

## Bible Story 5-17-2020

We've been making our way through God's Big Story this year, and it's been a fun, wild ride. This month we've been looking at what happened as the church was just getting started. This was just after Jesus died on the cross, came back to life, and then was lifted up to heaven.

Our reports show that the number of people who have put their faith in Jesus skyrocketed on a day the Jewish people refer to as Pentecost. We find out in the book of Acts—that **THREE THOUSAND** people put their faith in Jesus on that one day, and the numbers have only continued to grow.

As time went on, more and more people were choosing to believe that Jesus is God's Son. People were gathering in homes, sharing their lives and even their food with each other. It was remarkable.

Things got even more interesting when two men were going to the temple. These men were two of Jesus' disciples, named Peter and John.

Peter and John were headed to the temple when they saw a man who couldn't walk, who was being carried to the temple gate. Apparently, this was an everyday occurrence, He would carry this man to the temple gate, and he would beg for money from people going into the temple courtyards. The man asked Peter and John for money, but as it turned out, his life would never be the same.

Peter said **THIS** to the man . .

"I don't have any silver or gold. But I'll give you what I do have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk (**Acts 4:6, NIrV**).

That's just what the man did. He got up and walked!!

As you might expect, a large crowd gathered when this went down. The man named Peter addressed the crowd.

**Acts 3:12-19 says this**

“Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us? It’s not as if we’ve made this man walk by our own power or godliness. The God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has done this. God has brought glory to Jesus, who serves him. . . . This man whom you see and know was made strong because of faith in Jesus’ name. Faith in Jesus has healed him completely. You can see it with your own eyes. . . . So turn away from your sins. Turn to God. Then your sins will be wiped away”

Wow. Powerful words from Peter.

Not surprisingly, the religious leaders that heard Peter’s speech were angry. They got the temple authorities involved. Peter and John were **ARRESTED** and put in prison.

the next day, a group of religious leaders gathered together—including the high priest Annas and his family. They ordered the guards to bring Peter and John before them.

When Peter and John arrived before the Sanhedrin, the religious authorities demanded to know in whose name and power they were performing these miracles. Peter didn’t hold back. He told them that they had been healing people through the power of Jesus..

**Acts 4:10-12. Read**

“You nailed Jesus Christ of Nazareth to the cross. But God raised him from the dead. It is through Jesus’ name that this man stands healed in front of you. . . .You can’t be saved by believing in anyone else. God

has given people no other name under heaven that will save them (Acts 4:10-12 NIrV).

I am so impressed by the boldness of Peter and John. These are ordinary men with little to no training in public speaking or scriptural interpretation. How could they be so brave? Apparently, their time with Jesus had a huge effect on their bravery and wisdom.

The religious leaders commanded Peter and John to leave, and they gave the men a warning: they must never speak in Jesus' name again. I have a feeling that Peter and John had no plans to heed the warning. In fact, Peter and John said THIS to the high priest and his leaders . . . and I quote:

“Which is right from God’s point of view? Should we listen to you? Or should we listen to God? You be the judges! There’s nothing else we can do. We have to speak about the things we’ve seen and heard (Acts 4:19-20 NIrV).

The religious leaders couldn’t find a reason to keep Peter and John in prison. After all, they couldn’t deny that the miracle had taken place. The man who had been healed was standing there in front of everyone!

Peter and John are, in fact, free . . . and they are continuing to spread the message that they feel is their mission: Jesus is ALIVE!”

In fact, Peter and John had returned to their friends and told them about everything God had done. Through the power of God’s Spirit, as a result of all that had been happening—the healings and the message of Jesus were continuing to spread and the number of believers had now grown to more than 5,000!

Wow. What a story! It probably wasn’t so much fun for Peter and John. Those were some pretty scary moments for them. But still, Peter and John knew they had to keep going—to finish what they started.

Remember what they said:

**Open the Bible to Acts 4:20 (NIrV) and read.**

“We have to speak about the things we’ve seen and heard.”

That just shows you how determined these two men were to share the news about Jesus—even after everything they’d been through. They knew how important it is to do this:

Keep going even when it gets tough.

Peter and John make the wise choice to keep going because they knew God was with them. And God is with us, too.

### **Prayer**

Dear God,  
thank You for being with Peter and John, and thank You for being with us, too. We know we can keep going even when it gets tough, because You’re always there for us. Help us to finish what we’ve started—especially when it comes to sharing Your love with others. It may not always be easy, but we can keep going because we know You will carry us through.

We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name,  
Amen.

Peter and John knew it was their job to share the good news about Jesus. They were confident and bold because they knew God was with them. They had the Holy Spirit to help them.

They were determined to talk about Jesus, because they truly believed that He was the Savior God had promised. In the beginning,

people had messed up God's perfect world, but God sent Jesus to make a way so that we could have a relationship with God that will last forever.

All of us face tough things in life. Sometimes you might feel like quitting. But you can do what Peter and John did. You can choose to finish what you started.

“Keep going even when it gets tough. Say that with me.”  
Keep going even when it gets tough.

Remember, God is ALWAYS strong. We can rely on Him to help us when we get tired or frustrated. “Sometimes things start out easy, but they get harder. Maybe picking out a simple song on the piano is pretty easy, but once you've got the basics down, your teacher assigns you something that seems super hard. Or maybe you thought soccer was fun at first, but now your coach has your team running laps before practice, and it seems too tough to keep going.

Whether it's soccer, piano, or sharing the news about Jesus with others, we can choose to keep going. We can choose to finish what we've started.