

Empowered for Service

Text: Acts 4:13-31

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. ¹⁵ So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. ¹⁶ “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

¹⁸ Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! ²⁰ As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

²¹ After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. ²² For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

The Believers Pray

²³ On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

“Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
²⁶ The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord
and against his anointed one.” ^[b]^[c]

²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. ²⁹ Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

³¹ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Introduction

In Acts 3, a great miracle had taken place. A man who was lame from birth had received a miracle of healing and everybody was talking about it. Peter and John Used this moment to preach about Jesus. Acts 3:12-16 “When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. ¹⁴ You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

In Acts 4, Peter and John were arrested. Verse 1-2 “The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. ² They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.

The boldness of Peter and John when they were brought before the Sanhedrin however completely surprised them.

Verse 13: When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus

1. God Uses Ordinary People Yielded to Him (Acts 4:13)

Two things stood out about the disciples:

a) They were unschooled and ordinary

- Peter and John had not been trained in the rabbinic schools.
- They held no religious titles or official positions.

Yet God used them mightily.

“Illiterate and uneducated men... even by such men hath God in all ages caused His word to be preached.” — John Wesley

Amos

“I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet... but the Lord took me...”
(Amos 7:14–15)

God is not looking for qualifications’ He is looking for availability and surrender.

- You don’t need a title to serve the Lord.
- God delights in using ordinary men and women yielded to Him.

b) They had been with Jesus

Their boldness came from intimacy with Christ.

- Time with Jesus gives us the courage to face life.
- Relationship with Jesus produces transformation.

May Christ be seen in us more than our achievements or titles.

2. The Place of Sacrifice

Serving God comes with a cost.

a) The question of sacrifice

What sacrifice are you willing to make for your assignment?

The level of sacrifice you are willing to make determines the level of your impact.

b) The apostles' example

- **They refused to be silenced** (Acts 4:18–20). “Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! ²⁰ As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”
- **They rejoiced in suffering** (Acts 5:41–42). “His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.⁴¹ The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. ⁴² Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

*“To live is Christ, and to die is gain.” **Philippians 1:21***

They gave everything for the gospel.

c) A challenge to our generation

We live in a time where comfort and happiness are pursued above all else. But kingdom service demands sacrifice. There is no crown without the cross.

3. The Place of Prayer (Acts 4:24–30)

When faced with threats, the disciples did not panic—they prayed.

a) Their prayer focus

They did not pray for:

- Comfort
- Safety
- Easier circumstances

Instead, they prayed for:

- Boldness

- Power to continue preaching

They did not ask God to change the environment, but to empower them within it.

b) A shift in perspective

If our prayers are only about:

- *Daily bread*
- *Personal comfort*

Then we are not yet ready for Kingdom service.

“Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance.” (Psalm 2:8)

- *Prayer is not just a support system, it is the driving force of ministry.*
- *True prayer aligns with God’s global mission.*

4. The Power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31)

“After they prayed... they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word boldly.”

a) God responds to aligned prayer

When prayer aligns with God's purpose, heaven responds.

- The place was shaken
- They were filled with the Spirit
- They spoke boldly

b) The mission of God

“Go and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19–20)

God empowers those committed to His mission.

c) A necessary shift

As long as our focus is:

- “Me”
- “My comfort”
- “My needs”

We will never fully grasp:

- God’s heart for the nations
- God’s urgency for salvation

Conclusion

- ❖ God uses ordinary people
- ❖ Ministry requires sacrifice
- ❖ Prayer is key for empowerment
- ❖ Holy Spirit is our source of power.