

Acts 4



Building on God's Values

Life Group Leaders should read through this material and choose a few questions to talk over in your group. Your group will not have time to cover all the material. The guide is for personal study and for choosing a few questions that you and your life group would like to discuss.

Read Aloud Acts 4:1-12

Before we break down this section of Scripture, describe what is happening in your own words. (Being able to summarize Scripture is a great way to see if we are comprehending what we have just read.)

Acts 4:1-4

1 As the Apostles taught the people about Jesus they ran into opposition from the authority of the time. The opposition was not simply disgruntled religious people, but rather men who held authority and respect from the people. They were also seen as appointed by God and their power was backed by Rome.

A Priests - These were men of the Levitical priesthood/bloodline dating back to Aaron. These men were esteemed and were appointed by God in Exodus 28:1. They were to live lives of holiness, and they were allowed closest proximity to God in temple sacrifices, second only to the High Priest.

B Captain of the Temple - In essence this group was the temple police. Rome had allowed the Jews to police their own temple, therefore this group was held accountable and even backed by the Roman government. This group was the second-ranking office to the High Priest at the time.

C Sadducees - These men were wealthy and highly regarded Jewish officials in the temple. They were a part of the Sanhedrin, upper class financially, and high class socially.

! The men who opposed the Apostles were seen as godly, powerful, wealthy, and in control.

? **Question: Do you ever find yourself compromising what you believe due to being intimidated by people in power? This could be a boss, a pastor, a church, etc. Why or why not?**

2 Despite the authorities opposing the Apostles, they remained steadfast and preached the word of God. The result was more conversions and the number of believers being about 5000. The early church was clearly a ministry fueled by the Gospel.

! Romans 1:16 - Do not underestimate the power of simply sharing the good news, especially when we are challenged as believers.

Acts 4:5-12

The power of God leads to more opportunities to share the Gospel. Peter and John had been used by God for a miracle in Chapter 3. This was not just a physical miracle, but a spiritual miracle of faith. The miraculous power of God drew a crowd and then drew opposition. This gave the Apostles a platform to share the Gospel again. The early church was fueled by Gospel mission.

1 Peter was first filled with the Holy Spirit. Notice, Peter's power and effectiveness in ministry was not by his own doing. Just like the miracle was done by the power of the Holy Spirit through faith, so is his preaching done by the power of the Holy Spirit through faith. John 15:5

2 Peter clarified the fruit that was being challenged. Peter did not let them twist the narrative of what had happened, but rather pointed out the power of God that had been on display to help a helpless man. Peter had a clean conscience. 1 Peter 3:15

3 Peter then preached the Gospel. Notice how Peter uses the same "ingredients" to his Gospel message as he did prior. It is essential when sharing the Gospel we stay focused on the foundational truths of how one is saved.

A The Power of Jesus - It was by the power of Christ alone that the man was healed. Pointing the attention back to Jesus, and giving Him the glory. (Gospel Fueled)

B Sin & the Crucifixion - Peter does not shy away from pointing out the fact that they are sinners, and that their sin led them to crucifying the Son of God.

C The Resurrection - Peter emphasizes the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, therefore confirming the testimony that He truly was the Messiah.

D Prophecy/The Word of God - Peter quotes from Psalm 118:22, which is a prophecy of God bringing salvation to His people. By quoting this, Peter is declaring that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of Scripture to bring salvation to the people of God. (Scripture fed)

E Salvation in Christ Alone - Peter is clear that Jesus is the only way, the only truth, and the only life. John 14:6 (Gospel fueled)

Question: Do you ever feel nervous, guilty, or even apologetic in sharing the truth? If so, how can you maintain a clear conscience under pressure?

! Sometimes when people are against us as believers, we can put pressure on ourselves to make the message palatable to those who are angry with us and the message of Christ. It is important to have a clean conscience.

Read Aloud Acts 4:13-22

Describe what is happening in your own words.

Acts 4:13-14


The power of God was not merely in discussion and talk, but it was seen by the power of God, the fruit of His followers, and the fruit of the ministry. 1 Corinthians 4:20


- 1. They saw the boldness of Peter and John**
- 2. They saw/knew that they were uneducated**
- 3. They saw the man healing and standing beside them**

It is easy to define our belief by what we say, but genuine faith is seen by the fruit that it produces. The early church was fueled by the Gospel in power and action. James 2:19-20

Acts 4:15-22

As the opposition came, the fruit of the ministry and the testimony in the hearts of the Apostles prevailed. Not only did they remain strong, but the people praised God for the work that He had done through them.

 "We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." When we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8), we cannot help but speak about Him and live for Him. We can know about God, we can believe in God like the demons do, but saving faith leads us to an encounter with the living God. This encounter leaves us changed and drives us to speak of our relationship with Jesus Christ and tell of how His power and love have impacted our lives.

 **Question: Do you find yourself passionate about sharing the Gospel due to your testimony and the powerful works God has done in your life?**

Read Aloud Acts 4:23-37


Describe what is happening in your own words.


Acts 4:23-31


After the Apostles endured persecution and effectively preached the Gospel, they went back to celebrate with their brothers and sisters in Christ. The Church is a family: we celebrate with one another, we worship with one another, we grieve with one another. The early church was love filled.


 We can learn a lot from the early church and how they worshiped. Let's look at the focus of their prayer and worship found in Acts 4.


 **Lifted Their Voice Together** - They were unified. Ephesians 4:1-7


 **God's Sovereignty** - The early church trusted in God's sovereign will of past and present events. He was in control when Christ was crucified, and He was in control as they were being persecuted. They trusted that God was always at work to accomplish His will. Romans 8:28

 **God's Power in Creation** - The early church glorified God and exalted His power. Nothing demonstrates God's power like the creation we can see all around us. Simply by the power of God's Word the entire universe was created. How much more can He give us the power we need for our lives? Hebrews 11:3

 **Worshiped with Scripture** - The early church prayed and worshiped with the Words of Scripture. Scripture also helped them discern and "makes sense" out of the recent events. They were Scripture fed.

 **Celebrating the Victory of Christ** - The early church celebrated and focused on Christ's victory on the cross. They were Gospel fueled.

 **Seeking to Continue in the Mission** - The early church sought God's power in order to fulfill the ministry and make disciples of all nations. They did this by: Preaching the Word & Seeing Miraculous Gospel Power. The early church sought to be Gospel fueled in all that they did.

 After this prayer the Church was impacted and empowered to continue together! The early church did not pray empty prayers but saw God's effective power at work.

 **They Were Filled with God's Spirit**

 **They Continued to Preach the Word with Boldness**

 They were Gospel Fueled and Scripture Fed



Question: How would you explain your prayer life? How do you see the power of prayer in your life?



If you struggle with what to pray and how to pray, it can be helpful to study some of the prayers of the Bible!

Acts 4:32-36

The early church was love filled for one another and the Lord. This was on display through their sacrificial giving and their unity.

1

Unity - The early church was unified, this is a consistent theme throughout Acts. Philippians 2:1-7

2

Giving - The early church gave to one another, and did not even consider their possessions their own. The early church did more than tithe, but everything they had (time, energy, money) was centered around the advancement of the Gospel. They did this out of love for one another and an emphasis on fulfilling Christ's command to make disciples of all nations. 2 Corinthians 8:1-7

3

Reaching - The early church maintained Gospel focus not only in their prayers and fellowship, but in their efforts to reach the lost. As they obeyed, God confirmed their ministry with grace and power. Our job is not to produce results, but simply to obey! 1 Corinthians 9:16



Question: Is there one of the above three focuses of the early church that is difficult for you? Unity with other believers? Sacrificial giving? Reaching the lost?

Weekly Challenge

Throughout this chapter we saw the resilience of the Apostles at work. They did not shy away from conflict but rather spoke boldly with love. This was possible because they prioritized the Gospel, and they had a clean conscience. Sometimes it is hard to be honest with people and speak boldly in the midst of disagreement or persecution. Is there anyone in your life that you need to be fully honest with? Maybe you have held back because you are afraid of what they may say or think. Speaking the truth in love is a God honoring task that the church has been given. Ask the Lord if there is someone in your life that you need to share the Gospel with, or maybe someone you need to be honest with for the sake of unity and holiness.

Memory Verse

Acts 9:31 ESV

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.