

**Acts 4:5-12**

**How we use our power and influence**

Peter and John had caused upset by preaching about Jesus' resurrection, and are being interrogated by the Council of Jerusalem. Asked by what power they are acting, Peter speaks about Jesus' death and resurrection. After discussing the situation, and knowing full well who Peter and John were, they order them to cease speaking and teaching in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John said they had to speak about what they had seen and heard. Not really knowing what to do, and wary of making things worse, the Council let them go.



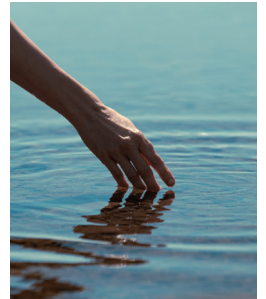
**Bible notes**



Peter, with John, took a lame man by the right hand 'and raised him up' in Jesus' name (3:1-10), and explained to the crowds at the Temple that 'this perfect health' was the work of the risen Jesus, 'the Author of life' (3:11-26). 'The priests, the captain of the Temple, and the Sadducees' are displeased at this teaching about resurrection, arrest Peter and John, and hold them in custody overnight (4:1-4). In the morning, the Council gathers to interrogate them. The listing of parties, 'rulers, elders, and scribes', and the naming of people, 'Annas the high-priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family', emphasise the political and religious power of those assembled, as well as their networks of personal influence. In contrast, the disciples invoke only 'the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead' (v.10). This makes clear the contrast between worldly power, self-serving and death-dealing, and spiritual power that enabled a lame beggar to walk, leap, and praise God. The apostles noticed a beggar neglected by the authorities, and his new life proclaims the resurrection that so annoyed them. This is the pattern of Psalm 118, quoted here and elsewhere in the New Testament. It is the rejected stone that becomes the cornerstone (Psalm 118:22; Matthew 21:42; 1 Peter 2:7). It is Jesus, 'humble, and mounted on a donkey' (Matthew 21:5) who is acclaimed: 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord' (Psalm 118:26; Matthew 21:8-9; Mark 11:9; Luke 19:38; John 12:13).

**First impressions**

- What circles do you move in? What power and influence do you have?
- Can you think of a time when doing something small has had a big impact?
- What small action could you take this week that might make a positive ripple in your community?



**Pray**



Bring to God situations where Christians are using influence or power to further God's kingdom.

**LOOK**

Find some current newspapers or spend a few moments looking at news headlines on your phone. Think about the people in the news who have power and influence. Who uses it for good? And who misuses it?

Play a game where you call out a superhero and your household demonstrate the related power: Wonder Woman



– strength; Flash – speed; Spiderman – spider web; Superman – flying; Ant-man – shrinking; Elsa – controls ice and snow, etc. Debate which is the best superpower and think about the power and influence you have in your everyday lives.

**A prayer of thanksgiving**

We give thanks, O God, that on your firm foundation we can build our lives, live our lives, find purpose and meaning, stability and peace.  
We give thanks that with you as our rock, our cornerstone, we can navigate the tussles and troubles of the world, not avoiding them, but making sense of them and doing all we can to make lives better.  
We give thanks that our faith in you steadies us when we are surrounded by false truths, greedy ways, or power-grabbing leaders who have no thought for anyone but themselves.  
For your promises and firm foundation, we give thanks.  
Amen.

**Write**

Paint the name Jesus or draw a picture of him on rocks. Talk about how Jesus' name is special and powerful.