Acts 4

1The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. 2They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 3They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. 4But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

* *Father, thank You for those who were brave enough to share the gospel with the people around them, even when they faced danger and threats. And thank you* *for those who chose to believe even when they saw the consequences. Please give me the same belief and courage to put my faith in Your word*.
* *Be with each of our missionaries as they teach around the world. Give them wisdom and strength and surround them with those who will encourage and support their missions.*

5The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. 6Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest’s family. 7They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “By what power or what name did you do this?” 8Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! 9If 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, 10then 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. 11Jesus is “the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’ 12Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

* *Father, I ask that you give me the courage to speak up and give an answer for when I am asked about my belief in you. Too many times I am scared and afraid of looking foolish. Help me to forget myself and my feelings and to rely on You and Your strength.*
* *Please help me to stay focused on Your word and to study it so that I can give an answer when I am asked. Help me to not rely on others for my answers but to study and know for myself.*
* *Father, I thank you for the teachers who have been in my life both as a child and as an adult. I appreciate their lessons and their examples as believing men and women if God. I hope and pray that the same can be said of me.*
* *I ask that you be with our teachers today as they start a new year with our kids. Please help them as they study and prepare enriching lessons to help each of our kids to grow in their knowledge and love of you.*
* *Lord, please be with each of the parents as they encourage their child’s learning and study of Your word. Help them to nourish the growth as the year goes on and help each child develop their own relationship with Jesus and each other.*
* *Father, we have several opportunities coming up for community in our fellowship. Be with us as we* *gather together to learn more about You and ourselves. Help us to encourage, support and uplift each other in a way that can only come from You.*
* *Please nurture a giving spirit in each one of us and prepare us for growth as we reach out to bring others to You. Give me courage to talk to...*
* *Be with us as we learn from Ian today and as we walk out our faith this week. Help us be mindful of You always.*

*We ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*