

NOTES



OPENING PRAYER

Pray that the Holy Spirit would give us courage to represent Jesus with clarity, humility, wisdom and love.

OPENING QUESTION_(OPTIONAL)

Have you ever wanted to say something in a conversation but held back because you weren't sure how people would respond?



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WORD

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, 9 if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been 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, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognised that they had been with Jesus. 14 But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. 15 But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, 16 saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” 18 So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But 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, 20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” 21 And 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. 22 For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

- Acts 4:8–22

Read Acts 4:8–22 together.

As you read, pay particular attention to:

v. 8 — Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit

vv. 10–12 — Peter clearly names Jesus

v. 13 — the authorities recognise that Peter and John had been with Jesus

v. 18 — the apostles are commanded not to speak in Jesus' name

vv. 19–20 — Peter and John choose obedience to God

v. 20 — “we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard”

MAIN REFLECTION POINTS

Peter and John have just seen a man who had been unable to walk healed in the name of Jesus. The miracle attracts a crowd, giving Peter an opportunity to explain what has happened. Peter refuses to take the glory. Instead, he points people to Jesus—the One whom they rejected, crucified and whom God raised from the dead. The message creates opposition. The religious authorities arrest Peter and John, question them about the source of their authority, and eventually command them not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. Their response gives us one of the clearest pictures of biblical boldness in the New Testament.

Reflection: What Is Biblical Boldness?

Biblical boldness is not simply being outspoken, confident or fearless.

Biblical boldness is Spirit-empowered courage to remain faithful to Jesus when obedience becomes costly.

Peter's boldness has several characteristics:

It is Spirit-filled, not ego-driven.

It is Christ-centred, not personality-centred.

It is truthful, not provocative.

It is courageous, not reckless.

It is humble, not arrogant.

It seeks to witness, not to win arguments.

It is willing to accept cost, rather than compromise conviction.

Biblical Boldness vs Worldly/Unwise Boldness

Biblical Boldness

Is empowered by the Holy Spirit
Points people toward Jesus
Speaks truth with love
Is courageous
Seeks faithfulness to God
Listens before speaking
Is confident without being arrogant
Accepts personal cost
Discerns when and how to speak

Loves the person being challenged

Can say, "I don't know"

Is centred on the gospel
Leaves the outcome with God

Worldly / Unwise Boldness

Is driven by personality or ego
Points attention toward self
Uses truth as a weapon
Is unnecessarily confrontational
Seeks to prove oneself right
Speaks without listening
Is confident because it assumes superiority
Creates conflict simply to make a point
Believes every disagreement requires a response
Labels or dismisses the person being challenged
Feels the need to have an answer for everything
Is centred on winning an argument
Tries to control the outcome

Key thought:

Biblical boldness isn't the absence of fear; it's the decision that faithfulness to Jesus matters more than the fear.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Boldness that points away from ourselves

Peter has just witnessed an extraordinary miracle, yet when the crowd gathers, he doesn't make himself the centre of attention. He points them toward Jesus.
Why is it important that Christian boldness is ultimately about making Jesus known rather than making ourselves heard?
Where might we accidentally confuse being outspoken with being a faithful witness?

2. Boldness that is Spirit-filled

Acts 4:8 says:

"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit..."

This is significant because Peter's boldness isn't presented as a natural personality trait. It flows from the work of the Holy Spirit.

What difference does it make when we understand boldness as something we receive from the Spirit rather than something we manufacture through confidence?

What might it look like to pray for boldness before entering a difficult conversation?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

3. Boldness that is clear about Jesus

Peter doesn't hide behind vague spiritual language. He says:

"by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth..."

And then:

"There is salvation in no one else..."

Why do you think Christians can sometimes feel comfortable talking about "God," spirituality or faith but become hesitant when it comes to explicitly naming Jesus?

Where in your everyday life might you have an opportunity to make Jesus more explicit?

4. Boldness under pressure

The authorities don't ask Peter and John to stop believing. They tell them to stop speaking.

The pressure is therefore directed at their witness.

What kinds of pressure might cause Christians today to remain silent about Jesus—even when there is no formal prohibition against speaking about Him?

Consider your workplace, university, friendships, family, social media, creative spaces or community life.

Which pressure is most likely to affect you?

5. Boldness that chooses obedience

Peter and John respond:

"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge."

And then:

"we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."

They aren't looking for conflict. They're simply unwilling to allow human pressure to determine their obedience to God.

What is the difference between being rebellious toward people and being obedient to God when the two come into conflict?

What would it look like for you to prioritise God's approval over people's approval this week?

Biblical Boldness vs Worldly/Unwise Boldness

Application: Where Do I Need Biblical Boldness?

Take a moment personally and complete these two sentences:

“I most hesitate to speak about Jesus when...”

“This week, biblical boldness for me would look like...”

Now identify one person and one situation where you could take a courageous but loving step.

It might be:

mentioning Jesus rather than using generic spiritual language

offering to pray for someone

sharing how Jesus has changed your life

inviting someone to church

standing by a biblical conviction without becoming combative

speaking about your faith naturally in your workplace or university

refusing to compromise your integrity because of pressure

listening carefully to someone who disagrees with you and still remaining unashamed of Jesus

The challenge

Don't aim to be the loudest Christian in the room. Aim to be the clearest and most faithful witness to Jesus.

Ask God this week:

“Holy Spirit, where are You asking me to speak the Name?”

Prayer Points

Pray for:

Spirit-filled boldness — that we would depend on the Holy Spirit rather than our own confidence.

Clarity — that we would not hide Jesus behind vague spiritual language.

Wisdom — that we would know when to speak, when to listen and how to respond.

Courage — that fear of rejection would not determine our obedience.

Love — that our boldness would always be motivated by love for people.

Opportunities — that God would open doors for us to share what we have seen and heard.

CLOSING PRAYER

Closing Prayer — Acts 4:23-31

Leader:

Sovereign Lord, you made the heaven and the earth, the sea and everything in them. Before there was a Sanhedrin, before there were threats, before there was a name to be silenced — there was You. We come to you tonight the way the early church came: not alone, but together — lifting our voices as one.

All (together):

You are Sovereign. Nothing that happens to us happens outside your hand.

Leader:

Lord, we're honest with you — some of us have walked into this week carrying opposition. Pressure at work. Tension at home. Doubt about whether our voice even matters. Like Peter and John, we've felt the room get smaller when we tried to speak what's true. So we don't ask you to remove the opposition. We ask what they asked:

All (together):

Grant us, your servants, to speak your word with all boldness.

Leader:

Stretch out your hand among us, Lord — to heal what's broken in this room, to heal what's broken in our homes, our workplaces, our city. Do signs and wonders that only you could do, through the name of Jesus. We don't want a quiet faith that survives the week. We want a shaken room — hearts unshaken in fear, but shaken awake by your Spirit.

All (together):

Fill us. Send us out bold. In Jesus' name.

Leader:

And Lord — like that first church — make us a people who hold nothing too tightly. Our time, our resources, our comfort, our lives. May there be no needy person among us, because we've learned to lay things down at your feet the way they did. Go with us this week. We won't shrink back.

Amen.