

The Spirit Gives Boldness

(Acts 4:1-31)

Pre-Session Warm Up

One of the last things Jesus told his disciples before He ascended into Heaven was to go into the world and make disciples. (See Matthew 28:19-20.)

Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. (20) Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Jesus wants us to go out and tell everyone the Good News that He came to save us from the penalty of our sins. But, is it hard for you to talk to someone about the Lord? [Teacher, discuss problems that make witnessing difficult — feeling of shyness, not knowing who to talk to; being afraid of ridicule or persecution; not knowing what to say.]

Last week we learned that the Holy Spirit enabled Peter to stand up and boldly tell thousands of people about what the Lord Jesus had done for mankind. He became a powerful witness for the Lord.

If you are a true believer in Jesus, you have the same Holy Spirit living inside you that enabled Peter to be a bold witness. Today we are going to learn that the Holy Spirit helps us be a strong witness; He gives you the power to share the Good News about Jesus with others.

Opening Prayer

Father, I want to be a bold witness for You. As we study the Holy Spirit this morning, I pray that we will gain confidence as we go out and tell people about what You came to do for us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Memory Verse

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

Lesson

Chapter four is a continuation of the story we learned about last week. The people are gathered around in awe at the miracle that had taken place. Peter and John told the people that it was by faith in Jesus' Name that the lame man was healed. However, whenever God is at work in the hearts of people, God's enemy doesn't like it.

Who is God's enemy? (Satan/devil.) We are about to see God's enemy at work in chapter four.

Acts 4:1-3

*While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. (2) **These leaders were very disturbed** that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. (3) They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning.*

What do we know about these religious leaders, the priests, Temple guards, and Sadducees? (They did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God and they had Him crucified.)

Whenever God's Word is being taught there will be some kind of reaction. Why do you think that these Jewish religious *leaders were very disturbed*?

These religious leaders thought when they put Jesus to death that would be the end of Him. But here was Peter and John, proclaiming that Lord Jesus died on the cross, was buried and three days later was raised from the dead. And, they were telling people that if they had faith in Jesus, they would be saved.

God's enemy was trying to use these religious leaders to silence the Good News because the last thing Satan wanted was for people to put their faith in Jesus and be saved.

But it happened just as these religious leaders feared.

The crowd at the Temple courts that day had witnessed an amazing miracle and they heard Peter preach in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had given Peter the words to share the Good News that if the people would repent from the sins and believe in Jesus, they could be saved. And many people came to faith in Jesus.

Acts 4:4

But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of men who believed now totaled about 5,000.

The crowds' reaction to the teaching of God's Word was belief; now there were about 5,000 believers. (Note there were now 5,000 believers total: 3,000 in Acts 2:41 + 2,000 here in Acts 4:4.)

The next day Peter and John were brought before the religious leaders.

Acts 4:5-7

The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met in Jerusalem. (6) Annas the high priest was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest. (7) They brought in the two disciples and demanded, "By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?"

Peter and John were obeying Jesus' command to tell others the Good News and many people believed. The Holy Spirit gave them power and courage to be bold. But they found themselves in jail for a night because many who heard them preach the Good News believed and came to faith.

Acts 4:8-12

*Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of our people, (9) are we being questioned today because we've done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? (10) Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that **he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ** the*

Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. (11) For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says, 'The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.' (12) There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."

What name was Peter referring to? (Jesus) Why is the Name of Jesus so important and why is His Name the only way a person can be saved?

Names in the Old Testament were very important. They stood for who that person was, or who they would become, or what they would accomplish in their life. Who is Jesus?

What are some Names for Jesus? [Teacher, list these on the board and talk about why they describe Jesus: Bread of Life, Christ, Comforter, Counselor, Creator, Defender, Deliverer, Door, Great Physician, Good Shepherd, Hiding Place, Immanuel (God with us), Son of God, Lamb of God, Light of the World, Living water, Lord of all, Messiah, Rock, Way, etc.]

When you speak Jesus' Name, what comes to you mind? Hopefully it is His many character traits, like His mercy or forgiveness, His almighty power to overcome evil or disease.

When Peter and John told the lame man, "*In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk,*" (Acts 3:6), they did not mean that the words themselves had the power to heal. Only Jesus can heal a person. The lame man was healed by faith in the Name of Jesus, He is Almighty God. There is power in no other Name.

While Peter was speaking to the religious leaders, they saw the courage he and John had.

Acts 4:13

The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.

They knew that that Peter and John were just ordinary men. But because Peter and John had the power of the Holy Spirit living inside of them, it was hard for others not to notice something was different about them. They were amazed; it was obvious to them that Peter and John had been with Jesus.

Is it obvious to others that you spend time with Jesus? If we are believers, people should be able to see that we are different because we know and follow Jesus. They should see Jesus' character traits in us.

The religious leaders didn't know what to do with Peter and John. This is what they came up with...

Acts 4:14-18

*But since **they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them**, there was nothing the council could say. (15) So they ordered Peter and John out of the council chamber and conferred among themselves. (16) "What should we do with these men?" they asked each other. "We can't deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and everybody in Jerusalem knows about it. (17) But to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in Jesus' name again." (18) So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.*

They wanted to put a stop to Pete and John telling people about Jesus, but they couldn't deny that an amazing miracle had happened. Everyone in Jerusalem knew that the lame man had been healed. The man who had been lame was standing right there among them.

Acts 4:19-20

But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? (20) We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard."

Because the Holy Spirit lived inside of them, Peter and John knew that they could not obey the religious leaders' command because

they would be disobeying Jesus' command to go into the world and make disciples.

The religious leaders threatened Peter and John a bit more and then released them.

Acts 4:21-22

The council then threatened them further, but they finally let them go because they didn't know how to punish them without starting a riot. For everyone was praising God (22) for this miraculous sign—the healing of a man who had been lame for more than forty years.

Notice: The Holy Spirit empowered Peter and John and the results caused the people to praise God, not Peter and John. It would have been terribly wrong for the crowd to praise Peter and John for the healing of the lame man. It was God's power that healed him.

Acts 4:23

As soon as they were freed, Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said.

When they were released from jail, Peter and John went back to the place where the believers met and shared with them what had happened.

Acts 4:24

When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: "O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—

They went to God in prayer and praised Him. Then they asked God enable them to continue to speak God's Word with boldness and to continue to heal others in the Name of Jesus.

Look at verses 29-30:

Acts 4:29-30

*And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and **give us**, your servants, **great boldness in preaching your word.** (30) **Stretch out your hand with healing power;** may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”*

God heard the believers' prayer and something amazing happened.

Acts 4:31

After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.

There was an earthquake and the Holy Spirit gave them the power to speak God's Word with power. The Holy Spirit gave these believers the courage to share the Good News.

If you have believed in the Name of Jesus, you have the same Holy Spirit living inside you that Peter and John had. He will give you courage to follow Jesus and do what He wants you to do each and every day.

Next week we will continue to take our journey through the book of Acts.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, thank You that the Holy Spirit lives in each of us to help us be brave! We can count on the Holy Spirit to give us courage and boldness. Now give us a heart to tell everyone about You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

GAME CENTER

Use the following questions in another game of your choice:

Review questions:

1. Who doesn't like it when God is working in people's hearts? (God's enemy, Satan, doesn't like it.)
2. Why were the religious leaders very disturbed? (Peter and John were proclaiming that Jesus rose from the dead and that faith in Him alone would save them. They thought when they put Jesus to death that would be the end of Him!)
3. Why did they put Peter and John in jail? (Because many who heard Peter preach the Good News believed and came to faith.)
4. How many people believed the message of the Good News? (5,000 total: 3,000 in Acts 2:41, 2,000 in Acts 4:4.)
5. What Name did Peter and John tell the religious leaders healed the man with? (Jesus' Name)
6. Why is the Name of Jesus so important and why is His Name the only way a person can be saved? (Faith in Jesus is what saves you, not the saying of His name.)
7. What did the religious leaders command Peter and John? (Not to speak or teach at all in the Name of Jesus.)
8. Why couldn't Peter and John stop telling people about Jesus? (They knew if they did that, they would be disobeying Jesus' command to go into the world and make disciples.)
9. What did the believers pray about after Peter and John were released? (Vs 29-30: They asked God enable them to continue to speak God's Word with boldness and to continue to heal others in the Name of Jesus.)
10. How did God answer their prayer? (Earthquake and gave them boldness to speak God's Word.)