: astonished by courage & were powerless
 15-17: • Bold proclamation was a bigger problem for
 18: authorities than a lame man walking
 19-20:
 21-22:

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 is the only means of salvation anywhere for everyone
 13-14: Authorities: astonished by courage & were powerless
 15-17: • Private deliberation: no good options (except belief)
 18: • Self-preservation was higher priority
 19-20: than knowing God
 21-22:

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- 13-14: Authorities: astonished by courage & were powerless
- 15-17: • Private deliberation: no good options (except belief)
- 18: • Public response: Stop it!
- 19-20: • Set up for future prosecution (see Acts 5:28)
- 21-22: • “in the name of Jesus” = “for the praise of Jesus”

(Jesus, speaking to Peter, John, and the rest of the Apostles)

People will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. And so **you will bear testimony** to me.

But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or **contradict**.

You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. Everyone will hate you because of me. But not a hair of your head will perish. **Stand firm, and you will win life.**

Luke 21:12-19

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15-17: • Private deliberation: what can we do?

18: • Public response: Stop it!

19-20: Peter: Can't stop & won't stop being witnesses of Jesus!

21-22:

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 21-22: Authorities: More threats
 "All the people": praised God

The Big Idea

**The authority and power
 of Jesus Christ of Nazareth
 is unchallenged and unchallengeable
 in all the world
 even through His very human followers**



- **When you encounter God (like a lighthouse...)**
 - **Opposing God is foolish and futile**
- **When you encounter opposition to God in you (like standing in the lighthouse)...**
 - **Have no fear, no matter how great the power!**
 - **Opposing God is foolish and futile**
 - **“If God is for us, who can be against us?”**

People, human powers, spiritual powers, human institutions, and life's troubles seem so powerful

They easily intimidate us

Yet when we stand on the rock of Jesus, no storm is too great, and no power can threaten us



Application

- When troubles intimidate and overwhelm us...
 - **Stand on the solid rock of Jesus!**
 - Whether sickness or relationships or finances or emotions
 - Jesus alone has the power to bring peace and wholeness
 - Beginning now
 - One day He will restore all things
 - All other ground is sinking sand

Application

- When troubles intimidate and overwhelm us...
- When our weaknesses or insignificance intimidate us...
 - **Stand on the solid rock of Jesus!**
 - Whether we lack education or degrees or position or titles or privilege or skills...
 - All of these things are like garbage compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Jesus!
 - “Savior, He can move the mountains.
My God is might to save!”

Application

- When troubles intimidate and overwhelm us...
- When our weaknesses or insignificance intimidate us...
- When people or powers intimidate us...
 - **Stand on the solid rock of Jesus!**
 - No one is small, weak, unimportant, or vulnerable, who is standing on the rock of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit
 - Persecution is very real today for many, and it may be real tomorrow for more of us... yet our God is greater!

Application

- When troubles intimidate and overwhelm us...
- When our weaknesses or insignificance intimidate us...
- When people or powers intimidate us...

STAND ON THE SOLID ROCK OF JESUS!

- Troubles are still real. Persecution may come.
 - Yet in Jesus, we are more than conquerors!
 - One day, these momentary, light trouble will be replaced with an eternal weight of glory!

For this reason I remind you to **fan into flame the gift of God**, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. So **do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord** or of me his prisoner. Rather, **join with me in suffering for the gospel**, by the power of God.

2 Timothy 1:6-8

If God is for us, who can be against us? ...

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Romans 8:31, 38-39

The Big Idea

**The authority and power
of Jesus Christ of Nazareth
is unchallenged and unchallengeable
in all the world
even through His very human followers**

**STAND ON THE SOLID ROCK OF JESUS
BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
AND NO POWER IN ALL OF CREATION CAN HARM US**