

TEXT Acts 4:13-22

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Job 23:10-12; Psalm 119:30-32; Isaiah 30:21

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain what it means to persevere or to “Keep On Keeping On” in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER His way have I kept, and not declined. — Job 23:11

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. — Acts 4:20

**ANSWER
TITLE:** **Keep On Going**

**SEARCH
TITLE:** **Keep On Keeping On**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The scene is Jerusalem. In Acts 3, Peter and John heal a lame man through the power of Jesus’ name, then preach the Gospel to the crowd which gathered. Now in chapter 4 comes the opposition. The Apostles are placed in prison. The next day they are brought before the Sanhedrin. Notice the opposition came especially from the Sadducees. Briefly, they were a Jewish sect who rationalized religion. They denied the supernatural. They scoffed at the idea of miracles, and ridiculed the thought of bodily resurrection. Many of them were wealthy and exercised tremendous political influence. Both of these groups arrayed themselves against the Apostles. Formidable opposition indeed, yet they did not triumph; the

Apostles did! The Christian can triumph today if he applies the lesson in this passage of Scripture.

Some three years earlier than the time of Peter’s preaching, Jesus Christ planted the seed of the Gospel; the disciples, following, watered that seed. Their first efforts were in and around Jerusalem but eventually the Gospel was taken into all the world. The Early Church, despite extreme persecution, experienced rapid growth as men, women, and children believed what they saw and heard. The Old Testament, from beginning to end, covers a period of thousands of years, but the events of the New Testament scarcely take up a hundred years.

YOUR OPENER

RESPONSES

1. Peter and John committed no crime except that they had “preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.” Through their faith in Jesus Christ, a lame man had been healed. Your class should see that this gave the Apostles an opportunity to speak to the people about Jesus. Since the rulers were the ones who had crucified Christ, they wanted to stop any preaching about His being risen and actually being the Messiah.

2. After the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they really began to proclaim the Gospel and firmly take their stand for Christ. This may be a good opportunity to review with your class the importance of receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Consider some of the offices of the Holy Ghost (comforting, teaching, guiding, giving power, etc.), and discuss how each of these will strengthen and encourage the Christian to “keep on keeping on.”

3. The authorities probably assumed that their directive would be obeyed. Discuss with your class how, from man’s standpoint, it would have been easier and safer for the Apostles to cease their preaching and working for God. God’s commandment to them had been one of action, and in obeying they were persevering. Ask one student to read His directive to Peter in John 21:17. His command, “Feed my sheep” involved effort and doing on Peter’s part. Another student could read His commission to the disciples in Matthew 28:19. Discuss the fact that God obviously wanted His followers to do more than just adhere to the principles of righteousness He had taught them; though this certainly was a part of His requirement. Action for Christ is also a part of perseverance.

4. The Apostles replied that they would hearken unto the Lord rather than men and that they could not help but speak the things which they had seen and heard. Discuss with the class how, in the next chapter (Acts 5:12-29) they demonstrated their determination to keep on preaching, even though they were put into prison.

Keep On Keeping On

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SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Job 23:10-12; Psalm 119:30-32; Isaiah 30:21

KEY VERSE: For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. — Acts 4:20

Perseverance—the determination to continue on in the face of opposition or difficulty—is a necessary attribute in the Christian life. The spread of Christianity would have come to a standstill if there had not been those who kept on in spite of persecution. Our text deals with two of the Apostles who stood through a severe testing time. As Christians today, we may not face the same types of opposition that the Early Church faced. But there will be times when we will have to be steadfast no matter what opposition comes to turn us from remaining true to God and His directives for our lives.

1. What crime had the Apostles committed that brought them before the Jewish rulers? See Acts 4:1-3.

2. The Apostles had not always been so bold. Peter had denied the Lord and others had forsaken Him and fled when He was taken by the high priest. Even after His Resurrection they didn’t seem to promote the cause of Christ, but, instead, went fishing. What was it that compelled these men to speak out now so forcefully for Christ? See Acts 1:8.

3. How do you suppose the authorities expected Peter and John to respond when they were commanded not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus?

4. How did the Apostles respond when the council commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus? Looking on into the next chapter of Acts, find where the Apostles showed by their actions that they meant what they said.

5. In the Old Testament, we read of others who, like Peter and John, were determined to cling to

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

God in spite of temporal and physical adversity. Briefly review the calamities that were the lot of Job. See Job 1:13-19 and 2:7. Which phrases in Job 23:8-11 prove that Job had kept his trust in God in spite of these circumstances?

6. Read Psalm 119:30,31. What do you think is meant by the phrase, "I have stuck unto thy testimonies"?

7. In order to keep on keeping on in our Christian walk it is important that we know what God wants us to do. One verse which brings out the necessity of studying God's Word is 2 Timothy 2:15. Find some other verses that bring out this thought.

8. We pray to have our sins forgiven, and to make a start in our Christian life. Why is it necessary to continue in prayer in order to keep steadfast in the way? See Matthew 26:41 and John 16:24.

9. What part does obedience play in keeping on in our Christian walk?

10. What good advice did Paul offer to those who want to keep on keeping on? See chapter 6 of Ephesians.

5. Verse 11 shows that Job had remained steadfast through all the trials that came to him. Few of us have ever suffered all the losses that came to Job, but no doubt some of your students could cite examples of those, in their own knowledge, who have proved true through severe testing. This might be a good opportunity to discuss some examples of "holding on" in our own day.

6. Allow time for your students to express their ideas concerning this phrase. Their combined responses should produce a good definition of what it means to keep on keeping on. At this point, help them zero in on why this is so vital for a Christian.

7. As your students share the verses they have found, emphasis should be placed on why it is important to know the truth of God's Word. Those who make no attempt to learn what God has to say, are very likely to fall into error and miss the Goal. Other Scriptures that could be mentioned concerning the importance of studying God's Word are Psalm 37:31 and John 5:39; 8:31.

8. Matthew 26:41 reveals that prayer will help the Christian to avoid temptation. John 16:24 shows us that petitioning the Father in prayer will bring results and a fullness of joy. Discuss how each of these results of prayer will help the Christian to remain steadfast.

9. As your students offer their answers, it should be brought out that the most important way they can show their love for God is by being obedient to Him. Adam and Eve failed to obey and plunged the whole human race into sin. The Christian who fails to obey, will also lose his hope of eternal life.

10. He encourages the Christian to put on the whole armor of God. Continue reading through verse 17, discussing the importance of each part of the armor and how it can be a help in continuing in the way. Close your class session by enumerating some of the things Paul went through (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). He came through it all "more than conqueror," and gives us the assurance that if we keep on, neither "height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35-39).

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How do you think you would react if you were brought before the council and commanded not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus?

Why do you think the priests were so upset with Peter and John?

In what way do you think Peter and John were different at the time of this lesson than at the time when Jesus was crucified? What made the difference?

How can our actions demonstrate to Jesus, to ourselves, and to the enemy, that we will not give up?

What are some positive actions which will counteract discouragement?

Why do some people make the Christian way sound so easy, and others make it sound so hard?

When we are disheartened, what should we do?

What patterns in life should we set that will help us hold on in any situations which come to us later in life?

What does the ANSWER story indicate might happen to the new Christian farther on down the road on his journey to Heaven?

THINGS TO DO

Bring a wind-up clock to class. Explain that it must keep on going to be of value. It will not tell time or fulfill its purpose unless it is kept wound. We must let God keep us “wound up” (through prayer, reading the Bible, etc.) if we want to function as an effective Christian.

Bring a trick candle to class (one that relights when blown out). Use it to illustrate that the Christian can hold on and keep burning.

Let your students help you draw a map of what the road to Heaven might look like if we could see it. Add pos-

sible obstacles that could be thrown in the way, and side roads that, if taken, would lead a person away from his original goal—Heaven. Show Heaven at the top. Don't make the journey look too hard! This map can help them see how good it can be to let Jesus lead us along.

Make a chart in class, listing tips for running a successful race. (Get input from your students.) Compare it with our spiritual race. Examples: You need to start; pace yourself; be consistent; avoid getting sidetracked; follow the rules; keep your eyes on the goal; finish the race or be disqualified. (Spiritually, no one loses if they finish.)

Answers for ANSWER

Keep on Going!

Follow through the maze below and look up each Bible verse. Fill in the missing words. These are all parts of God's Word that help you keep on the right way.

START

God will supply all your **NEED**
Philippians 4:19

We walk by **FAITH**
II Corinthians 5:7

Run, and not be **WEARY**
Isaiah 40:31

Thy word is a light unto my **PLATH**
Psalm 119:105

The joy of the Lord is your **STRENGTH**
Nehemiah 8:10

Be of good **CHEER**
John 16:33

God gives us the **VICTORY**
I Corinthians 15:57

That ye love one **ANOTHER**
John 13:34