

Worship Material
How we use our power and influence
Materials from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 21st April

Begin with an opening prayer

Lord God, all power and authority belong to you.
We thank you that you call us to help build your Church.
Help us to discover and learn how to use rightly the power and influence you give us,
in love and in service.
In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Read Acts 4:5-12

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).

Prayer

Spirit of Jesus,
help us to use our power and gifts
to do good things;
good things for each other, for the world and for your kingdom.
Amen.

A prayer to conclude

God, our heavenly father,
send us out in the power of your Spirit,
to build on the cornerstone of our faith,
Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**