



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 13 Bold LOVE
By Pastor Jody May 12/11/2022**

Acts 4:1-12 ESV

¹³ Now 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. 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.

[INTRODUCTION]

How do we display the love of Christ this Christmas, the ACTS way...

When we speak boldly...

1. When we speak boldly, we confound the critics.

3 different ways in which the critics get confounded:

- They (Sanhedrin) **saw** they had been with Jesus.

¹³ Now 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.

The critics saw the boldness of Peter and John and knew they were uneducated, untrained, and didn't fit in among the elite. The result of this was their **astonishment**. That word in the Greek is the same word to talk about



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the jaw dropping awe of witnessing a miracle (Acts 2:7 Pentecost) only this time, it was the super-natural recognition that this isn't normal.

They had a sinking feeling in their stomach they had witnessed this type of thing before:

John 7:15-16 ESV

¹⁵ The Jews therefore **marveled**, saying, "How is it that this man (**Jesus**) has learning, when he has never studied?" ¹⁶ So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.

They knew the Apostles were from Jesus for they had experienced the same thing with Jesus. They were afraid because of Jesus' claim, that the way in which He talked, **with authority**, was because it came from God Himself. Critics are amazed when Christians put them in their place, not by anger or insults, but by the authority of God.

We all have that capability, it's in your hands every day, it's the Bible and in it rests all the authority of God Himself – **Sola Scriptura**. He defines what sin is, He sets up the governments, He controls the financial sectors, and it is to Him we need to hold **ALL** accountable to. You want to cause a stir for God, get people's attention, **start quoting scripture and see what happens**.

- They **saw** the healed man and were silenced.

¹⁴ But **seeing** the man who was **healed** standing beside them, they had **nothing to say** in opposition.

The healed man represented years, decades, of temple life. He's just as much as a part of the permanent fixtures of the temple as the walls themselves. For years that guy with crooked legs, that guy that received alms for a perceived sin in his flesh, that man that no one took in, he was living proof that the Apostles had done something, like Jesus, that caused amazement.

As I said last week, God is always on the offensive to make those that mock Him look foolish, and He would love to put you to play in that process too.



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Speaking boldly is the first step in the process, because the results of your obedience to share the gospel that is what causes people to stop and notice. When people are touched by our lives, how we share the gospel with them, it puts them in the spotlight, and nothing silences a critic like a life changed by the living Christ.

It also may mean. Just like that lame man, you have a condition right now that is debilitating, no one seems to care, no one seems to listen, no one notices. Family, scripture tells me that God cares, He hears, and He notices, and it may mean that your moments of lonely solitude, misery, and pain is to increase your joy when you find Him. **The greater the joy the greater the repentance**, that is shown in how this lame man was still hanging on to Peter and John the next morning, in front of the ruling elite, for he knew Jesus was the one that saved Him. Perhaps your pain is to set you up for a life of declaring who it is that truly saves you, perhaps your shortcomings is how God demonstrates a loving discipline, perhaps your frustration is more about God killing in you that which will keep you out of heaven ([Luke 15:11-32](#)).

- They **saw** their loss of power among their supporters.

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."

When we speak boldly for Christ it's like stepping on the hidden yellow jacket nest... Critics start getting real defensive about the people who follow them because those are the people that support the work they do, and if you are speaking the truth in love boldly you will draw people back from the gates of Hell. It is one of the big fundamental differences between living in God's Kingdom and living in the Kingdom of the World:

- When one lives off the world, and what it can give you, you only have what you need as long as you can keep people happy.



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- But in God's Kingdom your focus is an audience of one, and you will always have what you need to get the job done, which is to bring Him glory.

The Apostle's critics were upset because they were stealing their income, their supporters, their fan base. Right now, as Christians we are watching a world get more upset with the church everyday simply because their strategy of trying to keep and increase their fan base is failing. Let me give you an example of modern-day critics of the church, a group that has condemned the church for how they organize their leadership and for how they teach about the patriarchal system of fatherhood.

With the rise of Feminism over the last century has come challenges and a lot of criticism to the role of men in the church, in the work-place and in the home. But based on the work that Feminists have done has also come the rise of Gay rights and with the rise of Gay rights came the rise of Transgender rights, and now the very thing that Feminism wanted, **EQUALITY**, that is being ripped from their hands by Transgender activists. Transgenderism claims if a man wants to be recognized as a woman you have to let him compete in female sports, effectively nullifying what Feminism set out to do. Liberalistic Worldly Ideology always competes with itself, there is not enough support to go around, and they will use and overthrow who and what they can to gain support for their ideas. Relying on the world, going to it for your fan base, working in it to get what you want, will always come up short because that is a limited resource.

BTW the church has never been in competition with women rights, no they have always championed them. Christians led the fight for equality of treatment while elevating the role of women in the home and church by helping men understand their role as leader, protector, and provider. Ladies if we want to see women treated with respect and dignity as Christ does for the church then we need to support the men and encourage them to fight the evils in this world. This is our complementarian role towards each other and when the world sees that it will definitely confound them!



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Then what happens to the church when it holds to doctrine, to moralistic standards, to the creeds, it reminds the world it doesn't work the way they want it to and that's a threat for they may lose support. **Confounding our critics** is not the aim of the church BUT it is the byproduct of a church that is working hard at Boldly speaking the Truth, demonstrating her love for her Lord.

Speaking Boldly was key in the book of Acts and throughout the Gospel. Boldness is the accelerator in preaching the gospel, **the bolder you are, the quicker the HS works to convert the lost**. It's not time to let up on the gas we need to stomp on it going into this next phase of life. When we are obedient to speak boldly for Christ, here's what we can expect next to happen.

When we speak boldly...

2. When we are threatened, we become resolute.

¹⁸ So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

Ok here's the issue, this is the ruling class of Jews, and they have now asked the Apostles to stop and desist BUT that's the wrong call. The governing body of the Jews, in light of what is in scripture **Deuteronomy 13**, should have not hindered the work (healing) of the Apostles being it was done in God's name, as a matter of fact they should work towards assisting the Apostles. Fear has clouded their judgment and now they misuse their power.

See how this elevates one chapter later after more healings...

Acts 5:17-18; 33 ESV

¹⁷ But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with **jealousy** ¹⁸ they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison.

An angel freed them, and they ended up in the Temple preaching again!?



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³³ When they heard this (“**we must obey God**” v.30-32), they were enraged and wanted to kill them.

We need to take heed, that when those in charge tell those that love Jesus to stop doing something like tell people about Him, it may come with a **threat to your way of life**. It used to be in our country that being a good citizen coincided with being a good church member/Christian, but we can't say that anymore, it is a little more complicated.

And that can be hard sometimes because scripture teaches us to be obedient to those in human governing systems:

Romans 13:1 ESV

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

But there is a time where govt. can be told to go fly a kite, **with respect**, and that happens when what they want goes against what God wants, and that is the **stop and desist order on speaking the name of Jesus for Salvation...** Recently, the church in North America went through some things by which we had to make decisions on whether we can adhere to what the authorities were saying (COVID). In Canada it was worse for our brothers and sisters.

(Canada) Churches were shut down, burned by scared and coerced citizens, and pastors were arrested, then recently government passed laws that they cannot teach against any alternate lifestyle, and they have almost removed the ability for their people to protect themselves. This is what happens when governments are taken over by totalitarians. In America it was not as bad but believe me the government pushed on us to see what it could get away with. We did see churches fined for non-compliance and we have seen a rise in aggression against the American church if she does not go along with the leanings of the government.

This is important for us to see in the text this morning, **that the Government is not always right and when they are not**, especially when it tells you that you can't boldly speak Jesus' name, **you have the option to disobey. When**



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you cannot practice worshipping Him, when you can't love Him by telling your neighbor about Him, you are called to open your mouth, act, and revolt.

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.”

Those that have seen God in the face of Jesus will talk about Him.
Those that have seen the Grace of God in Jesus will proclaim it.
Those that have received the Mercy of God in Jesus death will die for it.

You cannot keep from doing it for it is how you love and worship your God by **BOLDLY** proclaiming Him. Neither should we be coerced into not meeting to worship as a body, for that too takes away **our way of life**, which is the right for God's people to love one another in person.

Hebrews 10:25 ESV

²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and **all the more** as you see the Day drawing near.

It is a command of God's people to come together to encourage one another with the name of Christ. This is where I need us all to start taking this calling seriously. **When threatened will you become resolute?** You see it may not ever come to blows, protest, and persecution for us, but it may be that way for our children. If we don't start acting with **BOLDNESS** about our faith now, then what are we leaving for them?

If it comes to public disobedience know this, God will not leave you defenseless. As a matter of fact, this is where God likes to demonstrate to His people, He is with them.

Isaiah 54:17 ESV

No weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication from me, declares the Lord.”



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God will give you the words, that is the HS job, He will give you the opportunities, they were set up before you were ever born, and when you get the chance to demonstrate your resolve in loving Jesus great things can and will happen!

When we speak boldly...

3. When we become immovable, Jesus will be glorified!

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. ²²For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

The Apostles were released because the people were praising God, the Sanhedrin risked making them heroes like JB or Jesus if they did not release them. The people saw the truth, the man was healed because God was behind it, but it took the Apostles declaration of the miracle to get their attention on it. God's plan worked, and that was **to speak up and speak bold**, and let God work His plan of **revelation and regeneration!**

In the book of Acts you will discover a pattern. We should know that for those that practice loving God boldly: **gained in their resolve, gave in less and less, and the church grew more and more.** That's one of the reasons were studying Acts as a body, is to learn that the path for evangelism, the path to reveal God's glory, the path to get Jesus to come back by obeying the great commission, is a path with ever increasing difficulties because our critics will only increase in their hostility towards the church.

The Apostles knew the stakes and they encouraged us to hold our ground:

1 Corinthians 15:58 ESV

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is **not in vain.**

Our work will not be in vain, Jesus will be glorified, and the harder the critics speak out against our bold love, the more Jesus will be glorified.



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When we speak boldly...

[CHALLENGE]

I want to remind us in here why it is important this season to bring up the name of Christ:

Romans 10:17 ESV

So, faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Want to start this tradition of speaking boldly, go get some cheap **Christmas cards** with Bible verses on them, write in that card that Jesus is the reason you will have a good Christmas, and wish people a Merry Christmas. Let the Critics hate, it is all good!

When you share on your **social media** about Christmas, tie it to a Bible verse, and let God's Word do the offending for you, for people have to accept truth first of they want to encounter God's love in person.

When you **gather over the holidays**, never be ashamed to share a verse of the Christmas story for it is the way you love people, by sharing with them the good news that changed everything.

Speak Boldly the Word of God...

And if you are so lucky to get a Critic that curses you, make sure you answer and say with a smile, Merry Christmas, God bless us everyone!

[PRAYER]

[COMMUNION]

[BENEDICTION]



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Go in the name of the Father, that has prepared for us the works that will require a bold resolve.

Go in the name of the Son, that stood up first to this world so we would see the fruit that a bold love will produce.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that will give us the words and the bold resolve to declare the love of Christ to a lost world.