

POWER FOR LIVING

— Acts of the Apostles —

Living All In *3/8

BIG IDEA

God provides the power a church needs to overcome both the **external** pressure to minimize Jesus and the **internal** temptation to serve yourself.

Acts 4:7–12 (NLT)... 10 Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was **healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ** the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead.

11 For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says,

‘The stone that you builders rejected
has now become the **cornerstone**.’

12 There is salvation in **no one else!** God has given **no other name** under heaven by which we **must be saved.**”

- Jesus is special, unlike any before— AUTHORITATIVE. FOUNDATIONAL. EXCLUSIVE.

2 CHALLENGES to the CHURCH

1. Hostile **outsiders**.

Local cultural authorities:

Acts 4:18 (NLT): 18 So they called the apostles back in and **commanded** them **never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus**.

- Stop it with the Jesus talk.

What’s their bold Spirit-filled response?

Acts 4:19–20 (NLT) 19 But Peter and John replied, “Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him?
20 **We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard.**”

- After I was able to “taste & see”, I cannot stop myself from sharing & showing everything I’ve experienced.

Despite the persecution, the church thrived.

Acts 4:32–35 (NLT) 32 All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. 33 The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. 34 There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them 35 and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

- All believers united and overflowing with Jesus & generosity.

2. **Consumer** insiders.

Acts 5:1–5 (NLT) But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property. 2 He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife's consent, **he kept the rest.** 3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, why have you **let Satan fill your heart?** You **lied to the Holy Spirit,** and you kept some of the money for yourself. ...

5 As soon as Ananias heard these words, he fell to the floor and died. **Everyone** who heard about it was **terrified.**

- Main question for consumer: What's in this for me?

If you taste & see, what will you discover?

The **holiness** of God is "*the infinite purity and moral perfection of his nature, by which he is perfectly distinct from all sin and infinitely exalted above it.*" ~ Jonathan Edwards

- **Def: Holiness : "otherness"**
 - i. "other than you, separate from you, distinct, cut off, set apart, devoted to himself & nothing else."

Isaiah 6:1–3 (NLT) It was in the year King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord. He was **sitting** on a **lofty throne**, and the **train** of his robe **filled** the **Temple**. 2 Attending him were mighty seraphim, ...3 They were calling out to each other, “**Holy, holy, holy** is the Lord of Heaven’s Armies! The whole earth is **filled** with his **glory!**”

Revelation 4:8 (NLT) ...Day after day and night after night they keep on saying, “**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty—** the one who always was, who is, and who is still to come.”

Our Church’s Prayer for Courage

- in the face of **persecution & partisan politics**.

Acts 4:24–31 (NLT) ... 24 When they heard the report, **all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God:**

...

29 And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great **boldness** in preaching your word. 30 Stretch out your hand with **healing power**; may **miraculous signs and wonders** be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

31 After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all **filled** with the **Holy Spirit**. Then they **preached** the word of God with **boldness**.

WHAT NOW?

1. Taste & see that Jesus alone satisfies.
2. Let God’s holiness scare you straight.
3. Pray more & before you protest when persecuted, pressured or threatened.

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

1. What do you perceive to be the modern day threats to the church?
2. Would you be willing & able to tell your own Jesus story to your group? (Focus on salvation or healing)
3. What’s your favorite aspect of the holiness of God?
4. Read Acts 4:23-31 together.
 - a. What did you notice about their reaction to the threats against their church that we could learn from?