

Peter And John Arrested
And Released

Acts 4:1-31

MEMORY VERSE

ACTS 4:13

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A puppet.

As many “Faithful Witness” templates as the number of children in your class, crayons or markers, string or yarn, scissors and glue.

As many small prizes (pencils, erasers, stickers, etc.) as the number of children in your class.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

The Quiet Puppet

Bring a puppet to class and lay it on the table. Tell the children that you are going to tell today’s story with the help of a little “friend.” Have the children gather around to listen to the story. After a few minutes of silence, ask the children what they think might be wrong with the puppet. They will of course tell you that a puppet won’t work without a hand inside it.

Explain to the children that the same is true for us; we can’t share the story of Jesus effectively without being filled and lead by the Holy Spirit. This is what we will be learning about today. After Jesus ascended into heaven, he told the disciples to wait and His Spirit would come empower them. This was God’s answer was to enable them to be bold and effective in their preaching of the Gospel. They needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit in the same way the puppet needed the hand inside of it to work correctly. The filling of the Holy Spirit gave them the boldness that they needed to continue to serve God in spite of official opposition. **The Holy Spirit will give us boldness to share the gospel with others.**

LESSON TIME!

The religious leaders of Jesus' day thought they had put an end to Him when they crucified Him, but their confidence was shaken when Peter told them that Jesus was alive again. The Apostles were witnesses to the fact (Acts 3: 14-15). Peter was given boldness by the Holy Spirit to share the truth of Jesus to the people in our story today.

Sometimes we feel scared to share the gospel with others, or that we don't know what to say. The Apostles were just like us, but then God filled them with the Holy Spirit, which gave them the boldness to share the gospel even in the midst of adversity.

In our lesson today, we will learn that **The Holy Spirit will give us boldness to share the gospel with others.**

ACTS 4:1-4

Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them,

being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.

However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

Peter and John spoke to the people during the afternoon prayer time in the Temple. Filled with the Holy Spirit, they made the best of the opportunity to share the gospel with a great multitude of people.

The Sadducees were greatly disturbed by their preaching because it directly opposed what they believed. They didn't believe that there was any resurrection from the dead. For the apostles to clearly declare that Jesus rose from the dead went against everything they believed in. Instead of honestly examining the evidence, they had the Apostles arrested and held in custody overnight intending to try them the next day.

Think about how scary this may have been for the apostles. Not long ago these same powerful religious rulers had Jesus put to death. Their faith was on the line. Our witnessing will probably not send us to prison as it did Peter and John, but we still might have to make sacrifices in trying to share the gospel with others. In some

countries though it is a crime to declare the name of Jesus and the gospel. The threat of prison for Christians is still very real in the world today.

What do we risk in witnessing? Could it be worrying that someone may think we are different, possible rejection, or even persecution? Whatever we might risk, realize that nothing done for God is ever wasted. God has promised to bless and use His word. We need to be faithful to witness. We need to remember that **The Holy Spirit will give us boldness to share the gospel with others.**

ACTS 4:5-12

And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes,

as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel:

"If we this day are judged for a good deed done to the helpless man, by what means he has been made well,

let it be known to you all, 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 stands here before you whole.

This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

The Sanhedrin was charged with the responsibility of protecting the Jewish faith; this meant that they had to examine every new teacher and teaching in the land. This same counsel condemned Jesus to die, and they recognized Peter and John as the associates of Jesus.

Finding themselves in a very dangerous situation with their lives in jeopardy, Peter spoke up in the power of the Holy Spirit of God. Can you imagine how scared Peter must have been? But Peter was filled with the power of God to share the gospel.

Jesus warned that persecutions will come but that He would be with us, to comfort, protect and give us the words we need to share the gospel (Luke 21:12-15). If we ever have a time when we need to make a stand for the truth of God's word, remember that we can through the Holy Spirit. **The Holy Spirit will give us boldness to share the gospel with others.**

The religious leaders thought they had put an end to Jesus when they crucified Him, but the confidence of the disciples was alive again. This time they could not harm Jesus because He had risen from the dead. Now many more people were hearing the message of hope in Jesus and were coming to Him.

The Faithful Witness

Make as many copies of the "faithful witness" pattern as the number of children in your class. They can decorate their witness with markers or crayons and string or yarn to look like themselves or someone they know who shares the gospel.

Cut the two slots for the "mouth" piece, slide the piece into the "witness" face and have your children take turns using their faithful witnesses to share the gospel message.

ACTS 4:13-22

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.

But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name."

And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.

For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done.

For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

The religious leaders were in a dilemma. They couldn't deny the miracle of the lame man who was healed (Acts 3:1-10), and though Peter and John were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed at what being with Jesus had done for them. A changed life convinces people of Jesus' power.

One of our greatest testimonies as Christians is the difference others see in our lives as Jesus helps us with our attitudes. For example, we can show love when others express hatred, because the love of Jesus lives in us. And like Peter and John, we can share the gospel with boldness, even when we feel nervous or inadequate because the Holy Spirit is there to help us. 1 John 4:4 tells us, "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." We never have to be afraid to stand up for Jesus because the Holy Spirit will give us strength.

If the religious leaders had honestly sought the truth by considering the evidence and listening to the message, they might have been saved, but their pride and hardness of heart stood in their way. By threatening the Apostles, they hoped to put an end to this Jesus movement.

Peter and John's zeal for the Lord was so strong that they could not keep quiet, even when threatened. If our courage to witness for Jesus has weakened, let's pray that our boldness may increase. **The Holy Spirit will give us boldness to share the gospel with others.**

Prize Share

Choose two children to serve a small prize to the class. Instruct the class to “beg” for their prize as if it was food and they hadn’t had anything to eat for a long time.

Ask them if they would give food to someone they knew was hungry. Explain that witnessing is even better than sharing food, because it can give life for all eternity and that is the biggest prize we can ever receive. Remind the class that **The Holy Spirit will give us boldness to share the gospel with others.**

ACTS 4:23-30

And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.

So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them,

who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things?

The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ.'

For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together

to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word,

by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

Peter and John didn’t waste any time to share with their own companions how God used them before the religious leaders. Realizing their great need for God’s help, they prayed one of the greatest prayers recorded in the Bible, because they knew that God answers in mighty power.

Their prayer was born out of witness and service for the Lord. True prayer is not telling God what to do, but asking God to do His will in us and through us (1 John 5:14-15). They were united together with one heart and mind to please Him.

Let's notice how they prayed:

1. They praised God.
2. They told God their specific problem.
3. They asked for God's help.

They didn't ask God to remove the problem, but to help them deal with it. This is a good model for us to follow when we pray. Though we may ask for God to remove our problems, we must remember that He is able to help us through them, giving us the grace to deal with them. Their prayer was not for protection, but for God's mighty power to share the gospel. They wanted God to have all the glory.

ACTS 4:31

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

The name of the Lord Jesus has not lost its power, but many of God's people have lost their power because they have stopped praying. If we pray in God's will, we can expect Him to answer just as the disciples did.

God's answer was to shake the place where they were meeting and to fill the people once again with the Spirit of God. This gave them the boldness that they needed to continue to serve God in spite of official opposition. **The Holy Spirit will give us boldness to share the gospel with others.**

A person filled with the Holy Spirit is actively serving God. Through their actions and words, they are allowing God to work through them by His power. The Holy Spirit will give us boldness to have the courage to press through our fears and do what we know is right. We all need to be bold in our witness for Jesus.

To gain boldness, we can:

1. Pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to give us courage, He will help us.
2. Look for opportunities in our families and neighborhoods to talk about Jesus.
3. Start by being bolder in small ways.
4. Realize that everyone has a responsibility to accept or reject the gospel, but it is our responsibility to tell him or her.

The Real McCoy

Invite someone you know that has witnessed to others in adverse circumstances to come and share their experience with the class. You may know someone who has done short or long term mission work. Allow the children to ask questions about this person's experience.

Explain to the class that not everyone we share the gospel with will follow Him, but we are called to be faithful to tell and allow God to complete the work. Remind the class that **the Holy Spirit will give us boldness to share the gospel with others.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to look for opportunities to share what Jesus has done for us. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them an opportunity to do so.

