



“Apostles on Trial: The First of Many...”

Acts 4:1-22

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Speaker: Pastor Drew Hunsley

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20:55

Good morning. It's good to be here with you. I love seeing familiar faces, some new faces. It's good to see you guys here as well. So thank you for being here. I want to invite you to grab a Bible, if you brought one with you, we're going to be in Acts chapter 4 this morning. If you didn't bring a Bible with you, there should be a black one either under your chair or maybe one of the chairs in front of you that you can grab and follow along. We're going to be on page 1,117 in those black Bibles. So if you want to follow along in there, we're going to stick it on the screens as well. But this week we're going to look at Acts, well, the first part of Acts chapter 4.

21:29

And what we're going to see in our passage this morning, we're going to see the religious establishment. We're going to see the high priest and some of those Sadducees and the people that were kind of working with him. We're going to see this religious establishment respond to Peter and John's actions that we saw back in chapter 3. If you weren't with us last week we looked at Acts chapter 3, and in that chapter we saw Peter and John, two of Jesus' disciples that had followed him around, watched him, and had now been commissioned by Jesus to go and to take the news of salvation out into the world. Peter and John were coming into Jerusalem. They were coming into the temple, and they came upon this lame man who had been crippled for the past 40 years or so, since he was born.

22:14

And Peter looks at this man, he says, I don't have gold to give you, but what I do have, I will give you. And so he says, in the name of Jesus, get up and walk. And so this man is immediately healed. He begins jumping around and praising God. He was immediately strengthened and healed. And so Peter then goes into the temple and he starts to talk about Jesus. He starts to tell people about the good news that Jesus has come to save sinners like me and you. And so he calls people to repent. He calls people to place their faith in Jesus. And so now in chapter 4, we're going to see the response from the religious establishment, the Sanhedrin, the Sadducees, and those other religious leaders that were there in that day. They were mad at Peter and the other disciples.

22:59

They were upsetting their system that they had put in place. And so preaching Jesus was a

direct threat to their power. The system that they had established was under attack. And so they needed to stand up and to deal with this threat. They wanted to silence the “Jesus people” as quickly as possible, just like they had tried to silence Jesus a few months earlier. You may remember, these are the same people who ultimately arrested and tried and had Jesus crucified. What had started as a small band of followers, Jesus, and a few of his merry men, had turned into quite the group. It was getting out of hand quickly. And so Acts chapter 4 shows us their response towards Peter and John as they’re going to address this situation that has come up. So we’re going to look at Acts chapter 4.

23:46

We’re going to look at verses 1 through 22 this morning. So I’ll invite you to follow along in just a minute. But we’re going to see these men are arrested and interrogated. We’re going to see an emboldened response as Peter gets an opportunity to make his case before the Sanhedrin. And then we’re going to see them caught and released. Kind of a fun play on the fact that they were arrested and then ultimately sent back out by the end of our passage this morning. So I’m going to read all the way through the passage, and then we’ll come back and we’ll kind of pick it apart a little bit and dig into it a little bit. So let’s start in Acts, chapter 4, verse 4, it says.

24:22

And as they were speaking to the people, Peter and John, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed, because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they arrested them and they put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the word believed. And the number of the men came to about 5,000. And on the next day, their rulers and the elders and the scribes, these religious elite, they gathered together in Jerusalem with Annas, the high priest, Caiaphas, and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high priestly family. And when they had set them, Peter and John, down in their midst, they inquired, by what power or by what name did you do this?

25:06

And then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, rulers of the people, elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who you crucified, who God raised from the dead - by him, this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 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. Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they perceived that they were uneducated common men, and they were astonished.

25:52

But they recognized that they had been with Jesus. But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. When they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, saying, what shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them as evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, we cannot deny it. But in order that it may spread further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name. And so they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

26:25

But Peter and John answered them, whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you, rather than to listen to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard. 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. For the man on whom the sign of healing was performed was more than 40 years old. This is the word of the Lord. Would you pray with me, church? God, we thank you for the privilege of being able to come and to possess your word, to be able to hear from you this morning. God, we pray that this time would not be any of me, but that it would be all of you, God.

27:03

That you would use your word to speak what you would have for us this morning. God use this. God give us ears to hear and to receive what you would say. And God help us to apply, in a very practical way in our lives, what we see here from Peter and John as they are confronted with some very direct and clear questions. We give this time to you and we pray that you would use it for your work. It's in Jesus name we pray. Amen. All right. Well, as we dive into our passage, the first thing that we see is Peter and John are arrested and interrogated. The passage begins by telling us that these men had been confronted. Peter and John were confronted by these religious leaders.

27:45

We see the Sadducees and the priests and the captain of the temple, they face off against Peter and John. So we've got this conflict kind of setting up between these two groups. The religious establishment, they were upset because these men were out here talking about Jesus. And these same religious establishment guys, these religious leaders, they had Jesus killed just a couple of months earlier. They were trying to squash this whole Jesus thing that had come up in Jerusalem. But there was no time for them to confront Peter and John that night. It was illegal to have a trial at night, as you may remember from Jesus' Illegal trial that these same men held overnight. But these men are, Peter and John are thrown in jail, held until the next day. And we see that they come back the next morning to pick up the story.

28:35

Verse 4 kind of tells us that this is not a small group of Jesus followers that has been kind of built up at this point. Verse 4 tells us that many of those who heard the words of Peter and John, they believed. And the number of the men came to about 5,000. We saw a couple of chapters a few weeks ago as we were studying through the Book of Acts, we saw that over 3,000 men were added to their number on the day of Pentecost back in chapter 2. It also talked about how daily people were being added to the group of Christians to the church that was there in Jerusalem. And so by the time we pick up here in chapter 4, it tells us that over 5,000 men are now a part of this new Jesus movement that is taking Jerusalem by storm.

29:22

By the time you add women and children, we're probably talking about, I don't know - 10,000 - 20,000 people. Something like... this is not a small group of people that Peter and John and the other apostles are leading and teaching there in Jerusalem at this time. But by the time we get to verses 5 through 7, we see the rulers now reconvene and they're ready to confront Peter and John about what had happened the day before. Let's read those couple of verses again, just so that we're fresh on what we're talking about. Verse 5, it says, on the next day, the rulers and the elders and the scribes, they gathered together in Jerusalem. And it talks about Annas and Caiaphas and all these people who were from the high priest family.

30:01

But then verse 7, it says, when they had set them in their midst, Peter and John sat down right in the middle of this big circle of them. It's time to hold court. They look at them and they say, by what power or by what name did you do this? Talking about the miracle that the crippled man was healed the day before. They convened this little trial there to establish what Peter and what John have done. And it probably felt similar to one that had happened

just a couple of months earlier, that Peter had witnessed as he had followed Jesus and followed the crowd on the night before Jesus was crucified. You remember that story from Easter, that there was a trial that Jesus was placed before the religious leaders and they determined that Jesus needed to die.

30:48

And then ultimately led to Jesus being crucified on the cross. Peter had witnessed that illegal trial that these same men had held with Jesus. But now Peter and John are there standing in the same spot, standing before the same group that likely had condemned Jesus to die. It's easy to see how Peter and John had a reason to be afraid that day. They had reason to be fearful or reserved in their replies. They should have been measured. They should have chosen their words carefully if they were concerned about their safety in that moment, these same religious leaders had Jesus killed. And now Peter and John likely assumed that they were up next on the docket. The scene reminds me of Jesus words in John chapter 15 that he had spoken to his disciples just months before.

31:39

When he told the disciples that they would face persecution in the same way that he did Jesus in John 15, he told them, he. He said, if the world hates you, know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world would love you as its own, but because you're not of the world, because I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I have said to you. A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. But if they kept my word, they will also keep yours. Jesus never promised his disciples health and wealth and happiness. There's a lot of preachers today that will promise you health and wealth and happiness, but they're not giving you Jesus words because Jesus never promised that.

32:25

In fact, Jesus pretty explicitly promised the opposite. He tells the disciples, if you're doing it right, the world's going to hate you. Because remember, the world hated him. Jesus was certainly popular as he performed miracles, as he taught good things, as Jesus taught about the kingdom of God and taught kind of easy to digest things. And so the crowds would gather at times, but then Jesus would also teach hard truths at times. Jesus would lay out the difficult things of what it looks like to truly follow God. And people would go, oh, no, I'm not signing up for that and people would disappear. By the time Jesus was crucified, the big crowds, the thousands of people that had come to see him perform miracles, had kind of dissipated.

33:10

And he was there just with a few family members and friends there to watch him die. Jesus told the disciples; the world will hate you because the world hated me. Paul says something very similar years later in second Timothy, chapter 3. He says, indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. So I want to just tell you this morning, church, consider this your warning now. if you walk the path of obedience, if you try to live a godly life, it is not always going to be easy. I can't begin to describe how hard, how many times I've heard people describe the hard circumstances of life, talking about how the enemy is not going to go down without a fight.

33:59

If you try to live the way that God wants you to live, if you are living a godly life, you will be persecuted. I can look around a room like this, and I've had conversations in the past few weeks that people have looked at me and said, you know, it just seems like every time I try to do the right thing, it seems like three problems pop up. Every time I try to do what God wants me to do, there's this spiritual attack that comes against me. There's these difficulties. People have problems that are just popping up. You try to do the right thing, you begin

practicing the spiritual disciplines. You lead your family in a godly way or begin to lead your family in a godly way, and it seems like stuff just goes sideways out of nowhere.

34:45

You lose a job, you have this giant fight with your spouse, your car breaks down, whatever it may be. It seems like these things just seem to pile up at times. Whatever it is, the reality is that the enemy doesn't like it when we follow Christ, that there is a very real and present enemy that stands against us. And if we decide, I'm going to follow Jesus, he's not going to take that lying down. There's going to be things that come against us, there's going to be problems that pop up, there's going to be distractions that the enemy wants to do anything he can to distract us from the truth of walking in God's ways. If you're looking for easy this morning, being all in with Jesus is not the way to comfortable and easy.

35:32

Now, if you're not just looking for easy, but if you're looking for meaningful, if you're looking for significance, if you're looking for purpose in your life, I want to encourage you, stay tuned, because the Christians in Acts are going to show us how to become a part of the most incredible mission and purpose that anyone could ever imagine. If you want your life to be easy, this is not it. If you want your life to matter, this is it. Peter and John are faced with a difficult conversation on that day. They were placed in an incredibly difficult circumstance as their lives were on the line, standing there before these same men who sentenced Jesus to death. But now let's see how Peter and John respond in an emboldened Response in verses 8 through 13.

36:21

In these verses, we see Peter step up to respond to their accusations. Peter kind of steps forward in the way that only Peter. I love Peter. Peter is one of my favorite characters in all the Bible. Because Peter would speak whether he had anything to say or not, right? Sometimes when he was with Jesus, Peter would speak before thinking and he got himself in trouble a few times, which I just resonate with. But also in this moment, it tells us in these verses that Peter boldly addresses their accusations as he is empowered by the Holy Spirit. He starts talking about how this crippled man was healed.

36:57

And as Peter finds himself in this volatile circumstance that resembled Jesus' final night before he went to the cross, in the middle of all of it, Peter is empowered by the Holy Spirit and he speaks with boldness. Let's look at verses 8 through 10, how Peter responds. It says in verse 8, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, says to these religious leaders, he says, rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who you crucified, who God raised from the dead by him, this man is standing before you well. Peter's pretty direct, isn't he? Peter addresses their questions with absolute clarity.

37:51

He gives credit for the miracle, unapologetically to Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Just in case there was another Jesus Christ running around, he wanted to make sure. No, no, the one from Nazareth, right? This is the one who, by the way, wait... I think you guys know him, right? This is the same guy. You guys remember? He was just standing here in front of you a couple of months earlier. He's the one that you killed. Oh, yeah, we remember him. These men knew the story. Jesus had been Sadducees public enemy number one for a couple of years by this point. They had just had Jesus executed a few months earlier. Not only that, Peter goes on to say, Jesus, that same Jesus who you killed is the same one who God raised from the dead.

38:43

Now, let me give you just a little bit of background to kind of make sense of why that would have been significant in this conversation. The Sadducees, this religious group that Peter was there standing in front of, they denied the supernatural. They didn't believe in the existence of the supernatural. They denied angels. They denied evil spirits. They especially denied the idea of the resurrection, that Jesus, or really anyone, would be raised from the dead. So when Peter now looks at them and says, you killed him and God raised him from the dead, it was a shot across the bow with a clarity that would not have been missed on that day. Jesus has been raised from the dead.

39:24

He goes on now in verses 11 and 12, and he says, this Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, but has become the cornerstone. 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. In one of the clearest statements in all of Scripture, Peter explicitly declares the exclusivity of the Gospel. Peter is explicitly saying there is salvation in no one else. There is no other Savior. There is no other way to heaven. You can't earn it. You can't talk your way in one day. You can't assume that all roads lead to heaven. Peter's standing in front of them saying, there is one way to heaven and his name is Jesus Christ.

40:15

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved. Just in case you guys are hearing Peter say that and thinking, you know, Peter's kind of going out there a little bit. Peter got a little over his skis in that moment. Well, just in case you're wondering that or feeling that way, Jesus actually made a very similar statement back in John chapter 14. Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. This is the place where every questionable faith has to come to. This is the place where every other faith, every other belief, every other person, we have to answer this same question. Because Peter says it very clearly here. Jesus said it very clearly here.

41:12

It all boils down to, what do you do with Jesus? They all have to answer the same question. Every person has to answer the same question. Every religion has to answer the same question. What do they believe about Jesus? Do they teach that you are saved by placing your faith in Jesus Christ alone. Is your hope for your salvation, are you going to stand at the gates of heaven one day when God looks at you and says, why should you be allowed in? Is the answer, Jesus is good, I'm not. Because if it is, and you placed your faith in Jesus and Jesus alone to save you, we're good. If not, if there is anything else, if it is Jesus plus anything else, there's a problem there. Every faith has to answer the same question.

42:06

I have people often ask me this question, what about this religious group? What about this denomination? What about this teacher? What about this person? What about, I'll tell you, there are thousands of different groups and I can't keep track of all of them. I can't keep track of every teacher that you're going to see on the Internet. I can't keep track of every religious group that's going to pop up. Every new idea, every denomination. There's people all over the place. So when someone comes to me and asks me, what about this teacher? What about this religion? What about this group? I always answer them by asking the exact same question. Because this is what it boils down to, right? I ask the exact same thing in response to every single one of those questions.

42:49

What does that person, what does that group, what does that religion, what do they believe

about Jesus? Do they believe that faith in Jesus alone saves you? Because if they do, then we're solid on the big stuff, right? We might disagree on some other things. We should always be careful. But we agree on the big stuff. We're probably okay in the big picture of things. But if they don't believe that Jesus is God, if they teach that it's Jesus plus you also have to do all these other things. You have to abide by our rules. You have to do this certain thing, you have to act this certain way. If it's Jesus plus something or Jesus is not enough on its own. Can I say this as clearly as I possibly can? It's a cult. They are not teaching the same gospel.

43:41

They are not believing the same thing that we believe. They are not the same as us. Maybe we'll help with a little application. Right? Let me just give you a few examples of groups that I've had people come to me and say, hey, what do we think about that? Right. We're a non denominational Protestant Christian church. So what about Baptists? Are Baptists, okay? Yeah. They place their faith in Jesus and Jesus alone to save them. We're good. What about the Presbyterians? They disagree on some stuff. No. They place their faith in Jesus and Jesus alone for salvation. We're good. What about the Lutherans? Nope. Faith in Jesus, we're good. Right. What about Jehovah's Witnesses? Faith in Jesus is not enough. That's a cult. What about the Roman Catholic Church? Now I will say this. There are some Catholics who are bad Catholics.

44:38

Actually, there are some bad Catholics out there who will say that they placed their faith in Jesus and Jesus alone to save them. And so those people are probably okay. But the organized Roman Catholic Church would disagree with that statement. Jesus and Jesus alone is not enough. They say that you have to do all these other things in addition to placing faith in Jesus. They say faith in Jesus is not enough and that makes them a cult. What about Mormons? Nope. Faith in Jesus is not enough. That's a cult. What about Muslims? Nope. Faith in Jesus is not enough. It's a cult. We can apply this same test to every belief, to every group that we come across. We can simply ask the question, simplify this all down to just the nuts and bolts.

45:23

We can ask the simple question, what do they believe about Jesus? Is Jesus enough? Because if he is, we're okay on the big stuff. If he's not, we are not the same. Let's come back to Peter in Acts, chapter 4. As we come back now, we see this just clear and explicit and emboldened response from Peter in verses 8 through 12, it brings us to verse 13. The counsel that Peter and John were on trial in front of are blown away at this point. They see this incredible boldness in Peter's response standing before them. And verse 13 talks about it. It says, now, when the leaders saw the boldness of Peter and John, they perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. But then they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

46:24

This is one of my favorite verses in all of the book of Acts, really, in all of the Bible. These were uneducated men. These were just normal, everyday guys. There was nothing particularly special about them on the surface, right? Peter was just a fisherman, John was just a fisherman. They were just normal bros, right? These were just guys off the street. These were the everyday guys that, you know, the late-night talk show guys that you walk up to people on the street and get all kinds of random things from man on the street type interviews. These were just normal guys from the streets. Nothing particularly special about them on the surface, but they were emboldened, but they came with a different spirit about them that you didn't find in a lot of other people. These common, uneducated men were different.

47:17

What was different about them? I hear you whispering, right? If I was leading a group of kids, they would have yelled it at me by now, right? It's okay to talk in church sometimes. Jesus, right? Jesus was the thing that was different. Hey, just side note for you, if you're ever in church and someone asks you a question and you don't know the answer, Jesus is a pretty good guess, all right, Just yell back, Jesus. You got probably a 75% chance or so of it being the right answer, right? They were different because those that were judging them, these religious leaders were looking at them and they could tell that there was something different. And they went, oh, wait, these men have been with Jesus. Being with Jesus was the difference.

48:01

Jesus was such an influence in these men's lives that they spoke like him, they acted like him, they loved like him, they sounded like him. The things that were important to Jesus were important to them. They had spent time with Jesus and he rubbed off on them. Can people say the same thing about you? If someone were to watch the way that I live my life every day, the way that you live your life every day, would they come to the same conclusion that they came to with these men? That they were just normal, everyday people, right? That's okay. There's nothing inherently special about me or, well, you're special, but I'm not, right? But we're just normal people sitting here. We're just common, relatively uneducated, right? There's nothing special about us. But there can be.

49:04

Because the same thing that was said of Peter and John can be said about me and you. If someone watched the way that you speak and the way that you act, would they come to the same conclusion that these men came to about Peter and John? They're different because they spend time with Jesus. We see this emboldened response from them now, verses 14 through 22. We see catch and release. Such an interesting dichotomy. We've got these two groups that are here kind of presented to us in this passage, right? On one side, we've got Peter and John standing there on trial for what they have spoken, what they have done, this healing that took place. They're on trial, standing before many of the same men who had Jesus executed just months earlier. Their lives were in very real jeopardy.

49:58

Peter and John stood and boldly declared the truth, regardless of the consequences, regardless of what happened to them. They were going to boldly say what needed to be said. Meanwhile, we've got this other group that's also present, the Sanhedrin, the religious leaders that were there holding the trial. They were the ones who were overseeing the trial, and they held all the power in this exchange. But even as the ones who were in control of the moment, how do they respond? We see them cower in fear, right? Peter and John call them out and make their bold proclamations before them. But the response that comes from the Sanhedrin is to try to make this whole thing just go away quietly. Let's read the rest of our passage again, just so that we've got a frame of reference of what's happening here.

50:55

Verse 14, it says, seeing the man who was healed standing beside Peter and John, the religious leaders had nothing to say in opposition. But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, saying, what shall we do with these men? For a notable sign has been performed through them. It's evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. We can't deny it, 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. And so they called them and charged them not to speak or to teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to listen to God, you can be the judge of that.

51:41

But we cannot but speak of what we have Seen and heard. When they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them because of the people. For all the people were praising God for what had happened. For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than 40 years old. Right, we see the boldness here from Peter and John, but how did the religious leaders respond in this moment? What do we see? Well, first verse 14 tells us, as they hear Peter responding and defending himself to them, they've just got nothing to say, right? They had no response in that moment. So they just kind of clear the room. All right, everybody out. We need to have some discussions. And so they now, with the room empty, start to panic and to communicate with each other.

52:28

Having kicked everyone out, they try to come up with a plan for how to respond. In verse 15, they were so afraid of the crowd because the people were excited because the people had seen this miracle that had been done. This man, who is well known at that point, he had been crippled since birth. If he's over 40 years old, you can do the math, right? He's at least been crippled, sitting around at the temple for decades at this point, showing up every day to ask for alms, to ask for charity, any donations that people would give to him. This was a well known man in area. People knew this guy's been crippled for years, as long as I can remember him...

53:09

This man has been sitting by the gate waiting for someone to drop a coin in his cup and seeing Peter look at the man just a chapter earlier and say, I don't have gold for you, but what I do have, I will give you. Stand up in the name of Jesus Christ. Stand up and walk. And this man gets up and he starts jumping around and celebrating. His legs were strengthened in an instant. The people were so excited about this miracle that everyone had seen and could witness to. This wasn't just some little small thing they knew. All of Jerusalem is buzzing about this at that point. And so the Sanhedrin, in their fear, I don't know what to do, I don't know.

53:56

They respond by simply saying, all right, we're going to go tell these guys, we're going to let them go, because we can't hold them, going to let them go but they're not allowed to talk about Jesus anymore, right? I'm sure that's going to work. They politely asked Peter and John to stop talking about Jesus. That wasn't going to work. Have you seen the boldness of Peter at this point? Right? Peter did some dumb stuff a few years ago. But at this point, Peter has the Holy Spirit living inside of him. Peter has been emboldened and empowered by God to go and to do this mission that God gave him. You know what? Let me just read it for you again. Peter and John, as the Sanhedrin come and they say, hey, if you don't mind, would you please just stop talking about Jesus?

54:42

How do they respond? Verses 19 and 20 says Peter and John answered them, whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to listen to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard. Sanhedrin tells them, guys, we're gonna let you go, but you can't talk about Jesus anymore. And Peter and John's response was, this is my translation. The original Greek is, come on, guys, really, like, no, Jesus has done this incredible thing. I'm gonna go and I'm gonna tell everybody that I possibly can, try to stop me. That was Peter's response to them, right? You can tell us whatever you want, but we're going to talk about what we've seen from Jesus. They were empowered by the Holy Spirit.

55:27

They were emboldened, and nothing was going to stop their emboldened witness. This is the

same thing that Jesus had promised them just a few weeks earlier. You may remember in Acts chapter 1, right? Jesus, right before he returned to heaven, he looked at these same men, Peter and John, and the other apostles and disciples that were there with them. In Acts chapter 1, verse 8, Jesus said, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria and to the ends of the earth. And they were getting after it. Nothing was going to stop them. Nothing was going to stop the word of God. They were excited. They were ready to push back the darkness and to bring the gospel of salvation to a desperately needy world.

56:24

The witness of Peter and John. The boldness of Peter and John is overwhelming in this passage. I love seeing moments like this. It's not the first time that we've seen boldness like this. It's not the last time that we're going to see someone speak with boldness like this. And we're going to see a Jesus follower speak with conviction. But it does underline for us a really important point this morning. Because what we see in Acts 4 is that God had empowered ordinary men to do the extraordinary. God had empowered ordinary men to accomplish his mission. And so they spoke with power, clearly presenting that Jesus is the only way of salvation. So I want to ask you the question. Was there something special about these men? What was it? Can we learn to replicate it? Is there some hidden method? Right.

57:26

The church was experiencing this incredible growth. Peter and the other disciples, they were starting the first megachurch, right? It tells us that there were 5,000 men who had gathered their church there in Jerusalem, had joined together. By the time you add the kids ministry and the women's ministry, we got what, 20,000 people that are there. This is the first megachurch there in Jerusalem. What was their trick? How did they do it? I'm sure they had good social media, right? I'm sure they were on top of promotion, and they definitely made sure that everybody got out by noon. So you're hungry, right? We got. We better hurry up and finish this up quickly. What was the trick? They were just normal guys. They were uneducated. They were described as common men. Nothing special about them. It wasn't because they had some brilliant CEO running the company.

58:25

What was special? Anybody remember, verse 13? Yeah, yeah. See, you guys are getting it now. It's okay, you can talk back. What was special? Verse 13? They were uneducated common men. And the leaders were astonished. And they recognized they had been with Jesus. The same secret stuff that was available to them is available to you and is available to me. The same Holy Spirit that emboldened Peter before he stood up and spoke in front of these men is the same Holy Spirit that lives inside of me and the same Holy Spirit that lives inside of you. The same thing that made them special is available to us because they were. They simply were abiding in Jesus. John, chapter 15. Jesus is speaking to his disciples. He's speaking to his followers, talking about how they would live a productive life for God.

59:24

How would they bear fruit? And he lays out this whole analogy, this picture in John 15 that we see. He's talking about how I am the vine and you, my followers, are the branches. How you have to stay connected to Jesus in order to be fruitful. Just a couple of verses, verses 4 and 5. Jesus says, Abide in me, I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, it remains connected to the vine. Neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine and you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. For apart from me, you can do nothing. If you're here this morning looking for some, see, secret knowledge that's going to unlock the perfect Christian life for you.

01:00:16

If you just do these six easy steps. If you just follow this secret little. Just donate 39.95 and

then we're like, no, right? We've had Christian groups in church history that have sought the secret knowledge. They all drove off into the woods and got all out of whack, right? What's the answer? The profound truth this morning is pretty straightforward. It's the same thing that you've probably heard people preach over and over again. But maybe, just maybe, the answer is in being faithful in doing the simple. Because while this truth might be simple, it is revolutionary. Abide in Jesus. Do the things, right. God has given us tools that he's placed in our hands to live the godly life that he tells us to live. He tells us, hey, be in relationship with me. Pray. He says, no, live among the community.

01:01:19

You need one another. Be a healthy part of the community. Live in community with other Christians. What about that...anybody have one of those really nice coffee table decorations or bookshelf decorations that a lot of us have? Right? These things look really pretty on the shelf. Nice leather bound book, right? This is not magical to make you more godly. If you drive around with it in the trunk of your car. This is not magical that it's going to make you live the empowered godly life, that it's going to change your life if it just sits on the bookshelf and collects dust, that you clean it off every Sunday before you bring it to church.

01:02:09

But if you realize what we have in our possession, that the words of God, that God has spoken, given us His Word, written it down, given us everything that we need for life and godliness. When we realize that is what's in our hands, first off, you'd have to be a fool not to have any interest in it. Second off, if you will pick it up and you will read it and you will do what it says, like James tells us to don't just be hearers of the Word, but be doers of the Word. If you will do what your Bible tells you to do, you will bear much fruit. You will abide in Jesus. You will live the life that he calls you to live. You will bear much fruit. Jesus, John 15. Whoever abides in me, they will bear much fruit.

01:03:07

So the application this morning is fairly simple, but is also incredibly profound. The question for us this morning is, will you abide in Jesus? Is Jesus enough for you? Is Jesus the answer when you wake up in the morning is the driving force of Your soul. Is it money? Is it a relationship? Is it success? Is it power? Is it something that we feel is, one of those things that we run over here and we pick something off the shelf and say, this is what my life is about. I just need to succeed. I just need another sale. I just need another fix. I just need more money. I just need another boat. I just need...go read Ecclesiastes. It tells you about all the things and how it's ultimately just smoke.

01:03:55

We chase it, we grab it and it slips through our fingers. But if you wake up in the morning, you say, my life is not about sex or power or money or any of those other things. So you wake up in the morning and say, my life belongs to Jesus. And what Jesus says, I will do and what Jesus prioritizes, I will prioritize. And what Jesus...when people look at you and they say, you know, there's something different about him. There's something different about her. Oh, I know, they've been with Jesus. If you abide in Jesus, you will bear much fruit. Will you abide in Jesus today? Our prayer team is going to be down here after the service. They would love to pray with you. Our prayer wall is out the back doors to the right.

01:04:50

If you go down there, you can pray. Write those prayer requests down. You can sign it, you can not sign it. That's... whatever it is, that's totally fine. Our prayer team will still pray for you tomorrow even if they don't know your name. Right. So come receive prayer and I'd love to pray as we close out. Would you pray with me, Church? God, we thank you for your word and we thank you for the boldness of Peter and John to stand up before a, God, an overwhelming circumstance and to boldly declare there is salvation in no one else. There is

no other name, there is no other religion, there is no other group other than Jesus Christ of Nazareth where salvation can be found.

01:05:39

God, I want to thank you this morning that you have given me the privilege of hearing the name of Jesus. God, that the people sitting in this room have been blessed with an incredible privilege of sitting here and hearing the good news that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners like me, like them, like all of us. God, you have made salvation available to us and the free gift is readily available to all who would receive it. God, if there was someone here this morning that has not received that, God, let today be the day of salvation. God, let this be the moment when they realize, no, no, there is no hope anywhere else. Wandering through life looking for another answer is futile. There is salvation found nowhere else but Jesus. God, we pray this morning.

01:06:42

We thank you for the privilege of being exposed to the name of Jesus. God, I thank you that many in this room have placed their faith in Jesus and Jesus alone to save them. And God, God, for those that are in this room that belong to you. God, I pray that you would help us to abide day in and day out. God, that you would help us to live a fully committed, fully sacrificed, fully immersed life. That people would look at us and say, you know, they're not particularly special. They might be common, they might be uneducated. They might be just men and women, just normal people. But there's something different. They smell like Jesus, they look like Jesus, they act like Jesus, they talk like Jesus. God, help us to be Jesus people. God, we need you. Teach us to abide.

01:07:41

God, we love you. In Jesus name we pray. Amen