

## SYNOPSIS

An incredible experience compels us to share it. This was exactly what happened with the first disciples at the inception of the church – they witnessed a dead man who was now resurrected – and couldn't help but to speak that life-giving truth. They had a no-kidding supernatural encounter and it was a must-tell story. The message of the early church was one of a resurrected Savior, emboldened by the presence of the Holy Spirit. This is still the message of the church today, and although we have not physically laid hands on Jesus, by faith we believe this historical, life-changing, eternity-defining event happened, and the risen Jesus is very much alive and able to help us. As we grow outside of our comfort zones by loving our neighbors, we now can begin to practice conversations about how Jesus has changed our lives. This sermon reminds us of this must-tell story, and leaves us with one practical way to share the gospel.

## BIG IDEA

**The good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus was, and still is, a must tell story we should be prepared to share.**

## KEY TEXTS

**Acts 4:8-20**

SLIDES 1-2

## SERMON OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

Share about an experience you had where you just could not help but tell the story to someone else as soon as you possibly could. This sets up the nature of a must tell story.

In Acts 4 (*set a brief context*) we see that for the early disciples, the resurrection of Jesus was a must-tell story even when the religious rulers were trying to stop it:

***Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you 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 is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:8-12***

- It's by the real power given by the risen Jesus that the crippled man was healed.
- Peter acknowledged His rejection (Psalm 118:22)
- Peter lays exclusive claim that salvation come only through Jesus
  - The only way to God is through God!

SLIDES 3-4

*But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, saying, "What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name." So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. Acts 4:15-18*

- The rulers wanted this story shut down...

SLIDE 5

*But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." Acts 4:19-20*

- This is a must-tell story
- Peter and John were compelled to share it, regardless of the consequences.

**2,000 years later - This is still a must-tell story - but how does it all fit in the larger story of the Bible?**

SLIDE 6

**GRAPHIC 1 - The Eternal God (One God/three persons)**

SLIDE 7

**GRAPHIC 2 - God creates the universe and a perfect home for humanity**

- Our purpose is to be in unbroken fellowship with our Creator

SLIDE 8

**GRAPHIC 3 - But we broke that fellowship by disobedience; resulting in spiritual death**

- Relationship broken/and it's not a problem we can fix

SLIDE 9

**GRAPHIC 4 - BUT GOD steps in with a plan**

- In grace and mercy to restore us back to our purpose

SLIDE 10

**GRAPHIC 5 - It starts by calling out a people to be set apart in the world**

- The Jews, beginning with Abraham
- They receive the Law, and the Prophets, all pointing to the Messiah

SLIDE 11

**GRAPHIC 6 - The Messiah is born, and God said name Him Jesus.**

- More than a good moral teacher, Jesus claims divinity
- As the way, truth, and life - Jesus is explaining the only way to God is through God

**SLIDE 12**

**GRAPHIC 7 - Jesus wrapped Himself in DNA, in order to die on the cross**

- Here the penalty for sin is paid in full
- This is our propitiation

**SLIDE 13**

**GRAPHIC 8 - Jesus is raised on the third day**

- A literal, physical, historical resurrection – verified by up to 500 at one time
  - The church explodes by love despite oppression
  - Cowards turn to martyrs
  - Enemies turn to evangelists
  - Jewish traditions change almost overnight

**SLIDE 14**

**GRAPHIC 9 - Jesus ascends in glory, alive in heaven, knocking at the door of many hearts**

**SLIDE 15**

**GRAPHIC 10 - Those who trust in Him receive new life and a restored purpose to walk with God again in unbroken fellowship**

- Religion cannot give someone a new heart
- Only the gift of God can in Jesus

**HOW can we start to share all of that with a neighbor?**

**#1 By sharing your personal story with Jesus** – how have you come to know Jesus personally?

- Have you thought through how to tell your story in a couple minutes' time?

**#2 Sharing the story of Jesus** (in a way that your neighbor would understand\*)

**SLIDE 16**

***You were created for a purpose***

To be in an unbroken relationship with God.

- This is our highest and ultimate purpose in living.

**SLIDE 17**

***But our relationship is broken, and is beyond human repair***

(Ephesians 2:1-3)

- This spiritual problem is the source for all of the other problems in our world
- The word the Bible uses for missing God's holiness is sin.

**SLIDE 18**

***God cares deeply about this problem and personally addressed it***

(Ephesians 2:4-7)

- God the Father, sent God the Son in love and justice.
- Jesus dies on Good Friday, and is raised to life on Easter.

SLIDE 19

***This salvation is a gift***

(Ephesians 2:8-9)

- The only way to receive a gift is by taking it, accepting it, by faith.
- A genuine faith comes with a contrite heart and turning from sin.

SLIDE 20

***We can be restored to our purpose***

(Ephesians 2:10)

- We can now be rightly related to GOD.
- We are Grace-built people – spiritually new and alive, assembled for many great things

SLIDE 21

***Make an invitation:***

- To keep the conversation going.
- Into community or fellowship to investigate the faith.
- Or into the Kingdom with a question like: Is there anything holding you back from being restored to your purpose in life through Jesus?

If your neighbor wants to take this life-changing step of faith, you can lead them in a prayer like this one: Heavenly Father, I believe that you created me to know you, and walk with you. I also know that because of my sin, our relationship is broken. I thank you today for sending Jesus to die on a cross to forgive me of my sins. I want to turn from anything that is getting between us, and trust Jesus by faith. Change me now from the inside out and help me to live for you from here on out. Amen.

*(\*If your church is already training and equipping with a certain method of verbalizing the gospel: Romans Road, the Bridge illustration, 3 Circles, then reinforce that here. If you don't have a particular approach, feel free to adopt this one based on Ephesians 2:8-10.)*