



Sermon Text: Acts 4:1-22

Sermon Date: September 24, 2017

This week we returned to the story of Acts 4. Peter and John have healed the lame man and seized the opportunity to share the gospel. As they were preaching, they were arrested and thrown in jail. Having previously established the fact that a faithful witness in a fallen world entails suffering, Pastor Justin emphasized that God does not abandon us in suffering. His Spirit is with us.

IN OUR WEAKNESS, THE SPIRIT WORKS (4:1-4)

At the beginning of chapter 4 we see that Peter and John are powerless to stop the oppression by the religious leaders. The two apostles are arrested. Their message is interrupted. Their words are silenced. And yet, verse 4 declares that many are still saved. Peter and John end up in chains, but the gospel remains unbound. The Holy Spirit cannot be imprisoned. Salvation cannot be arrested. The Spirit works in our weakness. While we fear weakness and try to avoid it, we can rejoice in the truth that God's grace is sufficient for us. His power is made perfect in weakness.

IN OUR CONFUSION, THE SPIRIT SPEAKS (4:5-12)

As Peter stands before the very people who orchestrated Christ's execution, in the very moment of need, the Holy Spirit fills him to speak with clarity, wisdom, and boldness. The promise of Jesus in Luke 12 is fulfilled: "... do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say." Instead of merely defending himself, Peter preaches Jesus as the only source of salvation in the Universe—to the very people who rejected him. As we marvel at Peter's audacity, we must remember that this sermon is not the result of Peter's eloquence or intelligence, but a result of the Spirit's presence.

IN OUR FEAR, THE SPIRIT FILLS US WITH COURAGE (4:13-22)

In addition, the Spirit fills us with courage. The courage of Peter and John is not a personality trait, but a work of the Spirit within them. While they were not officially-trained rabbis, the Sanhedrin notes their boldness and association with Jesus. Just as he taught with dauntless authority, emboldened by His Spirit they do as well. Even when threatened, they do not shrink back. How could they not speak of Jesus? The gospel was true and God had commissioned them. "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." May we daily echo their words. To do so, we will need courage. Thankfully the Spirit provides the courage we need. Let us then depend upon Him in ways we never have before.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. Peter saw opposition as an opportunity to preach Jesus. What are some obstacles/opposition that give you an opportunity to point others to Jesus?
3. What are some ways our society intimidates us from speaking about Jesus?
4. Do you have an inner compulsion to share the gospel? How does the weight of verse 12 cultivate this inner compulsion?