



LIFE GROUP CURRICULUM

**WHATEVER IT TAKES**  
*for the gospel*

COTTONWOOD CREEK CHURCH

## **Lesson 2: Whatever It Takes To Grow**

### **Main Passage: Acts 4:1–22**

#### **Focus Verse: Acts 4:13**

*When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.*

#### **Big Idea: Spending time with Jesus changes us.**

In Acts 4 Peter and John give evidence that they had been changed by Jesus. We are called to grow in our relationship with Jesus. When we are saved, He changes us. He transforms us and sets us on the path of looking, acting and speaking different. Jesus wants you to grow in your relationship because in doing so you will have strength to live a whatever it takes kind of life.

### **Four Ways a Relationship With Jesus Changes Us:**

#### **1) A Relationship With Jesus Changes What We LOVE**

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

In Acts 4, Peter and John healed a lame man and then continued preaching the good news of Jesus in the temple to people who claimed to love God. But notice how the apostles' love is different than the crowds.

There is a contrast between the love of Peter and John and the love of the Sadducees. Peter and John focused their love around Jesus. The religious leaders focused their love around tradition and the law and their minds were closed to the workings of God. They held onto their love and failed to see how God worked through Jesus to bring about a kind of transformation. But the apostles love Jesus more than the opinions of others.

By nature, we point people to what we love most. When Jesus changes our primary love, He changes our primary worship and praise from self-focus to doing whatever it takes to make much of the name of Jesus.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- How does your primary love affect how you live? What are sacrifices you make for the sake of what you care about most?
- Can you share a time you've received negative feedback when sharing the Gospel with someone?

## 2) A Relationship With Jesus Changes How We THINK

**Acts 4:5**, *The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem.*

*<sup>6</sup> Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. <sup>7</sup> They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" <sup>8</sup> Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! <sup>9</sup> 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, <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> Jesus is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone." <sup>12</sup> Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."*

The Jews who witnessed the healing of the lame man failed to see the act as one of kindness and the power of God because their minds remained closed. But the apostles knew these things were evidence of God working in and through them. Jesus changed their thinking and perspective as they saw every opportunity as a "God moment."

In the book *Experiencing God*, Henry Blackaby states, "Right now, God is working all around you." When we stop and realize this, our perspective in every situation changes. We stop focusing on our agendas and we focus on what God is doing. Jesus changes our thinking, because we realize that He is always working.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- How does a relationship with Jesus change the way we think?
- How can you be more aware of "God moments" in your life?

## 3) A Relationship With Jesus Changes How We LOOK

**Acts 4:13**, *When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. <sup>14</sup> But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say.*

These ordinary, unschooled men looked like extraordinary, learned men because they "had been with Jesus." And this can be our story too. The more time we spend with Jesus, the more He changes how we look, operate, and act. It doesn't matter who you are, where you come from or what you've done: God can use anyone and everyone.

The enemy tries to remind us of who we are apart from Christ. Jesus tells us who we can be by spending time with Him. Walk in His forgiveness, be transformed by His working and let Him change you into who you are called to be.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- How is your life different when you are spending time with the Lord versus when you are not?
- How does this passage impact the excuse: “I just don’t know enough about the Bible to be a good witness.”

### **4) A Relationship With Jesus Changes How We TALK**

**Acts 4:15**, *So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. <sup>16</sup> “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. <sup>17</sup> But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.” <sup>18</sup> Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup> But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! <sup>20</sup> As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” <sup>21</sup> After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. <sup>22</sup> For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.*

Have you ever spent time with someone who is passionate about a particular subject? Our mouth is the overflow of our heart. The apostles were overwhelmed by Jesus and they couldn’t help but proclaim Him! When you are changed by Jesus, you can’t help but speak about Jesus.

As we allow the Spirit to transform us, we grow closer to Jesus and we are able to live out a “Whatever It Takes” kind of life.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- If someone recorded every word that came out of your mouth the previous 24 hours, would they conclude that you had been spending time with Jesus?
- What does a “Whatever It Takes” attitude look like in your own spiritual growth?



## **Lesson 2 Additional Commentary (Acts 4:1–22)<sup>2</sup>**

### **Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin (4:1–22)**

Up until this point in Acts, there had been no resistance to the Christians on the part of the Jews. Indeed, the picture has been that of the general acceptance and favor accorded them by the people (cf. 2:47). In chap. 4 the picture changes. Not, however, with the people. They still were responding favorably to the message of the apostles, indeed, in an overwhelming way (cf. 4:4). It was the officials who turned against the apostles, and not even all of them. The primary enemy was the priestly Sadducean aristocracy for whom the Christians were a serious threat to the status quo. Twice they arrested the apostles. The first time occurred here, as they descended upon Peter and John in the course of their witness in the temple square. This time the two apostles were given a “preliminary hearing” in their proclamation of Christ. Because the apostles did not heed this warning and preached Christ all the more, the Sadducees were enraged, and they arrested and tried all the apostles (5:17–42).

This section falls into two natural divisions, corresponding to the arrest of the apostles (4:3) and their release (4:21). The first section treats the arrest, interrogation, and defense of Peter and John (4:1–12). The second relates the deliberations of the court, the warning to the apostles, their response, and their release (4:13–22).

#### ***(1) Arrested and Interrogated (4:1–12)***

##### **THE ARREST (4:1–4)**

**4:1** Peter’s sermon was suddenly interrupted by an official contingency comprised of priests, the captain of the temple guard, and Sadducees, who “descended upon” the apostles. That Luke used the plural “while *they* were speaking” is interesting. It was Peter’s sermon that was interrupted. As always he was the spokesman, but the plural shows that John was not silent. Like all the apostles, he also was bearing his witness to Christ.

The priests who were present in the arresting company were perhaps those who were on duty that day for the evening sacrifice. The captain of the temple (*stratēgos*) was probably the official whom the *Mishna* designates the *sagan*. The *sagan* had extensive duties, which included assisting the high priest in all ceremonies and serving as his alternate in such capacities. Ranking second in the priestly hierarchy, he was always chosen from one of the families of the priestly aristocracy. Indeed, serving as *sagan* was viewed as a stepping-stone to appointment as high priest. The *sagan*’s involvement in this scene is particularly appropriate since he had ultimate responsibility for order in the temple grounds and had the power to arrest. His linkage with the Sadducees here is also quite natural. Representing the priestly aristocracy, he belonged to their ranks.

The Sadducees were clearly the powers behind the arrest of the two. Josephus listed them as one of the three “schools of thought” among the Jews of the first century, along with the Pharisees and Essenes (*Ant.* 13.171). The origin of their name is disputed but may go back to Zadok, the high priest in Solomon’s day. The Sadducees of the first century represented the “conservative” viewpoint. They rejected the oral traditions of the Pharisees and considered only the written Torah

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<sup>2</sup> John B. Polhill, [Acts](#), vol. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 137–147.

of the Pentateuch as valid. They considered the concepts of demons and angels, immortality and resurrection as innovations, believing in no life beyond this life.

More important than their theology, however, was their political orientation. Coming largely from the landed aristocracy, they were accommodationists with regard to the Roman occupation of Israel. Possessing considerable economic interests, their concern was to make peace with the Romans, preserve the status quo, and thus protect their own holdings. In return the Romans accorded the Sadducees considerable power, invariably appointing the high priest from their ranks, who was the most powerful political figure among the Jews in that day. The prime concern of the Sadducean aristocracy, of whom the high priest was the chief spokesman, was the preservation of order, the avoidance at all costs of any confrontation with the Roman authorities.

**4:2** The Sadducees' annoyance at Peter and John's witness to the resurrection was not so much theological as political, as was generally the case with the Sadducees. Note the wording in v. 2: not "they were proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus" but "they were proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead." The idea of a general resurrection was an apocalyptic concept with all sorts of messianic overtones. Messianic ideas among the Jews of that day meant revolt, overthrow of the foreign overlords, and restoration of the Davidic kingdom. There had been such movements before (cf. 5:36–37), and the Romans had put them down. There would be many more in the future. In fact, the worst fears of the Sadducees were indeed realized when war broke out with the Romans in A.D. 66, with terrible consequences for the Jews. Here, with the large crowds surrounding Peter and John, their fears were aroused. The notes of Peter's sermon alarmed them: resurrection, Author of life, a new Moses. These were revolutionary ideas. The movement must not spread. It must be nipped in the bud.

**4:3** So they arrested Peter and John and placed them "in jail" until next morning. The Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin, had jurisdiction over matters of temple violation. It met regularly each day, with the exception of Sabbaths and feast days. Since it was now already evening and the Sanhedrin had already recessed, Peter and John would have to be detained until the court reconvened in the morning.

**4:4** Verse 4 comes almost as an intrusion in the narrative. It is not so. The interruption had been the arrest. Luke returned to Peter's temple sermon. Despite adversities the sermon was no failure. Many did respond and place their faith in the Author of life. So much was this the case that the total number of Jewish Christians came to 5,000. Not only does this serve as a suitable climax to the sermon of chap. 3, but it also serves as an introduction to the trial scene of 4:5–22. The Sadducees tried their best to stop the witness of the apostles. They did not succeed. The Christian message was finding too much acceptance with the people. The rulers raged, but it was all in vain (4:25).

#### THE COUNCIL'S INQUIRY (4:5–7)

**4:5** The next morning the council convened to hear the apostles, just as they had tried Jesus in a morning session (Luke 22:66). At this point Luke did not use the term Sanhedrin, but it appears at v. 15. The term was also used of minor, local courts; but the reference here was to the supreme court of the land, which held the jurisdiction over the temple area. Exactly where it met is uncertain. Josephus indicated that it met outside the temple precincts and just to the west of it, while the rabbinic sources placed it within the temple area in a room especially designated for it

on the south side of the forecourt. Its origin seems to date to Hellenistic times when Israel was a client-nation and no longer had a king as its supreme political authority.

Matters regarding local jurisdiction were entrusted by the Hellenistic overlords to a council of Jews, which developed into the Sanhedrin of New Testament times. It seems to have consisted of seventy-one members, based on Num 11:16, counting the seventy elders mentioned there plus Moses as presiding officer. The presiding officer in the New Testament period was the high priest. At first the Council seems to have consisted primarily of the leading priests and lay elders from the aristocracy. From the time of Queen Alexandra (76–67 B.C.), however, Pharisees were admitted on the Council. Probably always in the minority, the latter still had considerable clout because of their popularity with the people (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 13.298).

The picture of the assembly here in v. 5 comports well with the known composition of the body. It consisted of the ruling priests, the elders, and the scribes. Luke used the term “rulers,” but this almost certainly refers to the priestly representation on the Sanhedrin. Verse 6 mentions four of these plus an unspecified additional number of members from the high-priestly families. The “elders” were the lay members from the Jewish aristocracy, probably comprising the bulk of the entire body and being of Sadducean persuasion. The “teachers” were the scribes, students of the law and responsible for interpreting it before the body. Most scribes were of Pharisaic outlook, so it was likely in this group that the Pharisees were represented on the Sanhedrin.

**4:6** In v. 6 Luke gave an “aside” that mentions by name several of the high-priestly group represented on the Council. Annas is named as high priest. Actually, Annas was high priest from A.D. 6–15, and at this time (early A.D. 30s) his son-in-law Caiaphas was the reigning high priest. Luke’s attribution of the title to Annas may reflect the actual state of affairs. Annas was the most powerful political figure among the Jews at that time. Five of his sons, one grandson, and a son-in-law all acquired the rank of high priest. He may well have been the power behind the scenes, calling all the shots. Caiaphas, Annas’s son-in-law, was high priest from A.D. 18–36, the longest tenure of any high priest during New Testament times. He seems to have struck it off well with Pilate, since he survived the entire period of the latter’s term of office. He and his father-in-law were instrumental in the conviction of Jesus (John 11:49f.; 18:13f.). At this time they were considering a pair of his followers whom they probably saw as equally threatening to the peace and consequently to their own considerable interests.

There is no known John among those who held the office of high priest. Codex Bezae, however, reads “Jonathan” in this verse. If one follows that variant, he would then be the Jonathan, son of Annas, who served as high priest in A.D. 36–37. No record exists of an Alexander who served as high priest in the New Testament period. He may have belonged to one of the families of the priestly aristocracy.

**4:7** The interrogation began with the apostles being brought before the Council. The Greek says literally “in the middle” (v. 7), which comports well with the rabbinic statement that the Sanhedrin sat in a semicircle: “The Sanhedrin was arranged like the half of a round threshing-floor so that they might all see one another. Before them stood the two scribes of the judges, one to the right and one to the left, and they wrote down the words of them that favored acquittal and the words of them that favored conviction.” The question was then posed to the apostles: “By what power or what name did you do this?” The verb is plural, as if the Court asked the question in unison; but one would assume that the high priest, as presiding officer, served as spokesman in beginning the interrogation. Some interpreters assume that the question has to do with the man’s

healing, but the main reason for the arrest had been the preaching of the apostles (v. 2). They were concerned about the source of the disciples' teaching and the possibility that their emphasis on the resurrection could lead to a major messianic insurrection with serious political repercussions. They were concerned about authority, proper accreditation, law and order, keeping the peace.

#### PETER'S RESPONSE (4:8–12)

**4:8** The question as to the “name” behind their preaching was a question of accreditation and authorization, but Peter could not let this one get by. The lame man was healed by the name of Jesus. If the Sanhedrin wanted to know about that name, he would tell them all about it. Instead of the expected defense, Peter gave them a sermon. In fulfillment of Jesus' promise (Luke 12:11f.), he was given a special endowment of the Holy Spirit to bear his witness with boldness.

Verses 9–12 comprise a minis sermon on “the name that brings salvation.” It begins with the reference to the name raised by the Sanhedrin and repeated by Peter (vv. 7, 10), which is linked to the word “saved” with regard to the healing of the man (v. 9). These two concepts are brought back together at the conclusion, with the reference to salvation in no other name (v. 12). The crux of the sermon is a play on the Greek word *sōzō*, which means both physical “salvation” in the sense of healing (v. 9) as well as the spiritual, eschatological sense of salvation (v. 12). The physical “salvation” of the lame man through the name of Jesus is thus a pointer to the far greater salvation that comes to all who call upon his name in faith.

**4:9** In many ways Peter's testimony before the Sanhedrin is a condensed form of his address in Solomon's Colonnade. It began with a reference to the healing of the lame man (v. 9). The crowd in the temple wondered about the source of the lame man's healing, and Peter pointed to the name of Jesus. The Sanhedrin wanted to know about the name, and Peter pointed them to the healing of the lame man. The two go together: wholeness, salvation, is in the name of Jesus; the name of Jesus brings wholeness. Peter's words contain a bit of irony. The rulers were worried about the political dangers of the “name” the apostles were preaching. “This name is not destructive,” said Peter; “it brings good things; it brings wholeness” (author's paraphrase). Peter underlined his point. “Be very sure of this,” he said, “you and everyone else in Israel.”

**4:10–11** Peter was ready to preach to all, even the Sanhedrin. But like the crowd in the Colonnade, the judges in the Sanhedrin rejected the *name* that could bring them salvation. Peter repeated the familiar kerygmatic formula: “Whom you crucified, but whom God raised.” Indeed, it is by the very fact that God has exalted him that the power had come for healing the man. The themes are the same as before: the healing name of Jesus, which proves his resurrection and points to his salvation, the guilt of the Jews who rejected him. Also, as before, there is a proof from Scripture, this time from Ps 118:22. It establishes the guilt of the Sanhedrin. They were the “builders,” the leaders of the nation, who rejected the very rock on which God's people are to be built. Very early Ps 118:22 came to be viewed by the Christians as pointing to Christ, the one rejected by his own people, whom God made the crowning stone of his people. This text also appears in Luke 20:17 as well as in 1 Pet 2:7 and in both passages is linked to other Old Testament texts that incorporate a “stone” motif. Many see this as evidence that the early Christian community made collections of Old Testament texts that were applied to Christ.

**4:12** All Peter's sermons to this point ended with an appeal, but there seems to be none here. The appeal, however, is present implicitly. If there is salvation in no other name (v. 12), then obviously one must make a commitment to that sole name that brings salvation. But the appeal is



even stronger than that. Peter switched to the first person at the end of the verse, “by which we must be saved,” amounting to a direct appeal to the Sanhedrin. Peter had been bold indeed. He had come full circle. They asked for the name in whom his authority rested. He answered their question. It was the name, the power of Jesus. He directed the charges. The Council had rejected the one who bore this powerful name. The ultimate verdict rested with them. Would they continue to reject the one whom God had placed as the final stone for his people, the only name under heaven in which they would find their own salvation? The final verdict would rest in their own decision.

## ***(2) Warned and Released (4:13–22)***

**4:13–14** Peter had borne his testimony. It was now time for the Council to deliberate. They assessed the evidence (vv. 13–14). First, there was the courage, the sheer freedom with which Peter spoke. They hardly expected this from men who had no formal education in matters of the law, who were ordinary laymen. Then there was the fact that they had been with Jesus. He too had been just a “commoner” but also with an amazing boldness and knowledge beyond his training. But he too had been a dangerous person, a threat to their peace; and they consequently had condemned him to death. Finally, there was the healed man, standing with them before the Tribunal. Whether he was there voluntarily in support of Peter and John or whether he had been summoned as a witness, we are not told. In any event there he was, standing there, “exhibit A,” a “known sign” (v. 16). He was hard to overlook. It was hardly a clear-cut case. The Council sat in silence. At this point there was nothing they could say. Indeed, Jesus’ promise was being fulfilled before the apostles’ eyes (Luke 21:15). The irony can scarcely be missed—the accused spoke with utter boldness and freedom; their accusers sat in stony silence.

**4:15–17** When the Sanhedrin ordered Peter and John out of the courtroom (v. 15), they were following normal procedure. Their custom after hearing the witnesses was to dismiss them in order to have as clear and open a discussion among themselves as possible. In this instance they were at something of a loss. They really had no charge to lay upon them. Further, the accused were popular with the people, for the news about healing of the lame man had already spread throughout Jerusalem. There was only one thing they could do—they could threaten. They would warn the apostles to no longer speak “in this name” (v. 17).

**4:18–19** Although only implicit at this point, this would also establish culpability should the apostles decide to transgress the interdiction of the court (cf. 5:28). So the apostles were brought back into the court and given the warning. They were no longer “to speak and teach in the name of Jesus” (v. 18). The warning was given in narrative style rather than in direct speech, perhaps Luke’s way of underlining the timidity of the Council on the whole matter. The response of Peter and John was in direct discourse; it was bold and almost defiant: “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God.”

**4:20–22** The response was much the same as that given by Socrates to his Athenian accusers who warned him to desist from his teaching. The saying had become quite proverbial, however, and was widely used by Jews and Greeks. It would seem a bit ironic if these unlearned and common men (v. 13) were throwing the words of the Greek philosopher at them. The stronger irony, however, is in the boldness of the apostles and the timidity of their accusers. The apostles could only speak of what they had seen and heard (v. 20). They were the eyewitnesses of Jesus’ entire

ministry (1:21f.), the witnesses to his resurrection (2:32; 3:15). Peter and John had no choice but to defy the court's order, for it had "stepped in between the conscience and God." The court had no alternative but to threaten them further and release them (v. 21). They could find no grounds for punishing them at this point, and they feared the apostles' popularity with the populace. The man, born lame, was over forty years old (v. 22), so the miracle was particularly striking; and the people took it for what it was, an act of God, a sign. The little word "sign" should not be overlooked in the Greek text of v. 22. That is what the man's healing had been—a sign to the temple crowd in Solomon's Colonnade that attracted them to the gospel and ultimately to faith. It had been a sign to the Sanhedrin as well, a pointer to the sole name in which salvation (ultimate "healing") is to be found. There is no record of response for Peter's appeal to the Sanhedrin, as there was for his temple sermon (v. 4). Here for the first time is found a theme that will recur throughout Acts—the rejection of the Messiah by the Jews. For many of them, particularly their official leadership, he was, and continued to be, the stone rejected by the builders.

## **Lesson 2 – Whatever It Takes To Grow – Missionary Story**

### **Hudson Taylor (May 21, 1832 – June 3, 1905)**

Hudson Taylor, an early missionary to China, shows us by his life and by his work that he indeed was a whatever it takes Christian so that the Chinese people could hear the Gospel. His story is a story of spiritual growth.

Hudson was born to parents who had a deep interest in China and who had prayed that their newborn son would “work for You in China.” On a quiet afternoon when he was 17, he was reading one of his father’s books and was confronted with the message of salvation. Reading that Christ died for our sins and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the world, he was struck by the thought that the whole work of salvation was finished, the debt paid and the only thing that he could do was to accept God’s gift of salvation and then thank Him for it. That is exactly what he did. This began a lifetime of serving God to reach others, in particular the Chinese people with the Gospel.

The next several years Hudson dedicated himself to preparing to go to China. Not only did he immerse himself in the study of God’s Word, but he also learned the elementary rudiments of medicine, became a licensed midwife, and began to learn Mandarin.

September 19, 1853, found Hudson Taylor leaving behind his love of England and family for his love for Christ and for the Chinese people. On that day, as an agent of the Chinese Evangelization Society, he boarded the *Dumfries*, a small clipper ship headed for China. He knew no one on board and he knew no one in China. He did have in his pocket three letters of introduction to people that could help him once he arrived. He had received two of these letters from casual acquaintances, and the third letter came from a virtual stranger.

When he arrived in China, he learned that one of the persons for whom he had a letter of introduction had died two months previously, and the second person had sailed to America a few weeks prior. His hope was diminishing. His last potential contact was the one he knew the least about and the one he had not expected to be of much help. To his surprise this gentleman, Rev. Dr. Medhurst, who was in China with the London Mission, welcomed him into his home where Hudson lived for the first six months after arriving in China. Dr. Medhurst also helped to secure Hudson’s first Chinese language teacher. The letter of introduction that Hudson thought would be of no help was the instrument that God used to get Hudson Taylor started on his work to bring the Gospel to China.

Hudson was not in China very long when he decided that his appearance was a distraction to reaching the Chinese people with the Gospel. He believed that if he looked more like the Chinese people that they would be more willing to talk with him. He began to dress in Chinese clothing, he grew his hair long enough to have a pigtail (like the Chinese men) and he colored his hair black with shoe polish. While his fellow Protestants in China were either incredulous or critical of his decision, God blessed his commitment. He began to have successful conversations with the Chinese people and shared the Gospel with them.

It was not long before Hudson came to believe that many of the missionaries he met and observed were “worldly” and spent too much time with English businessmen and diplomats who desired and needed their services as translators. Their “talk” was that of the world concerning worldly activities. He committed that his talk was to be the talk of God’s Word.

Hudson Taylor's heart yearned to take the Gospel to the interior of China. So, only a few months after arriving in China and with a very limited ability to speak Chinese, he and a fellow missionary, Joseph Edkins, set sail down the Huangpu River handing out Chinese Bibles and salvation tracts. Before many months passed, he had established a church in the interior and the work began to grow.

Before six years passed, Hudson Taylor resigned from the Chinese Evangelization Society (because they had proved incapable of paying their missionaries) and became an independent missionary trusting God to meet his needs. He married Maria Dyer, who was in China with her missionary parents, all the while pouring himself into his missionary work. By the summer of 1860, he was exhausted and very ill. He and Maria were forced to return to England to recover.

This time spent in England proved to be a turning point both in Hudson's health and his life and ministry. Once he was somewhat recovered, he began the work of revising the Chinese translation of the New Testament. The vision for the China Inland Mission began to develop in his mind and heart. He could not escape the truth that a million souls a month were dying without God. He began to pray for workers to go with him to China. As he prayed for workers, God spoke to his heart about the need for leadership for these workers. In time Hudson surrendered his heart to God to be the leadership of that endeavor, if indeed that was God's will for him. He began to pray specifically for 24 missionaries for China. The 24 workers included 2 for each of the eleven provinces of China and 2 for Mongolia.

Hudson Taylor began to make the vision a reality when he took his last \$50 and opened a bank account in the name of "China Inland Mission." He then wrote a pamphlet entitled *China's Spiritual Need and Claims* to inform the Christians in England about the great need in China. As this pamphlet circulated across England, hearts were moved for the spiritual needs of China. People were moved to pray, to give and to go!

On May 26, 1866, Hudson Taylor with his wife and children sailed with 14 other missionaries back to China as the first group of missionaries for the China Inland Mission. Only eternity will reveal the numbers of people that came to Christ because Hudson Taylor surrendered his life to God's plan to do whatever it takes to grow in Christ and to reach people with the Gospel.

Hudson Taylor continued his work in China until his death on June 3, 1905. He had sacrificed much personally. Maria died after only 12 years of marriage, his second wife also died, and four of his eight children died when they were very young. By the time Hudson died in 1905, there were 825 missionaries serving in every province of China, 300 mission stations, 500 local Chinese helpers, and over 25,000 new Chinese Christians. The China Inland Mission remained active in spreading the Gospel in China until 1950 when its main operation was moved to Singapore to protect the Chinese churches. In 1964, the name of the agency was changed to Overseas Missionary Fellowship and this agency continues to send the Gospel around the world and particularly to Asian countries.

The heartbeat of Hudson Taylor's vision and work is best described by his own words . . .

*China is not to be won for Christ by quiet, ease-loving men and women. . . The stamp of men and women we need is such as will put Jesus, China and souls first and foremost in everything and at every time – even life itself must be secondary.*

**Hudson Taylor was a whatever it takes Christian to reach the Chinese people with the Gospel.**