



ENOGERA BAPTIST CHURCH
Jesus changes lives

ACTS



Acts #6 – 4:1-31

Acts 4:29-30 – Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

NOTE FOR LEADERS

This document is intended to be used as a discussion *guide*, rather than a curriculum. As small group leaders, please feel free to lead through the topic as most appropriate for your group.

HOUSEKEEPING

Things going at the moment:

- **Tri Church Summit Dates:** 25th –27th May. Registration and Payment due this Sun 6th May.
- **LIFEBEATS: Katisha’s Fundraiser Concert:**
 - Saturday 12th May @ 7pm at Enoggera Baptist Church.
 - Entry by donation, all proceeds to Refugee Connect
- **Service at EBC:** We are looking at for volunteers to help with various parts of church life. Let your small group leader know if you’re interested to help. There is a signup sheet at the back of church.



#6 ACTS 4:1-31

REFLECT

This is a time to generate some discussion by reflecting on the ideas in this week's message. Some ideas include:

- Ask the group to debrief for those who have missed the sermons on Sunday
- What stood out? Do you have any questions?
- Were there any special moments of clarity where God spoke to you clearly?

DIG INTO THE WORD

Let's dig a little deeper. Use the biblical text to discover what God reveals to us in his Word.

In this passage we see the Spirit-filled church begin to interact with the world. Having just healed a crippled man, Peter takes the opportunity to declare to the crowd the Gospel: their guilt before God in their role of having Jesus crucified, and the offer of pardon by his own death and resurrection. While preaching, Peter and John are arrested, thrown in jail for the night and hauled before the council of Jewish leaders, and told in no uncertain terms to keep their mouths shut about Jesus. The apostles however cannot abide this, and declare boldly: *"Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges!²⁰ As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."*

Acts 4:1-31 *Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin*

4 The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people.² They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.³ They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day.⁴ But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

⁵ The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶ Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. ⁷ They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!⁹ If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed,¹⁰ then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.



¹¹ Jesus is

*“the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the cornerstone.”*

¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. ¹⁵ So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. ¹⁶ “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

¹⁸ Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! ²⁰ As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

²¹ After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. ²² For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

The Believers Pray

²³ On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

*“Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
²⁶ The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord
and against his anointed one.”*

²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. ²⁹ Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”



³¹ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

1 Peter 3:14-16

¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame.

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scriptures apply directly to their lives. Get group members to talk about the real life implications of the study.

1. **DISCUSS:** How are we to apply these things? Are there any immediate implications?
2. **STUDY:** Read the entire passage.
 - a. Why are Peter and John arrested? How do they react?
 - b. Acts 4:8-12 records Peter's third speech, this time before the Jewish council. What does Peter emphasize? How do Peter and John respond to the opposition of the council (v. 19-20)?
 - c. Marcus used the three categories of **Brokenness**, **Belief** and **Boldness** to frame the narrative of chapter 4. Where and how do you see the different players in the story (the apostles, the Jewish council, the healed man and the crowd) display these?
3. **DISCUSS:** Where in your life have you experienced opposition to your faith? What has been your response?
4. **DISCUSS:** Immediately after being strictly charged to speak no more about Jesus, the church do not pray against persecution, but rather pray: "*Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.*" (4:29). They pray for boldness. When you are faced with persecution, is your first impulse to pray for relief, or to pray to be strengthened to remain faithful and bold in the face of such persecution?
5. **APPLY:** Where in your life is God calling you to be bold? Share with the group, and then pray for boldness for one another.

PRAY

Thank God for the work and power of the Holy Spirit and pray that we would understand Him more deeply and rely on Him more fully.

Pray the same prayer as the church in Jerusalem in Acts 4:24-30, and ask God for boldness and the gospel to advance in power in our area and around the world.



HELPFUL NOTES

NOTES ON KEY TEXTS

Acts 2:14–5:42 The Witness in Jerusalem. Beginning with Peter’s sermon at Pentecost and continuing through ch. 5, the witness of the Christians is confined to the city of Jerusalem and restricted to Jews.

Acts 4:1–22 Peter and John Witness before the Jewish Council. Provoked by Peter’s sermon, the Sadducean leaders had the two apostles arrested and held for trial before the Sanhedrin. The section falls into three parts: the arrest (vv. 1–4), the hearing (vv. 5–12), and the warning (vv. 13–22).

Acts 4:1 The captain of the temple was second in rank to the high priest. The Sadducees may have accepted only the Pentateuch as Scripture; they also denied the resurrection (see 23:8), and represented the privileged aristocracy who worked closely with the Romans to protect their own political and economic interests. (See Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 13.297; 18.17–18)

Acts 4:2 Though the Sadducees did not themselves believe in a resurrection, most other Jews did, including the Pharisees (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 18.14). The Sadducees were upset with Peter’s preaching that in Jesus the general resurrection had begun, a message with definite messianic implications that was liable to be viewed by the Romans as revolutionary.

Acts 4:3 The Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin, met in the mornings. Since it was evening, the two apostles were placed in detention for the night.

Acts 4:4 Luke continues his catalogue of Christian growth: 120 (1:15); then 3,000 (2:41); and now the men alone were about five thousand, suggesting that the total number of Christians would have been well in excess of 10,000. The incredible growth of the church occurred in response to two activities empowered by the Holy Spirit: the powerful preaching of the gospel message about Jesus and the “many wonders and signs” (2:43; cf. 4:14, 16).

Acts 4:5 The Jewish high court consisted of 71 members—70 elders according to the pattern of Num. 11:16 plus the high priest as presiding officer. It was dominated by the priestly Sadducees with a Pharisaic minority, represented mainly by the scribes (lawyers) of the court.

Acts 4:6 Annas is designated as high priest. (Much like U.S. presidents, high priests seem to have retained their title for life.) He had served in that role earlier (A.D. 6–15) and was the controlling figure in the high-priestly circle, which may also explain why he is given the title here. His son-in-law Caiaphas was the official high priest at this time (serving A.D. 18–36), and Annas’s son John would serve in the role later (36–37).

Acts 4:8 filled with the Holy Spirit, said. Cf. Luke 12:11–12.



Acts 4:10 whom you crucified. As he had accused the Jews in his two temple sermons (2:23; 3:15), Peter now accused the Sanhedrin judges of their role in Jesus' death and pointed to the divine power that had raised him from the dead.

Acts 4:11 cornerstone. Cf. Ps. 118:22; Isa. 28:16.

Acts 4:12 Peter's statement that there was salvation in no other name was an implicit invitation to the Sanhedrin to place their faith in Jesus. It was Jesus' name that brought physical deliverance to the lame man (3:1–10) —the same powerful and exclusive name that brings eternal salvation to all who call upon him. Peter emphasizes this by saying that it is the only name under heaven (that is, throughout the whole earth) by which a person can be saved. Further, there is no other name among men (that is, in all of human society) that saves. On Christ as the exclusive way of salvation, see also Matt. 11:27; John 3:18; 14:6; 1 John 5:12. This verse also suggests that salvation comes only through conscious faith in Jesus.

Acts 4:13 Boldness (Gk. *parrēsia*) is an important word in Acts which depicts Spirit-inspired courage and confidence to speak in spite of any danger or threat. It also occurs at 2:29; 4:29, 31; 28:31; cf. 2 Cor. 3:12. Uneducated and common ("nonprofessional") men like Peter and John were not expected to speak so confidently before the supreme court of the land. The two words do not mean that they were illiterate or unintelligent but rather that they had not gone through the advanced training of the rabbinic schools. They had been with Jesus. It is impossible to imagine how much the disciples would have learned from spending three years in close association with the Son of God living on earth, listening to him teach, hearing him pray, and watching him interact with the most difficult challenges. They knew Jesus, and in knowing him they knew much more than all the learned scribes of the Sanhedrin.

Acts 4:16 What shall we do with these men? The religious leaders didn't know what action to take, since the healing of the man was well known and punishing his healers would displease the populace. Official leaders often act from fear of the people rather than from fear of God: see Matt. 14:5; 21:26, 46; Luke 19:48; 22:2; Acts 4:21; 5:26; cf. John 12:42–43.

Acts 4:17 in order that it may spread no further among the people. Sadly, the leaders were motivated by fear of losing power and influence rather than by a desire to glorify God, to be faithful to his Word, or to spread the true knowledge of salvation.

Acts 4:18–20 Though the leaders of the council charged them not to speak or teach ... in the name of Jesus, Peter realized the impossibility of abiding by this prohibition, thus demonstrating that believers have the responsibility not to obey authorities when such authorities prohibit preaching the gospel or otherwise require Christians to disobey God's explicit commandments (cf. 5:29).

Acts 4:23–31 The Christian Community Prays for Boldness in Witness. Peter and John returned to their fellow Christians and reported the Sanhedrin's injunction against preaching the gospel. In response the Christians prayed, asking for power to witness even more boldly.

Acts 4:24 After praising God, the believers prayed, quoting Ps. 2:1–2 (Acts 4:25–26), which they treated as a messianic prophecy inspired by the Spirit speaking through David.



Acts 4:25 who through the mouth of our father David ... said. Scripture is truly and totally the word of God even though it comes through flawed men like David. Even as they are persecuted, they address God as master and are in service to his will.

Acts 4:27 The psalm is interpreted in light of Jesus' death. The "kings" and "rulers" of v. 26 correspond to Herod Antipas and Pilate, while the Gentiles and peoples of Israel exemplify those who participated in the crucifixion (Acts 2:23). Much as in Peter's second temple sermon (3:18), this is viewed as being planned by God. Human responsibility is compatible with divine predestination.

Acts 4:28 In their prayer, reported with approval by Luke, the believers affirm both God's sovereignty and human responsibility. Whatever includes all of the evil rejection, false accusation, miscarriage of justice, wrongful beatings, mockery, and crucifixion that both Jews and Gentiles poured out against Jesus. These things were predestined by God, yet the human beings who did them were morally "lawless" (see 2:23, 36); they were responsible for their evil deeds (see 3:13–15); and they needed to "repent" (see 2:38; 3:19). This prayer reflects both a deep acknowledgment of human responsibility and a deep trust in God's wisdom in his sovereign direction of the detailed events of history.

Acts 4:29 Their prayer for boldness in witness shows a determination to directly disobey the command of the Sanhedrin. They do not pray against those who persecute them but pray for their own faithfulness in witness.

Acts 4:30 and signs and wonders are performed. The believers do not hesitate to pray that God would work more miracles as they continued proclaiming the gospel. Such a prayer does not indicate deficient faith but is rather an evidence of their strong belief that God would work in their midst in an immediate way that authenticates the gospel.

Acts 4:31 God answered the believers' prayer. The place where they were gathered was shaken as if by an earthquake, and the Spirit descended upon them in a way they could perceive. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit indicates that people could be "filled" with the Holy Spirit more than once, for Peter was among them and he had already been "filled with the Holy Spirit" (v. 8), and all the disciples present at Pentecost had been "filled" with the Spirit as well (2:4). The Holy Spirit's power did not come on them automatically but in answer to their expectant, believing prayer.

REFERENCE:

Developed with the help of the following:

- ESV Study Bible, Crossway.