

The Rise of Opposition

Passages: Acts 3–5

Memory Verse

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
1. Be filled with the Holy Spirit. 2. Speak the truth despite oppositions.	God’s name is the only name under heaven by which we can be saved.	1. Be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. 2. Be bold in speaking God’s word.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. A Lame Man Is Healed (Acts 3:1–19)
- B. The Rise of Opposition (Acts 4:1–31)
- C. The Second Opposition (Acts 5:17–42)

Life Application

- 1. Be Continually Filled with the Holy Spirit
- 2. Boldly Speak the Word of God

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Despite oppositions that we face, we must choose to obey God rather than men.

A. A Lame Man Is Healed (Acts 3:1–19)

Have you ever seen God’s healing power in your life? Or in the lives of your family and relatives? Or have you seen God demonstrate His power in church? (*Have students share.*) We’re going to look at a familiar story found in Acts of the Apostles. Let’s read the passage from Acts 3:1–16.

Every day, as worshippers entered the temple courts for the time of prayer, the lame man would ask them for alms. When Peter and John entered the temple to pray, he once again asked for alms. But Peter and John fixed their eyes on him and said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6). Then Peter took his hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. The healing power from God made a lame man walk! Can you imagine the joy this man must have felt after over forty years of laying on the mat (Acts 3:2; 4:22)? He was so happy that he entered the temple walking, leaping, and praising God! All the people were filled with amazement.

1. How was this lame man healed?

Upon seeing the people’s amazement, Peter preached to them of Jesus and His power. He explained to them the reason for the man’s healing, saying, “And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all” (v. 16).

a. “And His name [...] has made this man strong”

The power that healed this man was not from Peter or John, but from Jesus’ name. There is power in the name of Jesus Christ.

b. “Through faith in His name [...] the faith which comes through Him”

It was not the faith of the lame man, but the faith of Peter and John. They wanted to give him something much better than silver and gold. Money helps for a while, but it does not last. What does last is the power of healing from Jesus Christ and, more importantly, knowing Jesus.

So, we can conclude that Jesus’ name, and faith in His name, made the lame man well. Peter and John have taught us that when we speak in His name with faith, there is power. But Jesus’ name can do much more than heal us. Let’s read the following verses.

- Acts 4:12 – “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
- Phil 2:9 – “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name.”
- Rom 10:13 – “For ‘whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’”
- Heb 11:1 – “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”
- Heb 11:6 – “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

Testimony

I was born in 1984 in Hunan, China. In 2011, I contracted a severe illness. I was unable to walk. When I returned to the hospital on January 15, 2013, the doctor told me he could not heal me. On October 13, 2014, the hospital in Changsha concluded that I had a tumor in my brain. There was nothing the doctors could do. Toward the end of 2014, I was totally

paralyzed. I couldn't eat, couldn't go to the bathroom, and I was in severe pain. But my wife and my father-in-law prayed unceasingly for me, asking God for His mercy and healing. Every day, they prayed in the name of Jesus Christ. They also requested the church to intercede on my behalf. Miraculously, God healed me day by day. My sickness was cured by the power of intercession. Even the doctors could not believe how amazing this was. My health is back to normal and I can work. I'm so thankful to the Most High God. He is the One True God who lifted me out from the edge of death.

–Wang Si-Jad, Hunan Church, China
(From *True Jesus Church Amazing Grace Testimony Series #12*)

2. Peter's Sermon in Solomon's Porch

Let's read verses Acts 3:13–15.

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Peter explains to the people Jesus' identity, and thus the reason for His power which healed the lame man. Peter teaches us the reasons Jesus Christ is worthy of our worship:

- a. He is the Holy One and the Just (v. 14)
- b. He is the Prince of life (v. 15)
- c. He is raised from the dead (v. 15)

3. The importance of repentance

Let's read verses Acts 3:17–19.

Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

After declaring Jesus' identity and power and reminding the people of what they had done to Him, Peter then proceeded to teach them what they ought to do. They had made a grave mistake when they opposed, betrayed, slandered, mocked, and crucified the Prince of life. But Peter encouraged them with the good news: their sins can be blotted out as long as they repent. With repentance, they can have everlasting life.

Note: What are "times of refreshing"?

This can mean freedom from sin and the blessings that come as a result of conversion (2 Cor 5:17; Rom 5:9–11)(*BSG: Acts, 14*).¹

¹ TJC Department of Literary Ministry, "Segment Analysis 3:19-26" *Bible Study Guide: Acts*, (U.S.A.: True Jesus Church, 2012), https://bsg.tjc.org/tjc_bsg_lesson/acts-6/?guide_id=310, 14.

B. The Rise of Opposition (Acts 4:1–13, 15–20, 23–31)

Let's read Acts 4:1–13. Peter's teachings of Jesus' resurrection "greatly disturbed" the religious leaders, so they placed the apostles in custody until the next day. Despite this, many believed and the number of men grew to around 5,000! This was truly the power of the Holy Spirit moving the hearts of the people. The next day, Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other rulers and elders questioned Peter and John. None could deny the healing of the lame man, so the leaders asked them, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" (Acts 4:7).

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said, "Let it be known to you all, 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 stands here before you whole" (Acts 4:10). As Peter declared, there is no other name by which we can be saved, only the name of Jesus Christ. Acts 10:43 says, "Through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins." Jesus' name holds the power to heal and forgive and is the only path through which we can come to God.

Note: Why did Peter quote Psalm 118:22?

A chief cornerstone is the most important foundation stone upon which a building is built. Like the stone rejected by the builders, Jesus Christ was rejected by the religious authorities of His day. But God exalted Him, making Him our Lord and Savior and, in turn, the chief cornerstone upon which God's house is built. He is the foundation of our salvation (*BSG: Acts, 2c*).²

Let's continue reading Acts 4:15–20. The apostles were uneducated and untrained men, yet the council could not deny any of their words or their deeds. Moreover, an entire city had witnessed the healing of this lame man and glorified God for it. But instead of choosing to believe, the council commanded the disciples not to speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18).

C. The Second Opposition (Acts 5:17–42)

Let's read Acts 5:17–42. Angry at the success of the disciples' ministry and the many miracles they performed in Jesus' name, the high priest and his fellow Sadducees imprisoned them. But at night, an angel of the Lord released them and commanded them to continue preaching in the temple.

The next day, the council found the prison empty and the apostles preaching in the same temple in which they had been arrested. The council confronted them again and said, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" (Acts 5:28). But Peter and the other apostles answered, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:28). They went on to proclaim that God raised up Jesus and has exalted Him to be the Prince and Savior who offers repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31).

1. What can we learn from these oppositions?

a. No matter what opposes us, we need to preach the truth

In response to the council's command, Peter and John replied, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19–20). When Peter and his fellow apostles

² TJC Department of Literary Ministry, "Segment Analysis 4:5-12," *Bible Study Guide: Acts*, (U.S.A.: True Jesus Church, 2012), https://bsg.tjc.org/tjc_bsg_lesson/acts-7/?guide_id=310, 2c.

were later beaten by the council, not only did they rejoice for being “counted worthy to suffer shame for His name” (Acts 5:41), they also continued their efforts to spread the gospel.

The apostles had witnessed Jesus’ resurrection. They had seen His ascension. And before He left, they had received His instructions to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit. Then, on the Day of Pentecost, they experienced the downpour of the Holy Spirit, and their lives were transformed. Their experiences fueled their determination to testify in Jesus’ name, and their faith prompted their obedience to God, rather than man.

b. Opposition strengthens our faith

Let’s read Acts 4:23–31. From this passage, we can see that the believers believed in God all the more. They offered a prayer, and “the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).

The opposition did not weaken the apostles. Rather, it made their faith stronger. They asked God to help them speak His word with boldness (Acts 4:29) and thanked Him for counting them worthy to suffer in His name (Acts 5:41). They understood that being able to suffer was a blessing in itself. We may face obstacles when we preach, but we don’t need to be afraid. All we have to do is call on the name of Jesus with faith. Opposition can paralyze us, but by relying on Jesus through prayer, we can have the boldness and the wisdom to face any threats and speak the truth.

Check for Understanding

- 1. What did Peter and John say to the lame man who wanted alms from them?** “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.”
- 2. How was this lame man healed?** He was healed by the name of Jesus Christ and by the faith of Peter and John.
- 3. According to Peter’s sermon, what are the reasons Jesus is worthy of our worship?** He is the Holy One and the Just (Acts 3:14); He is the Prince of life (Acts 3:15); He is raised from the dead (Acts 3:15).
- 4. As a result of Peter and John being placed into custody, how did the early church grow?** The number of men grew to be around 5,000.
- 5. During the second opposition, what happened the night Peter and the apostles imprisoned?** An angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, brought them out, and commanded them to continue preaching in the temple.
- 6. What was the apostles’ response to the council’s order not to preach in Jesus’ name?** “We ought to obey God rather than men. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him” (Acts 5:29, 32).

Life Application

“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

1. Be Continually Filled with the Holy Spirit

When we pray for the power of the Holy Spirit, God will fill us with the Spirit. When we allow Him to fill us, He dwells and occupies every part of our lives, guiding and controlling our actions. Prayer is an outward action, but it is our innermost heart that is changed and transformed.

How do we fill ourselves with the Holy Spirit?

Receiving the Holy Spirit is just the start; Ephesians 5:18 commands us to be filled with the Spirit. But when we sin, we are ignoring Him, which leads Him to grieve within us (Eph 4:30). To be filled, we must yield ourselves completely to the Spirit. This means avoiding sin, which hinders the Spirit and our obedience to God. When we do sin, we should immediately confess, repent to God, and ask for forgiveness in prayer. Then, we will feel the presence and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Discussion: Share a time when you felt that you were filled with the Holy Spirit.

2. Boldly Speak the Word of God

The original Greek for “boldness,” *parrēsia*, translates into “freedom in speaking,” speaking “openly,” “frankly,” or acting with “free or fearless confidence.” Boldness isn’t being mean or pushy. Boldness from God is speaking what we have seen and heard with spirit-filled conviction. It can be very gentle or kind because it comes from a spirit-filled heart. It can also be a clear, compassionate, and compelling witness in bringing others to God.

Although Peter and John were uneducated and untrained men, they spoke with such boldness before the religious leaders that the listeners were reminded of Jesus, who had also spoken with authority and power. This boldness is from God, received through prayer. It is not something we gain by ourselves. The disciples prayed for this characteristic because they understood that with the power of the Holy Spirit, God would work His wonders by enabling them to speak the word of God with confidence.

We need to learn to speak the word of God with the same boldness the disciples had. That means we need to tell it all – there is no reason to hide God’s work in our lives. Of course, preaching God’s word is not without its challenges. Some will ridicule us, and others will actively oppose us. Opposition can come from anyone, even from family members. But if we fear such opposition, it is difficult to speak the word of God with boldness. If the apostles had succumbed to their fears, they would not have been able to transform the hearts of thousands of people. We need to remember that when the word of God is spoken with power, it transforms and changes people’s hearts. May God give us boldness so that we can be a clear, concise, and unwavering witness for God, even in the face of danger or opposition.

Discussion: Share a time when you were bold in speaking God’s word.

Testimony: God Gave Me Boldness

Over the last couple of years, I have been praying for my unbelieving family, but when I think about my grandmother in particular, I cannot help but shed tears. My head kept imagining horrible scenarios of what would happen if she did not receive salvation before she passed away. I want more than anything else not to let that happen, but at the same time, there didn’t seem to be any good opportunities for me to talk to her about my faith. The times when my mother hinted or shared about our church, she didn’t show much interest and that discouraged me even more.

However, God is good. During Thanksgiving break, my grandmother came with me and my parents on an overnight trip to Napa. That night, while my mother and I were praying, I heard my grandmother come into the room, then walk out. The next morning, as my grandmother and I were eating breakfast, she asked me what we were doing the night before. I immediately grabbed this opportunity and explained our prayer and about the true God we believe in. Thank God, she asked clarifying questions throughout my explanation, which meant she was interested in what I had to say. God gave me the boldness right there to share the gospel with her. Although the conversation did not go beyond that, I thank God for allowing me this precious opportunity for me to have had this meaningful conversation with my grandmother. It gives me faith that her salvation is not so far-fetched after all. I will continue to pray for her salvation, and with faith, I will trust that God will open the door of salvation to her.

– T. H. (Sacramento Church)

Memory Verse

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

Meaning

1. Peter, being filled with the Holy Spirit, understood that the miracle of the lame man took place because of the power of Jesus’ name and because of faith in Him.
2. Jesus’ name holds the power to heal, to forgive, and to save us. His name is the only path by which we can receive the precious hope of salvation. Since we can only be saved by the name of Jesus, we must therefore repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and pray in His name to be filled by the Spirit of God.

Conclusion

Despite oppositions that we face, we must choose to obey God rather than men. Not only that, we must pray for the fullness of the Spirit so that we may continue to witness, proclaim, and preach the message of Jesus Christ with boldness and faith.

Lesson 2 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does the memory verse teach us about the power of Jesus' name?
His name has the power to heal, to forgive, and to save us. It is the only path through which we can receive salvation.
2. What are the key lessons in Peter's sermon in Solomon's Porch?
Peter explains Jesus' identity, and thus the reason for His power which healed the lame man. He also teaches us that Jesus Christ is worthy of our worship because:
 - a. *He is the Holy One and the Just (Acts 3:14)*
 - b. *He is the Prince of life (Acts 3:15)*
 - c. *He is raised from the dead (Acts 3:15)*
3. What was the apostles' response when the council forbade them from teaching in Jesus' name?
"We ought to obey God rather than men. And we are His witnesses to these things and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:29,32).
4. What does it mean to be filled by the Holy Spirit?
It means that we have allowed the Spirit of God to fill us, and that He dwells and occupies every part of our lives, guiding our actions.
5. What does it mean to be bold when speaking for God?
It means speaking what we have seen and heard with spirit-filled conviction. It can be very gentle or kind, for it comes from a spirit-filled heart. It can also be a clear, compassionate, and compelling witness in bringing others to God.
6. What types of "prisons" do we face – physical, mental, or social – for sharing our faith? Knowing you may face these, do you think you can still share your faith?
Personal answers. (Students may need some guidance on answering this question.) Ex: Social stigma, bullying, loss of friendships, rejection from family, etc.