



Brown Community Group

Discussion Guide

Go Therefore: Acts 4:5-31 – February 7, 2021

I. Starter Thoughts and Context:

Have you ever been associated with a group or person who showed extreme boldness in dealing with a situation, conflict or opportunity? How did that person or leader make you feel in that moment? Did you feel truly emboldened and excited to do more? Or did you go and hide feeling scared or exposed?

Today we will learn how to become more emboldened through the power of the Holy Spirit as we live our lives and fit into God's plan on earth.

II. Discussion of Scripture:

Context: In the book of Acts so far, the church has been formed and we've seen the devotion of these early Christians to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. They were in awe of the Lord's many signs and wonders among them, they shared all that they had with each other, they praised God together, and the Lord continued to bring others to faith through their witness. Last week, we saw how Jesus, through Peter, healed the lame beggar. The man leaped up, with joy, and many were amazed. Peter preached the gospel, and many were saved. Peter and John get arrested for it.

Today, we're continuing through the end of chapter 4. While standing under the intense scrutiny of the council, Peter uses the opportunity, again, to preach the gospel with great clarity. Upon their release, Peter and John gather with their friends, and they lift up a prayer to God for continued boldness in spite of the growing opposition to them. Upon their expectant prayer, they are all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they are given continued boldness in their evangelism.

Acts 4:5-31 (ESV)

⁵ On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, ⁶ with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" 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 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.

²³ When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, ““Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’— ²⁷ for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

III. Group Discussion:

1. As Peter speaks before the Jewish high court, it says in verse 8 that he was “filled with the Holy Spirit.” In Luke 12:11-12, we’re reminded of the power of the Holy Spirit, especially as it relates to the situation Peter finds himself in: “And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.” **What should we take from this example for our own lives? How specifically did the Holy Spirit affect this situation? How did the Holy Spirit guide and empower? Do you think this was only affecting Peter? The whole situation? Everyone involved, from speaking to hearing?**
2. After Peter accuses the Sanhedrin of their role in crucifying Jesus, he lays claim to the

exclusivity of Christ in salvation. He is in this moment boldly inviting them to believe, when he says in verse 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.” **From the original preaching until now, has God’s way to heaven changed? Think about the Old Testament through the New Testament? What generally happens with a Christian boldly proclaims that this is the only way to Heaven? Is this loving or arrogant or intolerant?**

3. The council was amazed at Peter and John’s boldness, and they perceived them to be “uneducated, common men” (v. 13). **What do think this meant about them? Do you think this was a general comment or specifically directed to matters of God? In what sense were they insinuating that they were uneducated and common?**
4. In verse 17, the council decides that they don’t have anything to charge the men with, so they let them off, but with a strict prohibition against proclaiming Jesus. As Christians, we are called to obey the government (see Romans 15). In this case, however, Peter and John are defiant to their order, saying that they “we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (v. 20). **When, then, do we obey the government, and when should we not?**
5. When Peter and John return to their friends, they lift up a prayer in praise to the God of the universe, to pray for continued boldness (v. 29) despite increasing persecution. Peter and John’s witness was already bold, so much so that the council was amazed at their boldness **Why is it important that we pray for boldness? Why is it easy for us to not pray for this and to make ourselves a life boldly for Christ?**
6. In verse 28, the believers continue in prayer to the Lord, and they implicate Herod, Pilate, and the people in the death of Jesus. Yet, the believers also acknowledge that these people “did whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.” **When reading this verse, someone discuss how we can have both personal choice and predestination? Or does this mean that the people involved had no choice? How can Herod, Pilate, and the people be responsible for Jesus’ death, if it was already predestined by God in his infinite plan? Do these two point require reconciliation or are they perfectly harmonious together? Now let’s talk about our own life, for personal responsibility and a trust in God’s sovereignty over your life?**
7. In verse 31, we find a description of what happens following the believers’ prayer: “And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.” **Can we today have the same powerful results? In our CG, church or nation?**

IV. Responding in Prayer:

- Pray for the many people and families in our church body who continue to be affected by Covid. Pray for a mighty work of God to bring about healing, and for His protection to be on us. Pray that God would use this unique time to draw people to Himself, through boldness!
- Pray for boldness, as you proclaim Christ to your neighborhood, city, nation, and to the world!
- Pray for our elders, pastors, staff, and leaders, as they seek to shepherd well.