

Victory of the Lamb – October 29, 2017 – Pastor Bill Limmer
Seeking Certainty – Christ Alone is Enough – Acts 4:1-12

Dear friends,

Rockefeller was at one point the world's richest man and first ever American billionaire. Considering he was a billionaire in the early 1900's he is still considered as the richest person in modern history. When a reporter asked him, "How much money is enough?" He responded, "Just a little bit more. How about you? Bank account ok? Or could you go for a little bit more. Our full closets even scream this is not enough. One of the reasons I like to read is because I don't know enough. So I will pick up a book or five. Today as we continue our series "Seeking Certainty" we are going to dive into God's Word and see is Christ Alone is enough.

Our Scripture is from Acts 4 but before we get there we need to see what was going on to get us there. Right before Acts 4 there is a man who was crippled from birth. Without all the social programs that we have today this man was left to beg. And being the entrepreneur that he was. He had his friends set up at like the most popular place so that the most people would go by and see his plight and perhaps have pity on him. So, he was outside the temple gate and the most popular one. The one that most people walked into the temple though, the gate Beautiful. That was the story of his life. On the outside. Because he was crippled from birth, the incorrect but prevailing thought of the day was that he was lame because he or his parents had committed some great sin and so he was not allowed in the temple. So he was outside the Temple Gate.

Two of Jesus followers, Peter and John, walk by, some pretty passionate and compassionate guys. Just perfect for the lame man. Peter called for the man to look at him and John, and the lame is probably thinking chaching, chaching, and said to him, I'm not going to give you money but something much better. Peter told him in the name of Jesus, the one who has all authority over all things, including life and death, "walk." And Peter reached out his hand to the unclean man in compassion and helped him up. The man was healed. He literally jumped for joy. And he did something else he never did before. Something he could never do before, walk right into the temple, into the presence of God, the presence that he thought he had been shut out from, to praise God.

Friends by chance, do you know someone who feels they are condemned maybe because of race, gender or socio economic status, physical or mental abilities? Do you know someone who feels they are unworthy because maybe they didn't get the job they were hoping for, or maybe they are feeling unworthy because of their insecurities, anxiety or depression, or maybe because of some past sin or blunder? Do you know someone who feels unworthy or condemned because they didn't live up to their own or others expectations and they are being crushed under the weight of sinful condemnation? Some people are so caught up in trying to be perfect. They make moral issues not only out of the Ten Commandments but everything else as well. If they are getting dressed and have to go back to the closet an additional time because they forgot to get something while they were there the first time, they blew it. If they are leaving the house grab the laptop, the coffee cup, the bag and their coat on the way out the door to work but they don't have their keys ready to open the car they have blown it. They condemn themselves. In the powerful name of Jesus, they are not. They need to know that. Don't you. Let's get a little reinforcement on this.

Later that day this is what happened. Acts 4:1-3 **The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. ²They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. ³They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day.** The priests were greatly disturbed because they had thought they had swept Jesus away when they condemned him and he was crucified. The temple guard was greatly disturbed because Peter and John were preaching without permission and people were starting to follow them and he was responsible for all of this. The Sadducees were greatly disturbed about all this Jesus resurrection talk because they didn't believe in the resurrection to begin with. Despite of the leaders being so all against Jesus and his resurrection, the Scripture tells us. Acts 4:4 **But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.** I just want to insert a comment here: When someone claims they are going to rise from the dead in three days and then three days later rise from the dead. People start to follow that guy.

Acts 4:5-7 **The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. ⁷They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"** Peter and John are brought before the ruler leaders, known as the Sanhedrin, who by the way were the very ones who questioned Jesus and his authority, and keep in mind this Jesus is the very one who spoke the universe into being, and now this ruling body is asking Peter and John the same question they asked Jesus, "by what authority, what power, what name, did you do this.

As go into the next verses understand that his is a fulfillment of what Jesus had said both in Luke and in Acts, namely that the Holy Spirit would come on them allow them to speak boldly. Acts 4:8-11 **Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, ¹⁰then know this, you and all the people of Israel: 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. ¹¹Jesus is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.'** In the middle of their enemies, who have already demonstrated that they will murder someone if they disagree with them, Peter replies it is by the power and authority of Jesus Christ, and he goes a little deeper, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead that this lame man stands. You guys tried to do away with Jesus, but he is the cornerstone. He is the foundation of God. Everything gets marked and measured by him and through him.

Friends, do you try to mark and measure yourself by your own standards or the standards of the world or by comparison? On a scale of 1-10, 1 being evil and 10 being super good, what number would you give Hitler? Mother Theresa? He Reformers like Martin Luther? Yourself? I'm going to put the top vote getter here. But understand God's standards are not this low. God's standards, for point of illustration, are through the roof. So, there is a huge gap between the "best" and God. But get this, and this is key, this is not only the cornerstone but the capstone, the stone that holds people and God together, otherwise there is no connection, the relationship is simply broken: Jesus takes away our sinfulness and replaces it with his righteousness connecting us to God himself. Acts 4:12 **Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."**

This is great news because in our world of never enough, Jesus is enough. Jesus is the one, and the only one, it is through him that we are saved. Peter said by which we must be saved. The original language says necessary. Jesus is necessary for salvation. Peter also said “we.” He is talking not only about himself, and John but also about the lame man now healed. He is not only talking about himself and John and the healed man but also the rulers and elders, for those responsible for Jesus’ death. Salvation is open to everyone. Everyone. And everyone gets into heaven the same way, the only way Jesus.

Today a lot of people think that all religions are basically the same. You can call God, God or Allah or Buddha or whatever, there is like on creator God, call him what you want. But think about it, if all religions have the same God, then why did God tell the Christians one thing (I.e. you are saved by grace through faith) and Muslims another thing (i.e. you have to earn your way into heaven). It’s kind of like to Country Clubs. One says you are welcome as soon as you meet all the requirements. The other one just says “you are welcome. Jesus has met all the requirement for you.” Christianity is often considered to be exclusive, narrowminded, and judgmental. And that would be true except that Jesus is for all people. And Jesus was condemned in the place of all people.

The people were all amazed as Peter spoke. Peter went on to tell them that Jesus had to suffer, and remember he is talking to people who saw him suffer and die. Peter said you killed the author of life. Their sin was laid bare, they were naked. They were caught. And while we may be able to cover up sin and self-righteousness from others, God knows all. And Jesus endured the condemnation that we deserve and died for all the times our actions, words, thoughts our lives were not enough. But Jesus didn’t stay dead. His power was more than enough to rise from the dead. His love is greater than evil. The power of his name has no equal. His authority extends beyond the cosmos. And so Jesus rose from the dead, not to come knock on your door to find you guilty and hold you accountability but to knock on the door of your heart and offer, what only he could truly offer: Enough! Salvation through the power of his name. Jesus is enough.

Jesus is enough to move you from bondage to freedom, brokenness to wholeness, darkness to light, defeat to victory, dread to expectation, fear to faith shame to grace, sorrow to joy, from death to life. Let’s watch a little video that helps us see that Jesus plus nothing equals Enough!

Video