

JESUS LIVES!

I am inspired every time I read the Book of Acts. Those who had seen the resurrected Lord went forth proclaiming (*to make known in public, with the implication of broad dissemination*).

Acts 4:2

...they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

It was not a whisper campaign. Boldly, they told anyone and everyone. Jesus is risen. He lives! He is Lord. Their eyewitness testimony is compelling, but it is further bolstered by the fact that power, abuse, or threats of death wouldn't deter them.

Acts 4:18

So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

Acts 5:40

and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

When they were tired and afraid, they would pray to God for boldness, and he provided the power and encouragement to continue.

Acts 4:29-31

29 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, 30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." 31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

As a result, their answer to the opposition was certain.

Acts 4:20

for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.

We know they ultimately gave their lives for what they knew and believed. Jesus Christ is risen. One of the most compelling pieces of evidence for its validity is that they sacrificed their very lives based on their absolute certainty that the resurrection occurred. If it were an ardent wish or a sham, all those men would not have given their lives to proclaim it throughout the known world in the face of such abuse and opposition.

Their example teaches us two things. First, we can be certain that the resurrection of Jesus is true. Second, with that knowledge, we have great responsibility. Since the resurrection is true, mankind has an obligation to respond. Radical obedience to the risen Lord is the only faithful option.

Unfortunately, we live in a world that is growing increasingly hostile to the message of Jesus. In this tumultuous time, we must not cower in fear or shirk our responsibility. This is the message that the world needs. It isn't our prerogative to decide who deserves to hear it and who doesn't; it is simply our responsibility to proclaim it.

May we be strengthened in our faith and be people who say, "We cannot but speak of what we believe." Jesus lives!

Shalom,

Ryan