



## ***Speaking the Word of God with Boldness***

Acts 4:1-31; Acts 5:17-42

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**Overview:** The preaching of the apostles leads to more converts and results in their arrest by Jewish authorities. When called upon to give an account for their actions, Peter highlights the saving work of God and the sinfulness of mankind's opposition to Jesus. Despite their recognition of the boldness of the apostles, along with their uncommon ability to speak truth and do what is good, the authorities choose not to consider their message. The subsequent release of the apostles confirms that God is in control of all things, leading them to praise God and pray for more boldness. Their re-arrest and punishment neither dimmed their view of God's sovereignty nor diminished their boldness, as evidenced by their continued preaching of the gospel.

**01. Gospel boldness is displayed when God's people speak truth and do good even in the presence of anti-Christian hostility.**

**02. Gospel boldness is energized by the recognition of God's sovereignty and refusal to fear lesser authorities.**

**03. Gospel boldness is sustained by the reality of Christ's sufferings and the ongoing prayers of God's people.**

THIS PROMISE IS FOR YOU AND FOR ALL

1. When was the last time you suffered for the gospel? Do you agree or disagree with the statement that people who oppose the gospel are not innocent in their opposition, but rather are suppressing truth that points to the truth of the gospel? See Romans 1:18-32 for further insight.

2. Notice the growth of the church in Acts 4:4; 5:14; and 6:7. What accounts for the growth of the church in the face of persecution? How does this information encourage you regarding the growth of the church in countries where Christianity is illegal or under attack? See Philippians 1:12-14 for an illustration of this principle.

3. The apostles are arrested twice in chapters 4 and 5, both of which result in their being freed. Only once in this section do we find that they are physically punished (5:40). Why is it important to affirm the sovereignty of God in our suffering as well as our freedom? What mistakes might we encounter if we fail to affirm God's sovereignty in either case?

4. One practical way of becoming bolder about sharing the gospel is to commit Acts 4:12 to memory, as it assures us that salvation is necessary for everyone and that salvation is good for everyone. What other practical ways can you think of that might aid in helping you become bolder about sharing the gospel?

5. Christians today often seek political solutions to promote the faith or reduce personal inconveniences. In what ways did the early church appeal to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in their times of suffering? How does their appeal encourage us today? See Acts 4:8, 9-12, and 24-31 for further insight.

**For Further Reading:** Michael Green, *Thirty Years that Changed the World: The Book of Acts for Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: 2004).

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