

Acts 4:18 in the Navajo Bible

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Áádóó hágo dahodíniidgo, Jesus bízhi' ts'ídá doo bee hanáádoohdzih da índá doo bee nináadí'nóoh'tijí da, dahahníigo yee dahooł'a'. (Acts 4:18)¹

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. (Acts 4:18)²

Discussion

To my ear *yee dahooł'a'* ("they commanded them") sounds like *yee hahóót'á* ("there was a commotion"). This is not what the text says, or should say, but merely something that comes to mind as I read what's written. The first time this similarity occurred to me it made me laugh. One could easily imagine a room full of very upset people all loudly insisting that the disciples shouldn't talk anymore about Jesus.

Peter and John, on the other hand, didn't get upset. They didn't need to. When you really have the power of the Holy Spirit, you don't need to speak loudly. In the present case what they said was,

"Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. ²⁰ For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:19-20)

This answer was direct, but not loud or impolite. They knew the power of God was on their side, so they could afford to be calm. Consider a parallel. An equipment operator at Peabody Coal doesn't need to pull a level on his loader *and* shout in order to lift 30 cubic yards of coal in one scoop. All he has to do is pull the lever. All the power he could want is right there.

Similarly, when you ask God for something you need, you don't have to do that *and* shout in order to get what you ask for. God can hear you. All the power you could possibly want is right there. Prayer moves the hand that moves the universe.

In any event, what the writer says in Acts 4:18 is not the expression *yee hahóót'á* ("there was a commotion") that we've been talking about. Those words merely sound a little like what he says. The wording is *yee dahooł'a'* ("they commanded them"). The translators have it exactly right.

¹ Navajo Bible quotations are from *Diyin God Bizaad. The Holy Bible in Navajo*. Revised edition. New York: American Bible Society, 2000.

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