**DARE TO BE BOLD**

**Acts 4:1-31**

**THE BIG IDEA: Committed followers of Jesus will face persecution, but God fills His people with His Holy Spirit and gives them boldness to speak the truth.**

**THOSE WHO ARE SIMPLY \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ WILL OPPOSE THOSE WHO PROCLAIM THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS**

* *“While they were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple police, and the Sadducees confronted them, 2 because they were annoyed that they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 3 So they seized them and took them into custody until the next day since it was already evening. 4 But many of those who heard the message believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.”* (Acts 4:1-4)
* **The truth of the Gospel exposes those who are merely religious, and as such, they will oppose those who stand on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as the Messiah.**
* Jesus - *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of the bones of the dead and every kind of impurity. 28 In the same way, on the outside you seem righteous to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”* (Matthew 23:27-28)
* **Many people claim to know and follow God, but reject the Son He sent to be the Savior of all who would call on His name.**
* *“This Jesus is* ***the stone rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone.*** *12 There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:11-12)

**THE HOLY SPIRIT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ US AND EMPOWERS US TO BOLDLY PROCLAIM THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL”**

* *“After they had Peter and John stand before them, they began to question them: ‘By what power or in what name have you done this?’ 8 Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders: 9 If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a disabled man, by what means he was healed, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing here before you healthy. 11* *This Jesus is* ***the stone rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone.*** *12 There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.’ 13 When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus.”* (Acts 4:7-13)
* **Like Peter, with the Holy Spirit of God living in us we can overcome our fears and failures and proclaim the good news of Jesus regardless of the opposition we may face.**
* **God never promised that we would not face opposition, but He did promise He would be with us and empower us to face the opposition.**

**WHEN GOD IS TRULY AT WORK IN AND THROUGH US, EVEN NON-CHRISTIANS WILL RECOGNIZE IT**

* *“When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus. 14 And since they saw the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in opposition. 15 After they ordered them to leave the Sanhedrin, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, ‘What should we do with these men? For an obvious sign has been done through them, clear to everyone living in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 But so that this does not spread any further among the people, let’s threaten them against speaking to anyone in this name again.’ 18 So they called for them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.”* (Acts 4:13-18)
* **The question we must ask ourselves regularly is whether or not our lives demonstrate that we are living a life committed to Jesus.**

**THE EARLY CHURCH PRAYED FOR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ IN THE FACE OF PERSECUTION RATHER THAN FOR COMFORT**

* **The question is not *if* we will face persecution, but *when* we face persecution, how will we respond?**
* *“In fact, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”* (2 Timothy 3:12)
* **Realizing our need to look to our Heavenly Father for our strength and protection is the key to living out our lives as effective witnesses.**
* *“’And now, Lord, consider their threats, and grant that your servants may speak your word with all boldness, 30 while you stretch out your hand for healing, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.’ 31 When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God boldly.” (Acts 4:29-31)*
* **Rather than asking God to make things more comfortable for us, we should pray for God to empower us with boldness to speak the Truth regardless of the opposition.**
* **God hears and answers the prayers of His people when they are walking in submission to Him.**

**\*\*Connect Group Discussion On Back\*\***

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**ICE-BREAKER:** What is something no one in your Connect Group knows about you? (Remember, the ice-breaker is an opportunity to get to know one another and build relationships with one another.)

**START THINKING:**

* What do we learn about God/Jesus in Acts 4:1-31?
* What are some main themes/ideas in Acts 4:1-31?
* Why were the religious leaders so upset with the Apostles and their message?
* How did the Apostles and other followers of Jesus respond to the opposition to preaching Christ? What was their objective?

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

* How do you ensure that you are actually living for the Lord, as opposed to just being religious?
* How do you handle opposition from others, especially religious people, when you speak the Truth about Jesus? What can you do better/differently?
* What is your best defense against false teachings/understandings about Jesus and the Gospel?
* How does the example of these Christians in Acts 4 impact your view of prayer? What might you do differently when you pray now?

**FOCUS**

* Who in your life needs to hear the truth of the Gospel? How has this message/text affected and/or inspired you to reach them?
* Who are you inviting to Church next Sunday?