

Read: Acts 4:8-12

You Don't Know Who You Are Dealing With

Acts 4:8-10

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

"You don't know who you're dealing with."

You hear that line in movies. There is a person who holds power but whose power is hidden. Maybe she is an undercover spy. Or a superhero disguised as a normal human. Or the owner of the company, but the employees don't recognize her. Someone says something threatening or intimidating and the response is, "You don't know who you are dealing with." The person is saying, "I may look like you, but if you knew who I really am, you would be afraid of my power."

God came to earth as a little baby. He looked and lived like everyone else. Jesus was on an undercover mission. He tucked his power and glory away to live and die in a way no one would expect God to live and die. He used his power to say "no" to sin. He used his strength to bear the punishment of the world's sin.

After Jesus' resurrection, Peter spoke to the Jews who had called for Jesus to be crucified. He told them that God raised Jesus from the dead, which proves that Jesus is really God. Basically Peter said, "You didn't know who you were dealing with." Those words can be terrifying. You didn't know you were dealing with God Almighty, who has the power to punish you!

There is another movie situation that involves hidden identity. Someone is in danger, but a person with them reveals that he is able to help. For example, there's a car accident and someone is badly hurt. But a passerby runs up and says, "I'm a doctor. I can help." What a relief! Here's another example: Hikers find themselves lost in the mountains. But then, a fellow hiker appears and says, "I'm a park ranger. I know the way out." Here's one more: A group of terrified people have been taken hostage. But one of them whispers, "I'm a police officer. I know exactly what to do."

The point is this: While Jesus lived on earth, he revealed his identity. He said, "I'm the Messiah. I've come to save you." What a relief! What peace! Many believed him. When they learned his true identity, it gave them peace. How different from Jewish leaders who were disturbed and fearful when Jesus' identity was revealed!

Praise the Holy Spirit for showing us Jesus as our loving Savior. Through the Bible, we know his true identity. We are secure because he has taken back all his power as God. We know that he uses that power to care for us, forgive us, and bring us to heaven.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Who's your favorite superhero and for what does he/she use their superpower?
- How does Jesus use his power to take care of you?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Name a story from the Bible where Jesus used his power as God. What was his purpose in using his power?
- How does knowing who Jesus is cause different feelings in believers and unbelievers? (*Hint: Believers feel safe and at peace, unbelievers don't.*)

Questions for Middle School and Above

- How do a person's feelings about death and judgment day show you what they believe about Jesus?
- What can you say to someone to explain why they are afraid of judgment day and why they don't have to be afraid?

Closing Prayer:

Thank you, Holy Spirit, for showing us Jesus as our Savior. Help us to trust in him always. Help us to share Jesus with our friends and family so they, too, can know his identity and be saved. Amen.