

Sermon Title: "Like *Jesus*, Like *Apostles*"

Sermon Series: Acts: Kingdom Vision 20/20

Text: **Acts 4:1-37**

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**Key Theme:** The Apostles were brought in by the religious leadership of the Temple for the miracle done in Jesus' Name. The religious leadership present in the text was politically tied to Rome but divided among themselves. Each was seeking their own interests and as they had done with Jesus, now they are doing to the Apostles- silencing any claim to an authority not on their side. However, Jesus did not come pick a side but to lead as King. What was done through the Apostles was in Jesus' Name- an authority not sourced in any kingdom, power, or sect in this world.

### **Acts 4:1-4**

Because of the Apostle's healing the lame man in Jesus' Name was so out of the ordinary, crowds were gathering around them. Filled with the Spirit, Peter points everyone toward the source of the Healing- Jesus who is alive!

Alive Jesus has ascended sending His Spirit and Ascension Gifting to equip and empower the Church to continue Gospel Ministry of His Coming Kingdom! This message stirred the religious leaders resulting in them trying to stop the message.

Though Peter, John, and the man healed were thrust in prison for the night, the Spirit was not shackled. Like what was done to Jesus, the more the world pushes back against the Ministry of the Spirit, the more the Church grows.

*"...Apostolic power will bring apostolic persecution"*

-William Seymour

**Going Deeper:** 1) *How do you think Peter, John, and the healed man spent that night in prison? This was their first actual taste of persecution. How would you endure a night in prison for healing and preaching in the Name of Jesus?*

**Going Deeper:** 2) *Why did the religious authorities try to put a stop to this? Do you ever find yourself on the side of trying to prevent the work of the Spirit? Personally (Me, Damian) I have. Most of my life was spent in ministry resisting the work of the Holy Spirit. I knew God, loved Jesus and served Him. I was very studied; loved the Word. Yet, I sought not the Spirit as a Person of the Godhead. I used Him as a tool. Embraced His work to sanctify me; teach me the Word. Yet I rebuked His unique Ascension Gifting for my life. In my ignorance the Spirit was gentle and still led me. I rejoice in the longsuffering patience of my God; yet break in humility and repentance through many tears at how long I've grieved the Holy Spirit. **Repentance is an opening of the arms to embrace His healing for our lives.***

## Acts 4:5-12

The next day Peter, John, and the healed man are brought before the gathered religious leaders to be questioned. Immediately the miracle is affirmed as an act beyond their own ability.

By whose power or name (authority / help) was this done?

Filled with the Spirit, Peter addresses those gathered. Remember, they were taken into custody for what they were *teaching*, not the *healing*. Peter answers their question addressing both the miracle and the message!

Check out the source of Peter's quote: **Psalm 118:19-29**.

What they have rejected has become the cornerstone of our Salvation. In Jesus, just as this healed man made whole had done, all are invited to pass through the Beautiful Gate into the presence of God!

**Going Deeper:** 3) *What was Peter filled with before he answered? What was the affirmed source of the man's healing? Peter quickly points beyond himself to Jesus; are we as quick to let go of the flesh (self-glory) to give Jesus the Glory due unto His Name alone?*

## Acts 4:13-22

This gathered council concludes that these men were not repeating a message they were handed *but had actually been with Jesus*. ***What a charge to have laid against us!***

Seeing the healed man standing there, what could they say? How can they refute this miracle?

Had the Apostles gave him money; very good. *Anyone can do that*. Clothing, food, shelter- they could do that themselves. Doing something like that in Jesus' Name was easily refuted as misguided faith. But this demonstration of authority- *nothing on earth could generate or replicate this!*

Note how this whole scenario unfolding with the Apostles had also happened with Jesus!

See -> **John 9:1-41** (Note: 9:26-27)

Charging them not to speak in the name nor teach anything about Jesus. Keep doing good things for others; but keep Jesus out of it! The Apostles affirm they will remain faithful to Jesus above all others; for their eyes have seen and their ears have heard all that they are sharing!

Note -> **1 John 1:1-4**

**Going Deeper:** 4) *Why would the religious leaders be ok with doing good like feeding the poor, providing clothing, shelter or alms as long as there is no mention of Jesus? How often are we tempted to sell out to doing good that raises honor and praise from people but are hesitant to be a part of the things only Jesus can do through us that brings Him Glory (and rebuke from people)? Is your witness such that people see you have been with Jesus- or simply know about Jesus? Is your faith your own or someone else's?*

## Acts 4:23-31

Released the Apostles return to the Spirit Community of Believers and brings witness to all that has transpired. Their agenda would be the leading of the Spirit; ready and willing is their invitation.

Note -> Luke 16:22-23

Note the Response:

V.24: Affirming and celebrating who their God is above the authorities pressing against them.

V.25-26: As the residents of Canaan stood to resist Israel under Joshua, the religious leaders are standing to resist God's Kingdom under Jesus.

V.27-28: From a child to adulthood, Jesus' entire life was targeted by the enemy. (Note: the terms Child and Servant are employed depending on translation. *The Greek embodies both meaning from conception Jesus was God's anointed servant.* Ever notice how the enemy strike the children of God's faithful servants today?

V.29-30: An appeal to God for boldness to continue declaring and demonstrating God's Kingdom Coming through the Gospel witness- upon the foundation of healing; signs and wonders all through the Name (authority) of Jesus!

Note -> Mark 16:15-18

V. 31: The place was shaking were they were gathered, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit speaking the world of God with boldness

**Going Deeper:** 5) *The Apostles and early church affirmed God's Sovereign presence in all things and asked for the sufficiency only He can bring them to be faithful in their service to King Jesus. How often do we seek deliverance over strength to stand? Regarding persecution, their example to us is strength to stand, endure and proclaim the Name of Jesus. Is our witness one of just proclaiming Jesus' Name, or also one which expects the Spirit to move miraculously in healing, signs and wonders?*

## Acts 4:32-37

A Spirit filled community is one that is a model after the Heavenly Kingdom of God. **Their faith was in the Holy Spirit's ability and not themselves!**

Note -> Revelation 22:1-5.

With Jesus central through His Spirit in their lives, this Spirit filled community displayed the Kingdom of God demonstrated with fruit that changed the world around them.

Notice the shape of their Gospel witness:

- 1) Apostolic Witness (Power / Authority)
- 2) Grace (favor) was upon them all.

- 3) All recognized God as the source of their material possessions and used / surrendered them to the Spirit's prompting.
- 4) The needs of the community were met through each other.

### **Application**

Today the church was surrendered to the *safe witness* of providing good things such as food, clothing, and shelter for those in need. Helping our neighbors and being a part of social efforts to make life better for people are rightly applauded.

While this is the *fruit* of Gospel life, this is not the *heart* of Gospel Witness. **Declaring** and **Demonstrating** the Kingdom of God in the authority found in Jesus' Name is the foundation of Jesus' ministry passed on to the Apostles.

People need Jesus- His **Healing**, His **Salvation**, His **Sanctification** and His **Authority** in their lives. This is the central heartbeat of our Gospel Witness. Let us labor in prayer for true revival.

*Let us labor in prayer as did the Apostles- may God pour out His Spirit upon us anew in a wave of revival that sees an Apostolic re-awakening. Let us say yes and embrace the Ascension Gifting Jesus pours out upon us!*

Let us be like *Jesus*.

Let us be like the *Apostles*.

**Like *Jesus*, Like *Apostles*.**