

## PETER & JOHN BEFORE COUNCIL

Written by Ted Swartz and Lee Eshleman

**Characters:** Peter, John

**Scripture text:** Acts 4:1-12

**Props:** none

**Length:** 5 minutes

**Setting:** A courtroom

*(The two men have been brought before the council—and have been asked if they wish to speak.)*

PETER: Yes, we would like a chance to speak.

JOHN: Are you sure you should be speaking?

PETER: Sure—why?

JOHN: You're not known for your diplomacy.

PETER: Who says that?

JOHN: Everybody.

PETER: I'll be fine.

PETER: *(To the council.)* Hang on, hang ... let me get this straight. We are in trouble for healing a guy?

JOHN: Peter...

PETER: *(To John.)* No, no, I want them to say it. His life is changed forever, and we're in trouble.

JOHN: I think it's the reason he was healed that is the problem.

PETER: The reason he was healed? Why does that matter?

JOHN: No, I think the reason is ... we used Jesus' name.

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PETER:            *(To the council.)* So that's the issue—You don't want to hear his name. Would you rather we used my mother's sister's name? In the name of Lydia, stand up a walk—would that be okay?

JOHN:            Peter ... *(To the council.)* He's just had bad day... he'll be okay ... *(To PETER.)* Are you trying to get us killed?

PETER:            I just want to make these clowns see...

JOHN:            *(To the council.)* Now when he says clowns ... I don't think he's specifically referring to merry makers, jocular buffoons or mimes as such ... maybe just those wearing oversized shoes...

PETER:            When I say clowns I mean idiots...

JOHN:            *(To the council.)* Idiots. Now, there's another word that may have many meanings. What Peter is trying to say ... idiots ... not in the pejorative sense, perhaps making a generalization about religious leaders in general. Not necessarily these leaders.

JOHN:            Excuse us.

*(Pulls PETER back; the following is an aside.)*

PETER:            What are you doing?

JOHN:            I'm sort of smoothing things over.

PETER:            Why?

JOHN:            There is a ... proper way to go about speaking your mind.

PETER:            Don't you wanna just smack these people?

JOHN:            Well yea, but that doesn't mean we can.

PETER:            Fine.

JOHN:            This is their game, we need to play it.

PETER:            By talking?  
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JOHN: By talking, for now.

PETER: And how you think it should be? How should I start?

JOHN: How about “honorab!e leaders”?

PETER: You’re serious.

JOHN: Yes.

PETER: *(Pause.)* No.

JOHN: Distinguished leaders?

PETER: No.

JOHN: Leaders?

PETER: Fine. Leaders...

JOHN: ...and elders.

PETER: And elders *(To the council)*. You ask by what authority—we assume you’re talking about the man who was healed. ... *(Pause.)* ... Well, it’s not by your authority that’s for sure!! If we were waiting for you, we would...

JOHN: Peter...

PETER: *(Still at a high level.)* It was through the authority of Jesus. You remember him right? ! The one who was crucified, by the way ... and rose again—you are all aware of that aren’t you?! That he rose?!

JOHN: Peter. Excuse us again. Peter, this isn’t working. Make them ready to hear you. He who has ears, let him hear.

PETER: That’s just it. I don’t think they HAVE ears.

JOHN: Exactly. So help them grow some.

PETER: What?  
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JOHN: Help them grow some ears. Jesus said that.

PETER: I'm sure that he in fact most definitely did NOT ever say: "Help them grow ears."

JOHN: Yeah. It was right after the parable of the widow's mite. Very strong widow. (*Look from PETER.*) What?

PETER: Never mind.

JOHN: Okay, so he never said that exactly. But he would have found a way to compel them to listen.

PETER: True. (*Pause.*) What would he say? (*Pause.*) You're the expert. What would Jesus say to these guys? Right now.

(*Pause.*)

JOHN: You idiots.

PETER: There you go.

JOHN: You brood of vipers!

PETER: Wrong guy...

JOHN: Come on! The guy's healed, and you have a problem with that? You thick-headed, rock-encrusted morons ... do the phrases healed, made whole, released the captives, mean anything to you at all?!!! Evidently not. You gassy, self-important, over-inflated windbags. For crying in the beer!! I mean of all the imbecilic, moronic, chuckle-headed, myopic ... If you...

PETER: John, John.

JOHN: ... could just tell me.

PETER: John! (*John stops. PETER softly.*) Help them grow ears. (*JOHN realizes he's been no help, steps back in chagrin. PETER steps forward.*)

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PETER: *(More gently, as if talking to wayward children.)* You ... people. It's through his name ... through his name the world will be saved. Only he has the power to save. This man was healed because of the presence of Jesus in the world ... it's his name ... it's his name.

THE END

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