

“We Cannot Deny It” – Unbelief As the Dogged Dismissal of Indisputable Fact

Introduction

The Text

¹ And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ² greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴ But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

⁵ On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, ⁶ with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹ if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰ let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. ¹¹ This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵ But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, ¹⁶ saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” ¹⁸ So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” ²¹ And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. ²² For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old. (Acts 4:1–22)

Backyard Astronomy

A. I was out in my backyard a few months back. I had set up my telescope and waited for the sun to go down and the sky to go black. There on the Western horizon, I was excited to first check out a couple planets: Mars and Venus.

1. But when I dialed the telescope in on Venus and peered through the lens, this may sound dumb (for those of you who already knew this), but I was surprised by what I saw. I’m obviously a novice to astronomy. I’m only just getting into it (courtesy of guys like Donl).

2. But I didn't realize that Venus has phases. So I would look at Jupiter or Saturn and you would see the planet as a whole orb. But then with Venus on this night it looked something akin to a crescent moon. And I didn't know what to think.
 3. So I pulled up my astronomy app and I began to read about it. And I guess, to our observation here on Earth, Venus has phases because it's orbit is inside ours. As a planet it is closer to the sun than we are.
 4. As it makes its way around the sun, the sun shines on it in various ways, giving it the appearance of phases. When it's between us and the sun, it's almost entirely dark—because the side we see is not receiving any of the sun's light. When it continues in its orbit, it waxes until it gets to the far side of the sun where it looks full and illumined to our eye. And then it waxes down to nothing again.
 5. But, as I read on, here's what caught my attention in particular (and if you're wondering where in the world I'm going with all this, we're now starting to shuffle closer towards the point . . .): "Galileo's telescopic observations of Venus in 1610 provided crucial evidence that Copernicus' heliocentric (Sun-centered) model of the Solar System was correct. Galileo observed that Venus displayed phases like the Moon Ptolemy's geocentric (Earth-centered) model could not explain this behavior, whereas a Sun-centric model could."
- B. And this got me thinking. You remember, perhaps, what happened when Galileo came to the Catholic church with this evidence, seeing it as a clear indication that the Earth is not the center of our Solar System, the Sun is. How do they respond?
1. Well, ultimately, they reject him and his theories. Upon subjecting him to the Inquisition, here is the verdict rendered: "We pronounce, judge, and declare, that you, the said Galileo . . . have rendered yourself vehemently suspected by this Holy Office of heresy, that is, of having believed and held the doctrine (which is false and contrary to the Holy and Divine Scriptures) that the sun is the center of the world, and that it does not move from east to west, and that the earth does move, and is not the center of the world."
 - a. Consequently, he was thereafter required to "abjure, curse, and detest" these opinions. He was confined to house arrest and much of his work was thereafter banned from distribution.
- C. Now, I am oversimplifying what was actually a very complicated chain of events through a number of years. A closer look into the matter reveals that Galileo was not so heroic as he might first appear; and, likewise, the Catholic church not so villainous.
1. But I'm not here to give you a history lesson, so a quick summary and inevitable oversimplification will have to do.

"Inconvenient Truths"

- A. The bottom line is this: We all have a predominant framework, or paradigm, or worldview—a way of understanding things, how the world works, how the human heart works, etc.

1. And then, sometimes, as we go about our lives we are confronted with facts, with evidence, with what I'd call "inconvenient truths"—truths that seem to contradict the very framework or paradigm or worldview we espouse.
 - a. And in those moments the question we all must face is: So what are we going to do about it?
 - i. Are we going to take in the evidence and perhaps let it explode the current framework, shift the paradigm, change our worldview?
 - ii. Or are we going to double down on what we've always believed and imprison or ban any evidence to the contrary?
- B. You see in Galileo's day, the paradigm so far as the Solar System was concerned was geocentric. But along come these facts that threaten to blow that whole model up.
 1. And rather than shift the paradigm, it's more convenient and comfortable to just lock up the naysayer, the outlier. Then you don't have to deal with it . . . at least for a while.
- C. And I think that's the sort of thing we see it at work right here in our text with these religious leaders in particular.
 1. They have one way of viewing things. And they like it. They're comfortable with it. They've convinced themselves it's biblical.
 2. And along comes this man from Nazareth and these followers of his, and they threaten to mess all that up. And they don't want it.
 - a. And, you know, we're prone to the same sort of thing. So we've got to beware!
- D. I'm going to organize my thoughts under two headings: (1) Inconvenient Truths; and (2) Copernican Revolutions. So let's dive in!

(1) Inconvenient Truths

- A. When we're living against the grain of the universe, when we're living out of alignment with reality, we will inevitably keep butting up against evidence and experiences that don't fit within our paradigm. We'll continue to be confronted by these "inconvenient truths."
 1. For these religious leaders in our text, I see three inconvenient truths they're confronted by in particular . . .

Inconvenient Truth #1: The Resurrection of Jesus

- A. First there's the resurrection of Jesus himself. This is what really seems to have them so irked from the beginning. Peter and John are clearly claiming that Jesus, though crucified, is yet once more alive. He's raised!

1. So we read in vv. 1-2: “¹ And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ² greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.”
- B. You can go back to [Acts 3](#) to get a sense of what exactly Peter was saying about the resurrection here and this what we find, v. 15: “ [Y]ou killed the Author of life [Jesus], whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.”
1. They are proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus.
 2. But, more than that, they are claiming that they have seen him with their own eyes.
- C. This is a problem for these religious leaders, of course. These were the same guys that just a few weeks earlier had called for Jesus’ crucifixion. They wanted him off the scene. He was a nuisance.
1. And yet now here you have this significant number of people claiming to have seen Jesus risen from the dead. So they were “[greatly annoyed](#)”—agitated, disturbed. It’s an inconvenient truth.
- D. But, of course, they have an easy way out don’t they?
1. As the Christian church is now exploding on the scene, growing from “120” in [Acts 1:15](#) to “[three thousand souls](#)” in [Acts 2:41](#) to now “[five thousand](#)” as we’re told there in [Acts 4:4](#) (and that’s just the “[men](#)”—so the real number is likely double this)—it’s all based on this claim that Jesus is risen from the dead.
 - a. All they have to do, therefore, if they want to stop this Jesus train in its tracks is . . . what? Present the dead body of Jesus. Dead body, dead movement.
 - i. But they don’t present the body, presumably because they didn’t have it. No doubt, they went to the tomb. It wasn’t there. The Romans, the Jews—we know from history, they all want to stop these Christians, but neither group could.
- E. So what now? Well, the next move in this game of chess is actually still quite simple, isn’t it? If we don’t want to accept the inconvenient truth of Jesus’ resurrection, well it’s not checkmate yet.
1. If the body of Jesus couldn’t be found, the most logical conclusion—certainly even you and I would be inclined at first to agree—is that these disciples must have stolen it.
 - a. They’re trying to promote their agenda and jumpstart this new movement. So one from their number took the body.
- F. Okay, maybe, that’s plausible, at first. But then this runs up against yet another inconvenient truth . . .

Inconvenient Truth #2: The Transformation of the Disciples

- A. Did you see this there in [v. 13](#)? These religious leaders drag Peter and John before the Sanhedrin, the highest court for the Jews.
1. And, as they are being examined and even threatened, these apostles show no sign of cowering or caving. They're not scared in the slightest.
- B. So we read: [“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.”](#)
1. They had no rabbinic training in the Scriptures—they were [“uneducated.”](#)
 2. They had no position of authority, no status in the community, they were laymen—they were [“common”](#) men.
 - a. The Greek word translated [“common”](#) there, I love this, is [idiōtēs](#). I think you know what English word we derive from that. (There you go, now you can go home and tell your mama you learned Greek today at church ;) You're welcome.)
- C. In one sense, at least in the perspective of these Jewish leaders, these guys are [“idiots.”](#) And yet here they are, unafraid, bold, before the very people who just a few weeks prior took part in capturing Jesus and condemning him to death. How could this be?
1. Well, the answer these apostles would provide is: [“Jesus is no longer dead. He's alive! And he's for us, not against us. He loves us. He's with us. We're not scared of you. If you couldn't ultimately touch him, you can't ultimately touch us either.”](#)
 - a. As Paul writes in [1 Cor. 15:54-57](#): [“⁵⁴ ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”](#)
- D. This fact, of course, is made all the more pronounced when we consider what Peter was like before the resurrection.
1. Oh he was bold and mouthy at times, but it was always corrupted with foolishness and ego.
 - a. Indeed, when it came time for him to really show what he was made of, he didn't stand boldly for Jesus, he gave him up to save his skin. [“I do not know the man” \(Matt. 26:72\).](#)
 2. And yet here he is, running a complete reversal. What's changed? He's seen the risen Lord. As we read in [Luke 24:34](#): [“The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!”](#)
 - a. When you know the love of God, and power of God, in Jesus, you don't fear the opinions or threats of man like you used to. You're free. You can be bold.

- E. So now, with that last move on the chess board, you attempted to say these disciples must have taken the body and then gone around spreading lies about the resurrection.
1. But don't you see, even from Peter's own example, when we lie about something we always lie in the direction of what will serve us best.
 - a. So when Peter denies even knowing Jesus the night before his crucifixion, he is lying. But why? To save himself. That's how it works.
 - b. And now you expect me to believe that this same Peter is ready and willing to lie even unto death? It makes no sense. It runs against everything we know about human nature.
 2. We keep up a lie so long as we think we can still get something from it. But, once we see the jig is up, we don't keep lying to our own hurt. We figure out a way to wiggle out of it.
 - a. Even Galileo, interestingly enough, when he was at last on trial there before the Inquisition, he attempted to convince the judges that he had never maintained or defended the heliocentric view of the Solar System. He denied it. He lied. Why? To try to save his neck. They didn't buy it, of course, but, again: that's how it works.
- F. So Peter and John aren't boldly lying here. And as such, it's another inconvenient truth for these religious leaders.
1. And they see it. That's why they're "astonished" by it. It's not lost on them that something's going on here—that Jesus has transformed these disciples.
- G. But you know, there's still one more move that could be made, I guess, in desperation, of course. You could try to say: "Well, these guys may be genuine. Maybe someone else stole the body. Maybe they thought they saw Jesus but just hallucinated. So they're not lying. They're just a little crazy. That's why they're bold. They're nuts."
1. Well, while this is even more of a stretch now, I suppose it could work. But, again, it runs up against yet one more inconvenient truth . . .

Inconvenient Truth #3: The Healing of a Crippled Man

- A. Listen, when the guys are in the gym over there playing basketball, I can walk over, with a little sparkle in my eye and strut in my step, and say: "Stand back, in Jesus' name, I'm going to dunk this ball. Just call me Air Weber."
1. I may think Jesus is with me in that. But, after I've stretched my hammies and laced up my Nikes, when I take that running start, leap with all my might, tongue hanging out of my mouth, and I don't even make it to the rim, I don't even make it off the ground, instead I trip on my feet, tumble face first, and come to a skidding stop on the hardwood—when I look less like Air Jordan and more like Will Farrell . . . you know I'm off on something, right? Like maybe I am little wonky in the head or whatever.

- B. But here's the thing, Peter looks at this man who's been laid out in front of the temple gates, day after day, crippled from birth, he's over forty years old now, and he says: ["In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" \(Acts 3:6\)](#) . . . and the guy gets up.
1. What are you going to do with that? They're not crazy. You're rubbing your eyes going: "Did I just see what I think I saw? Maybe I'm crazy!"
- C. What is this? Well, it's a miracle, but, more than that, in biblical terms it's a ["sign."](#) Did you see that there in [v. 22](#): ["\[T\]he man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old."](#)
1. This miraculous healing is a ["sign."](#) In other words, it's pointing to something beyond itself. Like a sign on the side of the freeway, it's directing you somewhere, leading to something even more significant.
 - a. Well, in this case, what is it? It's pointing to the fact that Jesus really is alive and he really can save.
- D. Look again at what Peter says to the council there in [vv. 8-12](#): [" ⁸Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. ¹¹This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹²And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."](#)
1. It's a sign, flashing in neon lights, Jesus is alive and there is salvation in his name! Turn off the freeway of your skepticism and come to him for forgiveness and eternal life. That's the point!

Pausing to Apply to Us

- A. Now, before we go any further, I want to pause here at this point and quickly consider with you the way these same three inconvenient truths might confront us and lead us towards faith even here today in the 21st century.
1. Because, while I obviously think all of these are still relevant, there is a little different spin you might need to put on them as we bring it into our context.

Inconvenient Truth #1: The Resurrection of Jesus

- A. So, for example, consider the resurrection of Jesus. Nowadays when Christians claim to believe in such a thing, many might object and say: "Okay, so it's here in the Bible, but how do we know all this miraculous stuff, especially the resurrection, wasn't just added in way later by folks who were either trying to tell a good story or, perhaps, more insidiously, they were trying to manipulate people through religion and amass power and influence for themselves?" Have you ever heard something like this?

1. The resurrection, therefore, has nothing to do with the Jesus of history. It was a late add-on. And it, therefore, wasn't a part of the original movement at the start.
- B. Well, I only have time to say one thing against this now, but suffice it to say: it's quite clear that belief in the resurrection of Jesus was there in the early church from the very beginning.
1. As evidence of this, all we need to do is look at what even the enemies of Christianity wrote in the earliest centuries AD. It's interesting, so far as extrabiblical sources from non-Christians go, there are three particular standouts: Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius, and Roman governor Pliny the Younger.
 2. All three of these men refer to the Christian church as it was in the first century, and all three of them mention two things in particular:
 - a. First they were a group of people who held to a strange superstition: a "pernicious superstition" (Tacitus); a "novel and mischievous superstition" (Suetonius); a "depraved and excessive superstition" (Pliny the Younger). It seems quite likely that this is a reference to their belief that Jesus had risen from the dead.
 - i. Beyond this, Pliny the Younger, describes Christians in the first century as "singing . . . to Christ as to a god . . ." They're worshiping him.
 - b. But then, secondly, all three of these men make clear the fact that Christians were despised because of this superstition. They were hated. They were persecuted.
- C. So to be clear, then: They were proclaiming Jesus' resurrection from the very beginning. And it certainly wasn't something they were making up for fun, or something they were lying about to amass power or influence. They weren't getting power or influence because of their belief in the resurrection . . . they were getting killed for it (just like the book of Acts talks about)!

Inconvenient Truth #2: The Transformation of the Disciples

- A. When it comes to the transformation of Jesus' disciples here, yes it is still encouraging to see how these men were transformed. But, again, this is stuff written in a book composed some 2000 years ago. I feel removed from it.
1. These religious leaders got to see the apostles' lives transformed, what do I get to see?
- B. Well, this is where I'd want to remind us, of course, that men and woman are still being transformed by Jesus today. It's very encouraging to witness. And it confronts the skeptic.
1. One of the great joys I have as a pastor is I get to hear many of your stories firsthand—how Jesus saved you; how he's changed you.
- C. Some of you may know my own story, how Jesus grabbed ahold of me near the end of my freshmen year at Cal Poly.

1. I came back home to Phoenix for the summer and my parents were tripping out. My dad told me point blank that I had been the most selfish person he'd ever known. And now, he said, he wouldn't even know who I was. That's how much, at least from his perspective, I had changed.
 - a. Was I still selfish, am I still selfish, of course, just ask my wife. But fundamentally something had shifted.
 2. And the bottom line is this: my dad saw the transformation. And do you want to know what he concluded? "Nick couldn't have do this on his own. This isn't his doing. I know my son. He's an idiōtēs. No, this couldn't have come from him. This kid's been with Jesus."
 - a. And soon after my dad came to Christ.
- D. Jesus is still transforming people. And the testimony of these saints still confronts and convinces today!

Inconvenient Truth #3: The Healing of a Crippled Man

- A. But then, lastly, there's this miraculous healing. And, obviously, we weren't there to see this guy, so we, again, are left just taking the Bible's word for it and wondering: What about us? Is there anything we get to see?
- B. Well, here is where I'd like to remind you that, as with personal transformation, so too miracles do still happen today.
 1. Now there is so much I had wanted to say about this philosophically, especially considering the way our culture almost a priori objects to the possibility.
 2. But all I really have time for now is to point you to a book written by a prominent NT scholar (who also happens to be Chris Keener's brother), Craig Keener, entitled: [Miracles Today](#).
 - a. He touches on the philosophical a bit, but then he just goes on to outline many modern day miracles which he himself has carefully investigated. He opens the whole book up with a story of a healing he witnessed that bears striking resemblance to our story here in [Acts 4](#).
- C. So it happens. Jesus is still alive. He's still on the move today. His grace and healing power still confront us.

Picking Back Up in Acts 4

- A. Now let's pick back up with the story in our text. How do these religious leaders respond to all this?
 1. They know these apostles are claiming to have seen Jesus risen from the dead, and they can't find his body to prove otherwise.
 2. They know these disciples have clearly been changed by their relationship with Jesus, and they don't seem to be lying.
 3. And it appears they're not just crazy, because there's a certain power to what they say and do. This man whom we have seen at the temple gate day by day has been healed.

- B. So what are they going to do? How are they going to respond? It's fascinating and tragic and all too common: " ¹⁴ But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵ But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, ¹⁶ saying, 'What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it'" (vv. 14-16).
1. "We're in checkmate at this point. We don't have any other moves."
 2. You'd expect them to say, therefore, "Alright, we get it. Venus has phases and we can't figure out how that fits in our current geocentric paradigm. Apostles, help us understand what's going on." You'd expect them to open themselves up to the truth.
- C. But they don't. Instead, here's how the whole thing concludes, picking it back up in v. 17: " ¹⁷ 'But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.' ¹⁸ So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus." And then down in v. 21 we read that they "further threatened them" and finally let them go.
- D. They "had nothing to say in opposition" (v. 14). They "cannot deny it" (v. 16). They know the truth. They just don't care.
1. That word translated "notable" there in v. 16—it's a "notable sign"—in the Greek it's the word *gnōstos*. It means "known, capable of being known, intelligible." You might think of our word "a-gnostic" where a is the negator, and it refers to something that can't be known.
 - a. But here it's not a-gnōstos, it's gnōstos—it can be known, it is known . . . we just don't want to know it.
 2. So the whole thing devolves at this point into threats of violence and the flexing of power. There's no rational argumentation or logical rebuttals. It's just a show of force at the end.
- E. Don't you see? This was never about the truth. And that's what we've got to understand.
1. A lot of times, when people don't come to faith in Jesus, it's not because they don't know it's true, it's because they don't want it to be true. It's not so much a matter of the head as much as it is a matter of the heart.
 - a. So we lock up Galileo and we ban his books. We don't want to go there. These are inconvenient truths.

(2) Copernican Revolutions

Why Such Resistance?

- A. But why? Why do we do such things? Why do these Jewish leaders in our story do such things?
1. Well, for them, I think the clue is found in our text when we consider the difference between who these resisters are and who these people are that are coming to faith—because, again,

we know that, while these men are pushing back on the facts, not everyone is. What accounts for that?

B. Well, who are these resisters?

1. In [v. 1](#), we see that they include “[the priests](#)” and “[the captain of the temple](#)” (this was the priest whose authority ranked second only to the high priest) and “[the Sadducees](#)” (they controlled the official political structures of Judaism at this time; they were the ruling class of wealthy aristocrats).
2. Then down in [vv. 5-6](#) we see that even more are added to the list. There are the “[rulers](#)” and “[elders](#)” and “[scribes](#)” (these were drawn from the lawyers, mostly Pharisees). And the “[high priest](#)” is in the mix, along with “[all who were of the high-priestly family](#).”
 - a. Now what do you notice about every single group or person on this list? These are people who—at least in the present historical moment—they have prominence and prestige and power. They’ve got a good thing going.
 - i. In other words, in their eyes at least, they have a lot to lose. And they don’t want to lose it.

C. This explains the conflict they’ve had all along the way with Jesus. He was always a threat to them.

1. So after, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, and crowds of folks are all coming to believe in him, we read this near the end of [John 11](#): “[47 So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, ‘What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and \[now hear this . . .\] the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.’ . . . 53 So from that day on they made plans to put him to death” \(vv. 47-48, 53\).](#)
 - a. “Oh sure the signs he’s performing are real and significant and undeniable. But we don’t want to lose our place. We don’t want to lose what we have. Jesus is a threat to that. So let’s kill him.”

D. Now, compare this with those people who are coming to faith in Jesus here in [Acts 4](#). There are many who are not locking up Galileo. They’re letting the facts shift their paradigm.

1. All we’re told of them is what we read in [v. 4](#): “[But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.](#)” So who are these people? We don’t know. And I think that’s the point.
 - a. They’re nobodies. They’re not movers or shakers or anything fancy like that. Like these apostles, likely they’re just “[uneducated](#)”, “[common](#)” people. They don’t have much to lose, perhaps because they’ve already lost it. They’ve already been broken, they’ve already been humbled.
 - i. They’ve already come to realize that when I’m at the center of the Solar System, it doesn’t work. And they’re ready to let Jesus take it over. They’re ready for a Copernican Revolution.

Putting the Sun Back in the Center

- A. Here again is where I think our opening illustration serves us well. What was the Catholic church and the Inquisition trying to do?
1. Well, they were quite literally trying to keep us at the center of the Solar System. We don't want to put the sun there. We want to be there.
- B. Isn't that just it though? Isn't that still why we push back against the inconvenient truths of God and the gospel? I want to be at the center of my Solar System. I want to be in charge. I want to sit on the throne. I want to call the shots.
1. It feels freeing at first, right, to put yourself at the center. No one can tell me what to do.
 - a. But if the earth was at the center instead of the Sun, do want to know what would happen? Everything would spiral out of orbit.
 - b. And when you try to be the center of your life, the same thing happens. Stuff doesn't work. Things come unglued. You keep butting up against inconvenient truths that remind you: you're not God, you're a sinner, you're broken, you need help . . . you need Jesus.
- C. Let's be clear: these religious leaders, they didn't succeed in their resistance of Jesus here.
1. The church kept rolling forward no matter what they did.
 2. And they couldn't keep their prominence and prestige and power no how matter how hard they tried. Give it a few years and the Romans would come in and destroy the temple and take away their place anyway.
 - a. You don't gain anything by locking up Galileo and banning his books. You just make yourself miserable trying to hold on . . . and you still lose it all in the end.
- D. So I'm just saying: Maybe it's time for a Copernican Revolution in your life this morning.
1. Maybe you've been living against the grain of the universe, out of accord with reality, like you're the center. And it's not working.
 2. Maybe it's time open yourself up to Jesus—perhaps for the first time, perhaps just in a fuller way.
 - a. When you try to put the earth at the center, everything spirals out.
 - b. But when you put the sun there, everything comes back into orbit. Everything works. Everything makes sense. Because it's got weight, it's got glory, it's got gravitational pull.
 - i. That's what Jesus does. So let him in!