



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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Persecuted for the Name of Jesus Christ!

Scripture: Acts 4:13-22; 5:17-28

Many people react negatively to the fact that there is no other name than that of Jesus to call upon for salvation. Yet this is not something the church decided; it is the specific teaching of Jesus Himself (John 14:6). Since God designated Jesus to be the Savior of the world, no one else can be His equal. No other religious person died for the sins of the whole human race; no other religious person came to earth as God's only Son; no other religious person rose from the dead. Our focus should be on Jesus, whom God provided as the way to have an eternal relationship with Himself. **There is no other name or way!**

A changed life convinces people of Jesus' power. One of your greatest testimonies is the difference others see in your life and attitudes since you have believed in Jesus. Don't be surprised if some people reject you and your positive witness for Christ. **When minds are closed, even the clearest presentation of the facts can't open them.** But don't give up either. Pray for those people and continue to spread the Gospel.

After healing the lame man at the temple which is called Beautiful (Acts 3), which was lame for forty years (Acts 4:22) made the miracle even more impactful and further strengthened the public's faith and praise for God. The religious leaders were jealous—Peter and the apostles were already commanding more respect than they had ever received. The difference, however, was that the religious leaders demanded respect and reverence for themselves; the apostles' goal was to bring respect and reverence for God.

Peter and John's zeal for the Lord was so strong that they could not keep quiet, even when threatened. The religious leaders would do anything to stop these apostles from challenging their authority, threatening their secure position, and exposing their hypocritical motives to the people. They were frantic, wondering what would happen next and where all this would end!

Suppose someone threatened to kill you if you didn't stop talking about God. You might be tempted to keep quiet. But the apostles, after being threatened by powerful leaders, arrested, put in jail, beaten, and slandered by the religious leaders, and miraculously released, went back to preaching. This was nothing less than God's power working through them (Acts 4:31)! When we are convinced of the truth of Christ's resurrection and have experienced the presence and power of His Holy Spirit, we will have the confidence to speak out for Christ.

If your courage to witness for God has weakened, pray that your boldness may increase. Remember Jesus' promise, *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 10:32). The apostles had power to do miracles, great boldness in preaching, and God's presence in their lives; yet they were not free from hatred and persecution. Faith in God does not make troubles disappear; it makes troubles appear less fearsome because it puts them in the right perspective.

Don't expect everyone to react favorably when you share something as dynamic as your faith in Christ. Some will be jealous, frightened, or threatened. Expect some negative reactions, and remember that you must be more concerned about serving God than about the reactions of people. *"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29). The apostles knew their priorities. While we should try to keep peace with everyone (Romans 12:18), conflict with the world and its authorities is sometimes inevitable for a Christian (John 15:18).

There will be situations where you cannot obey both God and man. Let Jesus' words in Luke 6:22 encourage you: *"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake."*