

*When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name." Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old. (Act 4:13-22 NIV)*

Dear friends of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ +

The Word of the Lord continues to grow<sup>1</sup>. From small beginnings. At first but 12 poor little men – fishermen, uneducated, some doubting, all way out of their depth, hiding from the authorities in Jerusalem behind closed doors, shuttered windows, barred houses until that grand day, when all is changed yet once again. The living Lord, who was taken up into heaven and to the right hand of the Father, makes true his repeated promise of sending the comforter, the Holy Spirit, the Parakletos, the one, who was to confirm and guide them in all truth, remind them of everything Jesus their Lord had told, taught and entrusted to them. The comforter, the power from on high, the Lord and giver of life, the advocate and spirit of truth comes on Pentecost. He, the Holy Spirit is poured out over these apostles and disciples – and they, this previously terrified and rather intimidated handful, running away, hiding, forgetting, scared, confused, denying and betraying dozen, becomes a courageous, outspoken, frank and very self-assured band of witnesses, bold missionaries, brave evangelists, faithful teachers causing turmoil across the globe and turning the whole world upside down<sup>2</sup>. Preaching loud and clearly to the multitudes, starting there in Jerusalem and through this pure gospel preaching, this Christian dogma and teaching the Holy Spirit creates

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Franzmann CPH 1961

<sup>2</sup> Cf Acts 24:5

faith there and then in more than 3000 on Pentecost, then a crowd of over 5000 is counted and finally at the end *"a great multitude that no one can count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, will be standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They will be wearing white robes and hold palm branches in their hands. And they will cry out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." (Rev 7:9-10 NIV)*

Actually the apostles are not so much self-assured, but rather Christ-assured. He – IX - has done all and everything to convince them from disbelieving, doubting, questioning to trusting him faithfully as the one, who lives and is not dead, the one, who keeps his promises truthfully and fulfills all that was written and promised throughout the ages by the Father most meticulously and to the last fine and small detail. They confess him as the one Lord of all and only saviour of the world. Doubting Thomas becomes confessing Thomas. Running away John, becomes steadfast John. The timid denier Peter before little girls is the bold and steadfast confessor and preacher before the high and mighty. See, they don't just preach and teach the crowds, but also to the very elite, the chosen few at the top, the people in control and at the steering wheels of the powerhouses – the Sanhedrin. This is what St. Peter has got to say after a night in prison and after the powers that be have tried to stop them from preaching, teaching, confessing the name of Jesus Christ. St. Peter says and listen carefully: ***It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone." Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved – but this name of Jesus!"*** (Act 4:10-12 NIV) And now you want us to stop, keep quiet once again, go into hiding? Think again and ponder this: **"Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges!"**

## **1. We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard...**

- 1.1. After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. (Act 1:3 NIV)
- 1.2. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Act 1:8 NIV)

- 1.3. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." (Act 1:11 NIV))
- 1.4. Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection." (Act 1:21-22 NIV)
2. Then they (The rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law v.5) called them and **commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.**
  - 2.1. When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.
  - 2.2. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say.
  - 2.3. "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name."
  - 2.4. After further threats they let them go.
  - 2.5. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened.
  - 2.6. For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.
3. Examples:
  - 3.1. Luther on the Coburg – my beautiful little Confitemini: “non moriar sed vivam et narrabo opera Domini” (Ps 118:17)
  - 3.2. Schulz: Clausula Petri (Ac 5:29) We must obey God more than men!
4. **"Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges!"** Amen. The Peace of our living and reigning Lord IX be with you always +

Hymn 497