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WARM UP

What is something that people recognise you are good at?

WORD

Read **Acts 4:13-31**

After Peter and John are seen healing the man who had been lame since birth at the temple gate in Jerusalem called Beautiful, they preached the gospel that Jesus had been resurrected and had come to save them if they repented. There were two main responses from the crowd: complete amazement (Acts 3:10) and religious disgust (Acts 4:1-3). However, despite their being thrown in prison by religious authorities, the number of believers had increased; there were 5000 male believers alone. Peter and John grew in boldness despite the resistance, knowing that the same God who has filled them with his spirit will also be with them through it all, protecting their well-being and their credibility. Peter and John were the prototype disciples - the first that the book of Acts accounts as moving with boldness in the power of the Holy Spirit.

NOTES

1 Nothing to Say

¹³Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition.

Acts 4:13-14 (ESV)

As followers of Christ, we will face opposition at times. But as great as the opposition may seem, when people encounter the authoritative power of God moving mightily in the miraculous, whether it's physical healing or a transformed life, there is nothing anyone can say in opposition.

- Have you ever had a disagreement, upon reflection and further insight, you recognised you were wrong? Can you tell us about it?
- Tell us about a time you were left speechless because of something amazing you witnessed or experienced.

2 Can't Stay Silent

¹⁷But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name." ¹⁸So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." ²¹And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened.

Acts 4:17-21 (ESV)

When the people had witnessed the power of God heal the man at the gate called Beautiful, they could not be silent about it. When we, too, witness the power of God and experience how it sets us free from the captivity of sin and death, we cannot help but praise God.

- What might be the reasons the people were told to be silent? What was threatening about the disciples speaking out?
- Can you recall a time when you saw God's power and love in your life? What was your response?

PRAYER

- Pray the prayer of the disciples in response to resistance. Pray it over one another and ask God to show you how to respond to this prayer:

²⁴"Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, "Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed' — ²⁷for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

Acts 4:24-30