



CHAPTER FOUR

Making the Story Public

ACTS 4:7-22

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Acts 4:7-22 (NRSVue)

⁷When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” ⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹if we are being questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are being asked how this man has been healed, ¹⁰let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. ¹¹This Jesus is ‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.’ ¹²“There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.”

¹³Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus. ¹⁴When they saw the man who had been cured standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵So they ordered them to leave the council while they discussed the matter with one another. ¹⁶They said, “What will we do with them? For it is obvious to all who live in Jerusalem that a notable sign has been done through them; we cannot deny it. ¹⁷But to keep it from spreading further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” ¹⁸So they called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in God’s sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; ²⁰for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.” ²¹After threatening them again, they let them go, finding no way to punish them because of the people, for all of them praised God for what had happened. ²²For the man on whom this sign of healing had been performed was more than forty years old.

Discussion Questions from the Biblical Text:

1. Based on this story, how do you think Peter and the other disciples understand their mission?
2. Imagine being hauled before your local city council to account for your faith? How do you think you would feel?
3. What do you notice in this story? What wonderings are stirred for you?

Discussion Questions from *Bearing Witness in Acts and Today* by Troy M. Troftgruben:

1. When you think about Christian witness in the public sphere, what positive and negative examples come to your mind? What impressions of God are conveyed by these examples? What is to be learned? (page 71)
2. Imagine your church building (if it has one) suddenly burned down, forcing your community to gather for a year or more in a rented public space somewhere in the heart of your local community. What would change? (page 71)

Discussion Questions from *Opening Space: A vision for Fresh Expressions of Church and Creative Mission* by Shannon Kiser:

1. Fresh Expressions emerge around people, places, and passions (pages 45-46). Where are people already gathering in your community?