

The Church on the Move: Boldness in Works and Words

Acts 4:1-31 || Pastor Shawn Gendall || 03 July 2022

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: Do you have an area of your life or a skill where you feel you can “act with boldness”?

Worship: [Psalm 91](#) (Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation?)

Sermon Summary for [Acts 4:1-31](#) (Read aloud before reading the sermon summary.)

A central theme of this passage is boldness. The word appears three times: as Peter and John's speech was marked by boldness (v13), the Christian community prayed with boldness (v29), and they continued to speak with boldness even under threat of persecution (v31). Pastor Kevin DeYoung describes it this way: “*First, being clear in the face of fear, and second, following Christ no matter the cost.*” But what is boldness, according to this passage?

To Know // After the miraculous healing (seen in Acts 3) and preaching, Peter and John are brought before the Jewish elders and rulers. Crowds were captivated by the miracle and the power of their words, but the authorities saw them as subversive and dangerous. And so they sought to bring charges against Peter and John and imprison them. It's in the midst of this pressure-filled scene that we see the boldness of these uneducated, common men. Their words are clear, nuanced and convincing... because they know their hope and strength are found in Christ. Later in life, Peter would write in his own words:

“Who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? Even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil” ([1 Peter 3:13-17](#)).

To Be // In the same way that the miracle was an authentication of their message, their message was simply a verbal articulation of their lives as Christ-followers. Peter and John are bold because they know the effects of evil are fleeting; those who oppose the Gospel are no threat to God, who is always in control ([Gen 50:20](#)). The council longs to discredit them – to find contradiction between their actions, their words, and their lives. But there is none. These men are profoundly authentic. This is what the world may need most today: an integrated, embodied, lived-out Gospel – individually, certainly, but especially in Christian community. It's in our fellowship that our hearts and minds turn God-ward, and our God-ward vision reinforces the mission of God within us. For as Peter again writes (as he quotes [Psalm 34](#)):

“For whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil” ([1 Peter 3:10-12](#)).

To Love // Acts 4 offers us the embodiment of Christ's command to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself.” This is a love each of us needs and yearns for. Every person we encounter was created to experience our Father's loving embrace. But it takes boldness to share

this message. Yes, the Gospel is counter-cultural; yes, it is subversive to so many worldviews; yes, it can and does change everything for those who walk in it. But it is love to speak it and to live it. So may we live as Peter urges us:

“Have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing” (1 Peter 3:8-9)..

Discussion Questions (You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)

To Know

- This marks the first time the apostles experience overt opposition to the Gospel from authorities. How do Peter and John respond? What do they say is their motivation for witnessing?
 - Is this how you would describe your motivation for witnessing?
- Reread [1 Peter 3:13-17](#). If you were Peter, how would you relate / connect 1 Peter 3 to the story in Acts 4?
 - Do you find you have the hope in you that he describes? What would you say “to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you”?

To Be

- How would you describe an “integrated, embodied, lived-out Gospel” life?
 - What does Christian community look like that is marked by this?
- Does church increase our boldness in our mission? Why or why not?
 - How does a healthy church spur us on to such boldness?
- When are you at your most authentic? What does it take for you to be in that state?
 - Do you regularly live this way, or does daily life get in the way?
 - How does your faith play into all this?
 - How do we bridge the gap between the lives we live and our message as Christ-followers?

To Love

- In light of the threats from the established powers, it would be understandable for the believers to pray for relief from persecution. Instead they ask for renewed courage to proclaim the word of God. From where are they drawing such confidence? (Look at [Acts 4:24-28](#).)
- Where in our lives is it most difficult to align our (subversive) faith with the lives our culture and world would have us live?
- What would it mean for you and for your CG to live more boldly in your faith?
 - How could you support and encourage one another toward this?

Prayer

Pray through Acts [4:31-35](#) this week. Notice the many results the city of Jerusalem experienced from this prayer meeting. Pray these things for our city. This week’s Prayer Guide for personal or group use is [HERE](#).

Engage & Experience: Prayer & Gratitude

How have you grown in your prayer life this year? What role does gratitude have in your prayers? When have you been blessed by the prayers of others on your behalf? Take some time to reflect on what you may have learned about prayer this year and where you would still like to grow. Share with your group and leader(s).

Leaders: Please give pertinent feedback to the CG Team at community@pacificcrossroads.org.