

WARM-UP

- Are you the type of person who enjoys a challenge? Why or why not?
- Think of an activity you and your friends usually do together. Share it with the group.
- Tell us about a time you stepped out of your comfort zone. How did you muster the courage to do this?

WORD *And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. ACTS 4:31*

(Read also **ACTS 4:23-30**.)

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter and John healed a beggar who was lame from birth and preached boldly about Jesus Christ. However, they were arrested and put into custody for *teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead* (Acts 4:2). They were eventually released, but were ordered to speak no more to anyone in Jesus' name. They, along with other believers, were experiencing oppression from political and religious leaders, yet they had hope. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness. Let's look at Acts 4 to find out how they were able to move with boldness.

1 | The believers were united in prayer.

²³When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God . . . ACTS 4:23,24

The believers in Jerusalem gathered together when Peter and John were released. They were united in praying together in the midst of the opposition they faced. This is encouraging to see because not one disciple was singled out as the leader or sole cause for their prayer to be effective. Instead, their unity strengthened their faith. Why is it important for believers to be one? (John 17:23)

2 | Their prayer was an appeal to the Sovereign Lord.

And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them . . ." ACTS 4:24

(Read also **ACTS 4:25-28**.)

Jesus called His disciples to preach the gospel and make disciples to the ends of the earth. Religious and political leaders, however, were opposed to this, so the believers encountered constant persecution and threats of imprisonment and death. In spite of these, the believers focused on God, the Creator of heaven and earth, who does whatever His hand and plan had predestined to take place (Acts 4:28). They knew and held on to the truth that God is sovereign—that He has the ultimate authority and power over everything. How has the sovereignty of God been evident in your life? How can this bring supernatural boldness?

3 | They asked God for boldness.

²⁹*“And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness,
³⁰while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”*

ACTS 4:29,30

The believers could have prayed for God to remove the people who threatened and persecuted them. However, they asked God to enable them to speak His word with great courage and confidence instead. In spite of the obstacles, they focused on their mission and relied on God’s Spirit to help them. It was clear to them that opposition and persecution would be a reality on earth, but their mission didn’t change. They knew that their sacrifice was nothing compared to how much Jesus suffered so that they, and we, could experience life with Him—and they were willing to suffer for Him. God responded by filling them with the Holy Spirit, and they continued to preach the gospel—the hope for humanity—with all boldness. Have you encountered obstacles in preaching the gospel? How did the Holy Spirit help you through them?

APPLICATION

- Do you believe that God is sovereign above all? How can you focus more on Him instead of the challenges around you?
- What obstacles do you encounter when you preach the gospel? How does knowing that there are people who will help and pray for you give you the courage to continue preaching?
- Who among your friends and family needs to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ? Commit to boldly preach the gospel to him or her this week.

PRAYER

- Thank God for the church community that you belong to. Pray that as you fulfill God’s mission with them, He will continually strengthen your faith.
- Ask God for the boldness to preach the gospel despite persecution and hardships. Pray that He will open your eyes to see the Holy Spirit move in your life as you do so.
- Pray that God will soften the hearts of your family and friends so that they can experience Him. Pray for signs and wonders to follow as you preach the gospel.

NOTES



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