



Awakened to Boldness
Message Notes, September 3, 2017
Acts 3-4

In this series, we are walking through the Book of Acts to celebrate the many awakening moves of the Holy Spirit in and through the followers of Jesus. Today we focus on the dramatic transformation of the disciples from fearful scattered sheep to bold apostles for the kingdom.

Peter and John are on the way to the temple for their customary daily prayers. At the Gate Beautiful, they hear the familiar voice of the lame beggar who has been coming there daily for years, but this day, their hearts are stirred, and they approach the man with compassion and faith – “Silver and gold I have not, but what I do have I give to you – in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, walk”(Acts 3:6). And the man did!

An amazed crowd gathered, and Peter boldly preached Jesus and Him crucified. As on the day of Pentecost, thousands believed and were saved. But the priests and the Sadducees were greatly disturbed at this proclamation of resurrection through Jesus. They arrested Peter and John and jailed them overnight. The next day they interrogated them – “By what power or name did you do this?” (that is, heal the man). Once again, filled with boldness by the Holy Spirit, Peter preached Jesus Christ of Nazareth – “salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name ... by which we must be saved.” The hard-hearted religious leaders are not moved. They decide to reprimand Peter and John and forbid them to speak any further in the name of Jesus. Their bold response: “We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (4:20).

These are the ordinary fishermen Jesus called some three years earlier. No impressive credentials, no education, no prominent social standing – just “ordinary unschooled men,” the religious leaders remarked with “astonishment” (4:13), but “they (also) took note that these men had been with Jesus.” The priests and Sadducees were stumped by the disciples’ boldness. These are the same disciples who abandoned Jesus on the night he was arrested, and Peter was so afraid that he vehemently denied even knowing Jesus.

Where did this dramatic transformation of boldness come from?

1. They were captivated with Jesus. The amazed crowd gathered to applaud this amazing miracle – and they pointed to JESUS. In their threatening interrogation – they pointed to Jesus.

- When we are captivated with Jesus, His glory, and His deep love for us, we are freed from self-absorption and the fear of failure or rejection or even persecution.
- What truly captivates us? Are there things we treasure more than Jesus?

2. “They had been with Jesus.”

- How does John 7:14-16 reflect this same astonished perception of Jesus as an unlearned man?
- But they were not just like Jesus in their bold preaching; they lived like Jesus – loving deeply, healing the sick, reaching out to the outcasts, laying down their lives for the Kingdom.



3. They were filled with the Holy Spirit – the true source of their transformation.

- Jesus had told his disciples that they would continue to do the things He had done, and “even greater” because He would send Holy Spirit “to be with you forever ... for he lives with you and will be in you ”(John 14:12-17). The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), when the Holy Spirit is poured out on the followers of Jesus, is the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy that “I will pour out my Spirit on ALL people – sons, daughters, old, young” (Joel 2:28-29). The Holy Spirit would now operate in and through every follower of Jesus, not just selected leaders for specific purposes.

This filling of the Holy Spirit, for all the followers of Jesus, was similar to young, ordinary David’s filling of the Spirit for the specific purpose of ruling as king of Israel (I Samuel 16:11-13). It is this anointing and filling of the Spirit that empowered David with faith, confidence, and boldness to face and defeat the giant Goliath.

- While mighty Goliath was enthralled with himself (“let him who thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall!”) ...
- And the Israelites were focused on the daunting circumstances of a fierce, undefeatable foe ...
- David was focused on the presence and power of Yahweh – boldness infused by the Holy Spirit.

This boldness of David and of Peter and all the followers of Jesus (many of whom gave their lives for the kingdom) is available to us by the same Holy Spirit who lives in us – we “ordinary” ones who belong to Jesus.

May we be captivated with Him. May we “be with Jesus” – taking time to meet Him in his Word, to commune with Him in prayer, to engage with Him in worship, and to share life around Him in community. May we be filled with His Holy Spirit.