

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon June 26, 2022

Acts 4: 13 "Have you been with Jesus?"

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. 22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' 24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

1 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

5 And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, 6 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. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 "If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 "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. 11 "This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' 12 "Nor is there salvation in any other, 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 and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 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. 17 "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." 18 So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 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. 20 "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." 21 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. 22 For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

I. Introduction

- a. “When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and private individuals, they marveled, and they came to a right conclusion as to the source of their power—they had been dwelling with Jesus. Their [Peter and John] conversation with the Prince of light and glory, backed up, as they might also have known, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, without which even that eminently holy example would have been in vain, had made them bold for their Master's cause. Oh! my brethren, it were well if this condemnation, so forced from the lips of enemies, could also be compelled by our own example. If we could live like Peter and John; if our lives were "living epistles of God, known and read of all men;" if, whenever we were seen, men would take knowledge of us, that we had been with Jesus, it would be a happy thing for this world, and a blessed thing for us. It is concerning that I am to speak to you this morning; and as God gives me grace, I will endeavor to stir up your minds by way of remembrance, and urge you so to imitate Jesus Christ, our heavenly pattern, that men may perceive that you are disciples of the Holy Son of God.”
- b. Today's sermon: Acts 4:13 “Have you been with Jesus?”
 - i. Boldness of Peter and John
 - ii. Uneducated and Untrained Men
 - iii. The Sanhedrin marveled
 - iv. The Sanhedrin's realization
 - v. Questions to know love and obey God
- c. Let us hear once again the clear, direct, gracious and unreserved speech Peter delivered to the Sanhedrin that prompted their astonishment:
 - i. ““Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 "If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 "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. 11 "This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' 12 "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.””

II. Boldness of Peter and John

- a. “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John,”
 - i. This highest, most powerful court of Judaism rested with much confidence in its ability to terrify Jews into compliance. Holding power not only to enact grievous penalties under Jewish law, but also this council had of late demonstrated its power to control the Roman governor, Pilate, who still ruled and wielded the power of the Roman cross. They were accustomed to fearful, timid apologies and fawning promises to obey from men trapped in the “under the sun” mindset.

Peter and John shined with the peaceful radiance of those walking this earth before the heavenly countenance of Christ. This contrast shocked the council, gripping their curiosity.

1. Sanhedrin “Highest Jewish council in the first century. The council had 71 members and was presided over by the high priest. The Sanhedrin included both of the main Jewish parties among its membership. Since the high priest presided, the Sadducean priestly party seems to have predominated, but some leading Pharisees also were members (Acts 5:34; 23:1–9). The word “Sanhedrin” is usually translated “council” in the English translations of the Bible. Because of the predominance of the chief priests in the Sanhedrin, at times the words “chief priests” seem to refer to the action of the Sanhedrin, even though the name itself is not used. According to Jewish tradition, the Sanhedrin began with the 70 elders appointed by Moses in Num. 11:16 and was reorganized by Ezra after the exile.”¹

b. Boldness = παρρησία

- i. freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech
- ii. openly, frankly, i.e without concealment
- iii. without ambiguity or circumlocution
- iv. without the use of figures and comparisons
- v. free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance
- vi. Peter and John had no fear before this cruel and mighty council, and even held out an assured and cheerful demeanor as they spoke. This fearlessness provides the courage needed to speak unreservedly, directly, openly and without riddles, ambiguity, or equivocation.
 1. “They could not, with all their pomp and power, face down Peter and John. This was a miracle not inferior to the cure of the lame man, considering both what cruel bloody enemies these priests had been to the name of Christ (enough to make any one tremble that appeared for him), and considering what cowardly faint-hearted advocates those disciples had lately been for him, Peter particularly, who denied him for fear of a silly maid; yet now they see *the boldness of Peter and John*, v. 13. Probably there was something extraordinary and very surprising in their looks; they appeared not only undaunted by the rulers, but daring and daunting to them; they had something majestic in their foreheads, sparkling in their eyes, and commanding, if not terrifying, in their voice. They *set their faces like a flint*, as the prophet, Isa. 50:7; Eze. 3:9. The courage of Christ’s faithful

¹ Robert J. Dean, “[Sanhedrin](#),” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1445.

confessors has often been the confusion of their cruel persecutors.”²

vii. Holy Spirit boldness

1. V8 “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them...”
2. John 16:5-7 "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' 6 "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."
 - a. Peter and John had been with Jesus until He ascended to heaven. But, Christ’s ascension was not to their loss, but rather to their gain. The Holy Spirit maintains Christ’s Presence with Peter and John, a Presence that cannot be removed.
3. “Seen in the context of v. 8, the boldness and confidence of Peter and John are the result of the influence of the Holy Spirit. The boldness of their confession puts them in serious danger, as they assert with fearless candor that they believe that Jesus is the Messiah, that he was wrongfully accused and executed, that he has been vindicated through his resurrection from the dead, that it was the reality of his continuing power which healed the lame man, and that salvation is possible only through Jesus and through loyalty to him. The boldness of their presentation goes so far as to suggest that the Jewish élite in Jerusalem should accept the imperative which is implied in the exclusive link between salvation, and Jesus, the Messiah.”³

viii. More about “boldness”

1. Bock “The leaders see and discover certain things. First is the boldness (*παρρησίαν*, *parrēsian*) of the apostle and his companion, John. This term appears occasionally in Acts (2:29; 4:13–14, 29–31; 28:30–31; the verb *παρρησιάζομαι* [*parrēsiazomai*]: 9:27–28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8; 26:26). In Greek contexts, this term stood for the characteristic of free citizens to speak out (Johnson 1992: 78; Fitzmyer 1998: 302; Euripides, *Hippolytus* 422; in the LXX: Esth. 8:12s [= Add. Esth. 16:19 Eng.]; Job 27:10; Prov. 1:20; 10:10; 13:5). Here the apostles stand before the chief council of Judaism and make clear not only that their authority comes from outside the council but also that

² Matthew Henry, [*Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2077.

³ Eckhard J. Schnabel, [*Acts*](#), Expanded Digital Edition., Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), Ac 4:13.

the leadership is culpable for what it did to Jesus. There is no attempt to seek favor or to take a poll about how popular what they said would be.”⁴

- ix. By the power of the Holy Spirit, and via their relationship with Jesus Christ, Peter and John speak and live as His followers, carrying out His commission, speaking and acting accordingly, in the face of every type of threat.
 - c. “Peter and John”
 - i. Note that even though both individual men were granted boldness from the Holy Spirit, they were also given one to another. Holy Spirit boldness did not create individualistic isolation in Christ’s disciples. They received all the necessary tools for Kingdom advancement from their Lord, both Christ (via His Spirit) and His people.
- III. Uneducated and Untrained Men
- a. “and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men,”
 - b. In addition to their surprising boldness, the Sanhedrin is further perplexed by their unimpressive background. How could such courage and directness of speech flow from such common men? The Sanhedrin searches for explanation for the boldness, but initially their search is fruitless.
 - c. Uneducated = ἀγράμματος
 - i. illiterate, unlearned
 - 1. “It refers to one who is “without letters”—unschooled or lacking formal education. It need not mean “unable to read” but simply that the person lacks a certain level of skills....In this context, it is religious instruction that is primarily meant. The inference is that much should not be expected from them...”⁵
 - ii. The Sanhedrin sought for signs of credentials, degrees and formal theological or philosophical training, but could see no such signs in Peter and John.
 - 1. “As Peter and John spoke with complete openness and eloquent confidence, the members of the Sanhedrin, who were listening attentively, realized that these two men were neither priests who were trained to use the law in the context of their ritual duties in the temple, nor wealthy aristocrats who had enjoyed the privileges of primary and perhaps secondary education, nor law experts schooled in interpreting the Torah in all its minute details. They were “uneducated” (ἀγράμματοι), a term that here,

⁴ Darrell L. Bock, [Acts](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 195.

⁵ Darrell L. Bock, [Acts](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 195.

presumably, does not mean “illiterate” but “uneducated” in terms of scribal education.”⁶

iii. These Jewish leaders had no room in their minds for the school of Christ. They were locked up in their system’s requirement for degrees and credentials as a necessary ingredient for confidently delivering such a speech.

d. Untrained = ἰδιώτης

i. a private person as opposed to a magistrate, ruler, king

ii. a common soldier, as opposed to a military officer

iii. in the NT, an unlearned, illiterate, man as opposed to the learned and educated: one who is unskilled in any art

iv. So, not only did Peter and John show no signs of formal education, but also they did not appear to be men of high station in life.

1. “They were *ignorant men—idiōtai, private men*, men that had not any public character nor employment; and therefore they wondered they should have such high pretensions. They were *idiots* (so the word signifies): they looked upon them with as much contempt as if they had been *mere naturals*, and expected no more from them, which made them wonder to see what freedom they took.”⁷

IV. The Sanhedrin marveled

a. “they marveled.”

b. Marveled = θαυμάζω

i. to wonder, wonder at, marvel

ii. to be wondered at, to be had in admiration

iii. So, this entire council of powerful, wealthy, educated, “respected” men simply cannot solve the riddle of boldness they see from Peter and John. How are these two men so strong in their argumentation, so bold in their presentation and so undaunted by this entire show of Jewish force? Finding no answer, they marvel. How can this be explained? Their “under the sun” search for explanations falls short and leaves them marveling, bound in the ignorance of their degrees, positions and gold.

1. “The first reaction of the members of the Sanhedrin is amazement, as they observe the boldness of Peter and John and as they realize that they were uneducated amateurs.”⁸

V. The Sanhedrin’s realization

a. “And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”

⁶ Eckhard J. Schnabel, [Acts](#), Expanded Digital Edition., Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), Ac 4:13.

⁷ Matthew Henry, [Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2077.

⁸ Eckhard J. Schnabel, [Acts](#), Expanded Digital Edition., Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), Ac 4:13.

- b. Realized = ἐπιγινώσκω
 - i. to recognize
 - ii. by sight, hearing, of certain signs, to perceive who a person is
 - iii. to know i.e. to perceive
 - iv. to know i.e. to find out, ascertain
 - v. to know i.e. to understand
- c. So, the idea is that the entire Sanhedrin had not yet fully connected with the fact that Peter and John had walked closely with Jesus during His time on the earth. But, once the entire council came to this unanimous understanding, their eyes were opened to how these two mysterious men were so bold and solid in their reasoning. The council had seen this before: they had heard of and even interacted with Jesus of Nazareth. Peter and John reminded the council of Jesus.
 - i. “The phrase “to be with Jesus” (σὺν τῷ Ἰησοῦ εἶναι) can be understood as a basic definition of discipleship in the presence and in the footsteps of Jesus: according to Mark 3:14, Jesus appointed the Twelve to “be with him” (ἵνα ᾤσιν μετ’ αὐτοῦ) and “to be sent out” (ἵνα ἀποστέλλῃ) to proclaim the good news. Here the phrase describes Peter and John as companions of Jesus during his ministry in Galilee.”⁹
- d. But, we must also remember that Peter and John (especially Peter) did not display this clear and recognizable Christ-likeness during the times prior to Christ’s resurrection. Their times with their resurrected Messiah during forty days before He ascended are the solidifying days of being with Him and becoming like Him.
 - i. “Note, Those that *have been with Jesus*, in converse and communion with him, have been attending on his word, praying in his name, and celebrating the memorials of his death and resurrection, should conduct themselves, in every thing, so that those who converse with them may *take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus*; and this makes them so holy, and heavenly, and spiritual, and cheerful; this has raised them so much above this world, and filled them with another. One may know that they have been in the mount by the shining of their faces.”¹⁰

VI. Questions to know, love and obey God

⁹ Eckhard J. Schnabel, [Acts](#), Expanded Digital Edition., Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), Ac 4:13.

¹⁰ Matthew Henry, [Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2077.