

Acts 4:1-31

Preach It!

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Have you ever felt compelled to share something with a person (e.g. good/bad news, they have toilet paper on their shoe)? What happened? How did they respond?

Part One: Boldness And Preparation

Acts 4:1-14 (NIV)

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. ² They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. ³ They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. ⁴ But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

⁵ The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶ Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. ⁷ They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹ 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,¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Jesus is

“the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the cornerstone.”

¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

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. ¹⁴ But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say.

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What was it about Peter and John's message that both landed them in jail and led 5,000 people to believe?

? Why might Peter continue to accuse and highlight the leaders' and elders' fault in the crucifixion of Jesus?

? The members of the Sanhedrin were astonished by Peter and John's courage (vs.13). Where does their boldness and confidence come from?

? How were Peter and John prepared for this moment (e.g. Luke 21:14, Acts 4:13)?

? In what ways can we be prepared to be used by God?

? In vs. 13 we read that Peter and John are “unschooled, ordinary men.” How can their example inspire us to forget our shortcomings and rely on God completely?

Part Two: Boldness and Our Circumstances

Acts 4:15-31 (NIV)

¹⁵ So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. ¹⁶ “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. ¹⁷ 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.”

¹⁸ Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges!

²⁰ As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

²¹ 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. ²² For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

²³ On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

“Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?

²⁶ The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord
and against his anointed one.’

²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. ²⁹ Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

³¹ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

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The disciples continuously faced opposition in sharing the Gospel message (vv. 18-19). Can you list some examples? How do we see them respond?

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The disciples don't seem fazed by their circumstances, no matter how difficult they are. How do we respond during difficult circumstances? Why can it be difficult for us to believe in God's authority in those moments?

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Peter and John's intimacy with Jesus gave them the boldness to use their stories as a way to share the Gospel (vs. 1-2, 10-12, 20). How can we use our stories to share the Gospel with those around us?

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- What does boldness in the proclamation of the Gospel look like in today's church?
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- Peter and John pray for boldness to speak the truth despite their circumstances. How have you seen God honor your request for boldness when you've asked Him?

For Accountability And Discussion

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- In what ways do you need to walk in boldness?
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- Peter and John's words and actions reflect that they've been with Jesus. Does your life and story reflect to others your relationship with Christ and the Gospel message? How so?