

When the Spirit Speaks
Tom Rempel – Faith Bible Church
Series: Faith on Mission
November 29, 2015

Acts 4:1:31



Unless the Spirit of God who breathed the very Word of God that we are about to unpack together, unless He is given the freedom to be our teacher that our gathering this morning will be nothing more than an hour in a meeting. Nothing of lasting value will have taken place either in us through us, and certainly not for eternal glory.



So we do invite the third person of the Godhead, the often-forgotten, the unspoken One, The Holy Spirit, to come and minister His word to us, knowing that it is His ministry not to draw attention to Himself but to put the focus on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask that He would do that as we unpack Your word together this morning. We ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

I want you to take your Bible and turn if you would to **Acts 4**. As we continue our journey through the book of Acts, as we've said before, the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus is summarized in a

two-volume set. The first one is Luke's gospel the **Gospel of Luke** where he introduces it by saying to Theophilus, he says that "I have after careful research recorded for you the details concerning this one, Jesus the Christ." And he tracks the life of Jesus all the way through to the Crucifixion, the Burial, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. At that point he closes Chapter 24 of Volume 1, "The Earthly Life and Ministry of the Lord Jesus."

Acts 2 is "The Earthly Life and Ministry of the Lord Jesus: The Sequel," or **Volume 2**. And reading back you realize that the last chapter of **Luke** and the first chapter of **Acts** have an overlap. They repeat some of the same details, but he tells us in **Acts 1** that for forty days the resurrected Christ came and ministered to the disciples. And then before the Ascension He said to them, He says,

Acts 1:8

(All power will be given to you) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

So the sequel to the earthly life and ministry of the Lord Jesus is the earthly ministry of Jesus in the indwelling presence of the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, doing the work of Jesus through His body which is the church. **Acts 1:8** not only gives to us our marching orders it also gives us the strategy whereby He'll do that, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the remotest part.

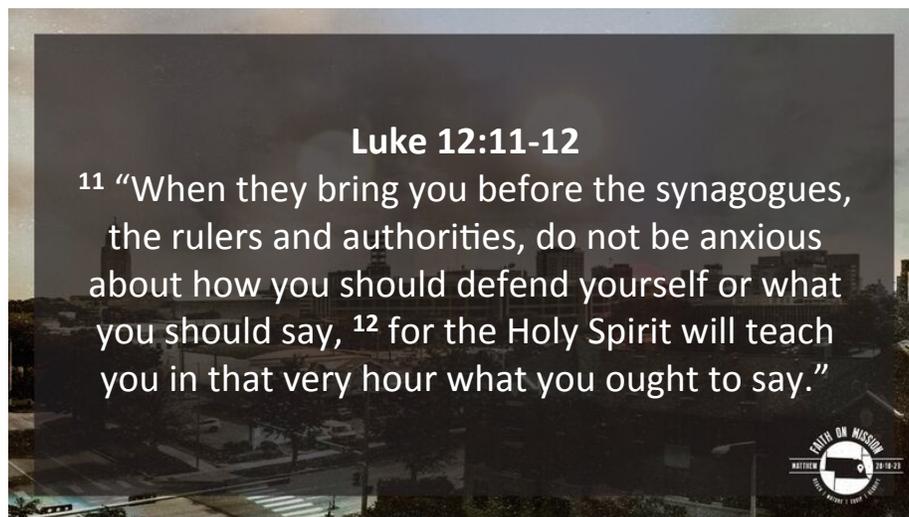
It also lays out an outline for our reading through the book of Acts, and in the book of Acts tends to unfold itself in that way.

When we come to **Acts 4**, we have a first-time occurrence. We come to a conflict or the first persecution of the church. What happens here is that ritualistic religion is confronted with the reality of Christianity. Ritualistic religion is based on the principle that man must reach God, that man must do all that man can do to appease God, that man must take the initiative and responsibility to please God in some way. Religion is man reaching God. And he always fails because nothing that a man can

do, no religion, no restrictions, no practices, none of that is sufficient to prepare a simple man to be in the presence of a holy God. Real Christianity is the reverse. Real Christianity is God reaching man. It is God taking the initiative to rescue and to save.

In Linda's and my early journey in trying to understand sovereign saving-grace Gospel, all of those things, we would, as I've said before, we would read a passage of Scripture and go, "Whoa, there's another one," and we write the reference in the flyleaf of our Bible, accumulating our argument for and against. One that was really a mind blower was when we came to **James 1** where it says, "Every good and perfect gift comes down from above from the Father of Lights, in Him there is no shifting or shadow or turning." Comes down from above. Ritualistic Jewish religion is suddenly confronted with the reality of Christianity.

Now Jesus had warned the apostles about this in **Luke chapter 12** when he said ...



5:07

And we see that happen in **Chapter 4**.

Now the first part that I reference is Peter and John standing before the crowd. We looked at this two weeks ago the setting is simply this ...

Acts 3:1

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour (which is 3 o'clock in the afternoon).

Like I said before there are so many amazing little details woven in here. It's exactly the hour that Jesus on the cross said, "It is finished. (BOOM! Stamp it "Paid in Full!"), and He yielded up His spirit, and He died." What's the connection between the two? I'm still not sure, but it certainly worth chewing on.

Then He goes on to say ...

Acts 3:2

And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms (gifts, freebies, benevolence) from those who are entering the Temple.

And He goes on to say that the lame man who was at the pristine place for receiving alms from worshipers sees Peter and John coming, and any cries out to them asking for a gift. And they stop and they look at him and they said, "Silver or gold we do not have, but what we do have, we give you. In the name of Jesus arise and walk."

Now, again, Luke is a trained medical doctor. He has an eye for detail. So when you read that account, don't let it slide by. If I were giving the account, I would say, "WOW! This guy that was four decades of wasted legs suddenly has healthy legs, and he walks." That would pretty well summarize it, but not for Luke. Luke says "his ankles and his feet" were healed, and he stood, and he walked, and he started jumping and dancing and praising God." And he created quite a stir in the Temple courts. The temple courts would've been these pillared kind of porticos on the side, or about sixty-feet-tall marble pillars with a cedar a roof and ceiling over it. So you can imagine for the first time in his life, his legs are working without going to Madonna or going to Tabitha having to have rehab and all that.

He simply was healed, and they work. And he's dancing, and with a loud voice he's praising God. And the people are hearing it and are gathered around. And Peter not wanting to miss an opportunity to preach a sermon is asked by the people, "How did this happen?"

Acts 3:16

And (in) His name – by faith in His name – has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

And that sets up a conflict with ritualistic religion.

Notice ...

Acts 4:1

¹ And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the Temple and the Sadducees came upon them ...

When you see a chapter open up with the word "and," you know that it connects to what precedes, that is, "and as the people were giving praise to God."

Peter and John before the Crowd

Acts 3

And as Peter was confronting them with their guilt before God and declaring to them the grace of God that is willing to forgive them and the kindness of God that is willing to break the bonds of their enslavement to sin, as they are doing that, speaking to the people the "priests," that is, those who are in charge of the worship services in the Temple. The "captain of the Temple" is actually the chief of police for the temple courts and the "Sadducees came upon them."

Now the "Sadducees" are the politically connected. They are the influencers. They are the ones with the power and the authority. They have earned it. They have bought it. They are not very religious, but they are more political. They are not beneath collaboration with the Romans in order to negotiate freedom for them to do as they want underneath the authority of the Romans.

But the other thing about them is that theologically they did not believe in the supernatural. They didn't believe in angels. They didn't believe in demons, and they did not believe in any form of the resurrection.

My father used to say, "The Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection; therefore, they are sad – you see." And that abides. They were totally put off by this thought.

Now, notice it says, "and they came upon them." That literally means that they "seized them suddenly." So you kind of get this image: You've got the Sadducees. You've got the Temple police chief, and then you've got the priest who are in charge of that.

10:04

And you've got this growing crowd of people celebrating. "Tell me the story. What happened?" This is the guy. I recognize the guy. WOW! Praise God. Look at what he's done." And they're making their ... "Excuse me. Excuse me." And they're making their way all the way around until they have Peter and John completely surrounded. And then they give the signal, and immediately they grab them. It's that kind of a seizing. They have to silence them.

Acts 4:3

And they arrested them and put them in custody

Notice the reason they did it is said in ...

Acts 4:2

(They were) greatly annoyed because (of two things, one) they were teaching the people and (two, they were) proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

"We gotta shut 'em up. Who gave them the right to do a home Bible study? Who told these guys that they know the Scriptures well enough to explain to the people in the temple courts the meaning of the word? We must silence them because they don't have our certification. They didn't graduate from our seminaries and our Bible colleges. They don't have the paperwork hanging on

their wall that indicates that they have studied and been approved by one of our rabbis. For that reason we have to silence them.”

And second of all, “They are spreading this heresy about the reality of resurrection. And that ain’t never going to happen!”

So it says ...

Acts 4:3

... they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, (Luke includes this line) for it was already evening.

I can just see him interviewing people that were present, and he said, “I understand that they came upon them. They grabbed them. They hauled them off, and they put them in jail. Why didn’t they just go through the trial at that point?”

They said, “You don’t understand.” This thing had been going on since three o’clock in the afternoon, and now the sun is setting and their law says they can’t hold a trial through the evening and overnight. A law they were conveniently willing to violate when they arrested Jesus not that many weeks earlier. So they put them in jail.

I want you to notice that as they arrested Peter and John and tossed them in the clinker, that Peter John and didn’t protest, and they didn’t resist. There are numerous themes and motifs that will run all the way through the book of Acts. One of those themes that is repeated over and over is that God only blesses those who are willing to live under God’s appointed authority. Submission to authority is a requirement to receive and experience the blessings of God. Even submission to authority you don’t like or you disagree with or that chafes on you. God’s plan is “Children, obey your parents.” This is right. God’s not going to bless the child who is in rebellion to mom and dad.

“Wives, submit yourself to your husbands as the husbands love their wives.” God’s not going to bless the life of a woman who is chafing under the authority of God’s appointed. “Husbands, submit yourselves to Christ as Christ submits Himself to the

Father.” There is a divine-appointed chain of accountability and a submission that is required. So notice it’s shocking here. But they come, and they arrest them, and they have done nothing to be arrested for. And they put them in jail overnight. They do not protest or resist.

I wrote myself a note here. It says, “You can bind the messenger, but you cannot chain the message.”

Notice he says ...

Acts 4:4

But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

They had 3,120 believers before this happened, and now they quit counting the wives and the children. They couldn’t keep up, and there are five thousand heads of households, so they could put the messengers in binds, but they couldn’t bind the message.

Peter and John before the Court

Acts 4:5-22

Acts 4:5

Now on the next day ...

Notice how meticulous, again, Dr. Luke is to list in detail.” Now tell me again,” as he’s interviewing, “tell me again who was involved in this? Who exercised their authority?”

“Well, it was “the rulers,” that is the appointed authorities over the Jewish people. Those are the “elders” the dignitaries who have demonstrated a level of wisdom and sound judgment by their years of experience. And the “scribes,” those are the PhD’s, the theologians who interpret and apply the Old Testament, the lawyers of the group. They gathered together in Jerusalem with “Annas, the high priest,” who was actually the former high priest. “Caiaphas” was now the high priest, but like in America once you’ve been president, they always refer to as President Bush or President Clinton, so it is he is the high priest Annas.

15:01

And Caiaphas, “John and Alexander,” all members of Annas’ family, along with all who were “high priestly.” This is called the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin were seventy-one select Supreme Court justices. When they bring Peter and John to trial, they bypass the lower court system. They take it right to the top. Whatever verdict is rendered when they gather together at the Supreme Court level, at this level, the Sanhedrin, there’s nowhere else to appeal the case. So here they stand as Jesus said, “When you stand before rulers.”

And you almost get this thing with Peter, like, “WOW! How many chances am I going to get to proclaim the Gospel to the Supreme Court? I’m not going to blow my opportunity.”

So it says in ...

Acts 4:7

And when they had set them in the midst ...

What they would do is they would basically arrange the seventy-one under the authority leadership of Annas, the acting high priest. They would basically do it in a circle of three rings, and so they would kind of do a semi-circle almost closed at the top, but those that are on trial would stand there at the top. And in three rings, the more mature, the more proven, the seniority would be in the front row and then lesser to the second and then finally the third. So you’re completely enclosed in the courtroom, and they’re all looking at you.

They bring this charge or this question ...

Acts 4:7

when they had set them in the midst, they inquired,
“By what power or by what name did you do this?”

They can’t even address the miracle. They’re so offended by their teaching and are so offended by their conviction, their heresy that there’s a resurrection, that they can’t even say, “By what name did you heal this man?” And they just call it “this.”

Now, notice Peter, skillfully, rather than stand on trial, puts the judges on trial. Look at this:

Acts 4:8a

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit ...

The evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit is that the words that flow from an individual's mouth are pleasing to the Lord and exalt the name of Christ.

Acts 4:8b

... filled with the Holy Spirit, he said to them (respectfully) "Rulers of the people and elders ..."

He acknowledged that, he didn't protest, he said "What in the world are we here for? We haven't done ...," doesn't challenge their authority, he submits to it.

Acts 4:9

... if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed ...

"Let me get the charges right. We're here at the Supreme Court because we did a nice thing for a lame guy. Do I have that right?" Now you see, the Sanhedrin was right in doing an examination. Look at **Deuteronomy 13** (later). In Deuteronomy 13 if a miracle was performed, then the miracle needed to be validated by the appointed authorities. And if the message proclaimed by the one that God used to perform the miracle was heresy, they were to be executed. They were to be stoned, not Colorado-style but old rock style. They threw rocks at 'em, and they would die. But if they would find out that the miracle was authentic AND that it had been done and the messenger was proclaiming the greatness of God, then those who heard the case were responsible to join in leading the celebration of the praises of God. So what they are is, if this is validated and God did it, then these seventy-one have a responsibility biblically to step forward and lead in the praise and the worship.

But he comes back to them and says ...

Acts 4:9

If we're been examined today concerning a good deed done

to a crippled man, (he was able to say what they called the “this”) what this 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 ...

Oh, how they hate that name. weeks ago they had shouted, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” They despise that name. And Peter gets just a little bit bold and snarky here, and he doesn’t say, “in the name of Jesus,” as he said earlier to the people, but he gives them the full title. “Jesus Christ, fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, of Nazareth, can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” THAT Jesus.

And then he indicts them ...

Acts 4:10b

... whom you crucified ...

20:00

The first time Peter preached he said, “By your sinful hand God nailed His Son to the cross.”

And then he goes on to say ...

Acts 4:10c

... whom God raised from the dead –

... you crucified Him. God raised Him. Boldness, respect, courage

...

Acts 4:10d

... by Him this man is standing before you well.

There is a wonderful little hidden play on words here. Here’s this guy, forty years a cripple. Here we are less than twenty-four hours later, and we’re in court, and there’s Peter, John, and, I don’t know, George, or whoever he was, never gets a name, and he’s just standing there. And they get the point. By that name he is standing here because the root word for “standing” is a root word for the word “resurrection.”

“By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth this man has been resurrected. You can deny the supernatural. You can fall back on your tradition, but the evidence is there is a resurrection. Look at this man’s legs.”

Acts 4:11

This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you,
the builders, which has become the cornerstone.

Psalm 118:22

The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone

They sang it all the time in worship. They thought that they were talking about a piece of marble, well chiseled and well smoothed, in order to be used in a construction project. They had a story about the cornerstone, but the cornerstone wasn’t a person. Peter is saying the cornerstone is this Jesus. And he says ...

Acts 4:12

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.

Bold clarity. Let me simplify it for you guys. That name that made this man well, that has produced the evidence of resurrection power, that name is the only name that can save.

Acts 4:13

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated ...

... they didn’t have a sheepskin on the wall from a noted seminary or Bible college or university. They were just common men. They’re fishermen, but honestly not that good as fishermen. Every time Peter went fishing got stiffed. Just common men.

They were astonished. Start tracing that word through Acts as we go: awe, wonder, astonishment. You see, when the Third Person of the Godhead does the work of Jesus by indwelling the saints, by empowering the church, the predictability is that He is going to do

something that is so beyond explanation that it leaves those who see it in astonishment.

I love the book of Acts. It's the book of action. The Spirit of God is alive and present, and He is doing jaw-dropping things. Regrettably He's the Forgotten God in our generation. We just kind of learn to manage with God the Father and God the Son and our skills of administration and strategic planning. But that's not the biblical picture. There is a living God who indwells us, and when He does work, they're "astonished." But then it says ...

Acts 4:13b

And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

The clarity of their teaching. Jesus taught as one with authority. They couldn't explain it. He had a character of gentleness and kindness, an others-orientation that was unprecedented. And they looked at these men at the most frightening situation of life. When their lives hung in the balance, their freedom hung in the balance, they were calm as Jesus was calm, when He was in trial. And they were clear as Jesus was clear in trial. They looked at them and noticed that "they had been with Jesus."

25:00

Those who are filled with the Holy Spirit cannot help but bear the mark of Jesus in their character and in their life.

Acts 4:14

But seeing the man who was healed (Luke jabs 'em, again!) standing (resurrected) beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition.

"Well, shut my face. Zip my lip. What can I say?"

Acts 4:15

¹⁵ But when they had commanded them to leave the council, (They called for a recess and they were going to consult with one another) they conferred (and said) ¹⁶ ... "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.”

“If we leave this courtroom, and we go out and say, “Nah, it didn’t really happen.” You know, it was just like a plant in the congregation, and, you know, they had this little ear bud in, and the Great Healer was on the stage, and somebody said, you know, in the fourth row to the back, third seat in, his name’s John. He’s lame. He’s in a wheelchair. He hasn’t walked for a lot of years.” Called him out, “I believe that God has a man here, His name is John. I think he’s right over here. Brings him up. He heals him. Sixty Minutes does a follow-up twelve months later. Guy’s still in the wheelchair, nothing is changed.

They’re going, “No, this wasn’t one of those healings. We can’t deny it.

Acts 4:17-18

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.

The first time that Christians’ dissent against authority is here. Now we want to be careful when you choose to dissent against God’s appointed authority. Make absolutely certain your conviction is biblical. I would recommend that you confirm it by the counsel of godly people. And then I would suggest that you be willing to live with the consequences of your dissent. They were all of the above.

Peter and John said ...

Acts 4:19

... “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge ...

Notice how he pits them against God. He goes, “We have two authorities going on here. We have your authority saying, ‘Don’t speak the name of Jesus.’ We have God’s authority sending us out to speak the name of Jesus. Which one do you want us to submit to?”

And suddenly they're in a tight spot because if they continue with their orders they have chosen to say, "We are God," supersede God, that would be blasphemy.

Acts 4:20

... we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.

"We understand what you're telling us to do, but you don't understand what you're telling us to do. We have seen the resurrected Christ. We have seen the lame walk and the blind see. The sick are healed."

Acts 4:21-22

²¹ And when they had further threatened them (that's all ritualistic religion can do is interrogate and threaten), they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. (In case you missed the point, Dr. Luke summarizes) ²² For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

We come to the third movement in the book. Now we have ...

Peter and John before the Church

Acts 4:23-31

Acts 4:23-24a

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 (their church group) heard it, they (spontaneously) lifted their voices together to God, (notice how their prayer erupts) "Sovereign Lord," ...

You see, when you're in a trial or tribulation, and you don't know how to pray, the best thing you can do at that moment is to rehearse what you know to be true of God: He is sovereign over all. You remind yourself of that in the midst of the journey. God is still sovereign. They said it this way ...

Acts 4:24b

who made the heaven and the earth

and the sea and everything in them,

Sovereign Lord who made it all, that's who we're praying to.

We crowded thirteen people around our twelve-seat table on Thanksgiving. It's great to have family and some friends in.

30:00

I lead the prayer of thanksgiving. I have to confess, I didn't start my prayer like this. I was grateful to God who let the family all be there. I was grateful for the provisions He had made. I was grateful for His protection and provision for our family over the year, but I didn't begin, "Who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them" ...

Acts 4:25-26

²⁵ who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, (**Psalms 2**)

"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.

All of a sudden the Scriptures are making sense. They said, "Lord You said in **Psalms** that this would happen, but in Psalms You said it was the Gentiles, but this is Your people.

Acts 4:27-28

²⁷ ... truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, ... the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your plan had predestined to take place.

Scriptures are making sense. The portraits and the prophecies of the Suffering Servant of **Isaiah 52** and **53** are starting to fall into place. They're beginning to understand that Jesus wasn't murdered. Jesus was offered up. He was the sacrifice.

Several years ago I had the privilege of being in Jerusalem during Passover week. We were on a tour group, we stayed in a very nice hotel. We were traveling with a lot of people in their seventies, so at four o'clock in the day we were done. We're sitting there. They had a really nice swimming pool, and so I went out to the swimming pool and decided I'd sit in the sun, and I'll read a book, and kind of watch the families here together. People kept looking at me like ... I was getting a lot of that. When I was on the elevator going up one of the guys on the trip he says, "Man, you might want to take the dust cover of your book. I was reading John MacArthur's *The Murder of Jesus*, sitting there in Jerusalem with *The Murder of Jesus* book in my hands. No wonder I was getting the looks.

Jesus wasn't murdered, he was offered up as a sacrifice according to "Your hand" and "Your plan." And so this is how they pray.

Acts 4:29

And now Lord look upon their threats and grant your servants to continue to speak your words with boldness.

If we had a prayer meeting about something like this, and one of our brothers or a couple of our sisters were thrown in jail overnight, and they were told, "Don't ever teach Sunday School again. If you ever open your mouth and say that name, we're going to throw you back in, and we're going to throw away the key," we would gather together, I'm certain, in a prayer meeting. We'd say, "God would you pull them back? Would you grant us grace? Would you lighten our load? Would you smooth the path of our journey?"

They didn't pray that way. They prayed, "Lord give us boldness to speak your word ...

Acts 4:30

while you stretch out your hand (God keep doing what you've been doing keep right on healing, doing signs and wonders) in the name of your holy servant Jesus. ³¹ and when they had prayed the place in which they were gathered together was shaken and every one of them was filled with

the Holy Spirit (and when you're filled with the Holy Spirit you continue) to speak the word of God with boldness.

So what's the difference between ritualistic religion and real Christianity? What is the conflict over? Number one is that real Christianity has a genuine **Sensitivity To Human Need**. Ritualistic religion is trying to buy brownie points with God or they're trying to look good in the eyes of other people. But Spirit-filled churches and Spirit-filled people see real people with genuine need, and their hearts are stirred to do something about it. Hundreds could walk past the lame man begging for an offering at the Temple, but the Spirit-filled believer could not.

A second thing is that we bear a **Robust Witness**. We are constantly looking for a window of opportunity to confidently point to Christ. Paul prayed that in **Colossians 4**.

35:00

He said, "Would you pray for me that God would open up a door of opportunity?" If you start praying the same thing for yourself, say, "God, help me see the doors of opportunity to speak the word of Jesus to people this week. You'll be shocked by how many opportunities He gives you. The reality is we just steam right past them all the time because we're preoccupied with something else. But when we pray that way, God opens our eyes to see the opportunity, and then we boldly, robustly proclaim the name of Jesus.

Then a church that is filled with the Spirit has an **Unquenchable Courage**. A couple years ago Pastor Mike went to India and Ethiopia to visit some of the indigenous church pastors that we are part of supporting. He still gets emotional when he talks about going to a small village gathering of believers whose pastor and father of some of the members had been brutally murdered just months before because he refused to stop preaching in the name of Jesus. And they continue to meet because when a people, when a church is controlled by the living Third Person of the Godhead, He gives an unexplainable courage and **Gospel Confidence**.

There is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved. But be honest, we all have, we'll call 'em "booger-head" pagan friends that are so far beyond the pale of grace that our assumption is that we have finally identified and unsaveable sinner. But we're not ready to give up, yet, and so we start crafting a seeker-friendly address message whatever ... we rethink what were saying and thinking that somehow that will arrest their attention and lead them to Jesus.

But when the Spirit is filling us in the speaking, it is always and only about Jesus. That is the only name that has the power to save. It's the only name that has the power to raise the dead. It is the only name that has the authority to break the hold of sin on a life. We don't compromise the message. We point them to Jesus.

And a spiritual believer and a Spirit-filled church has a growing **Biblical Clarity**. All of a sudden ...

Psalms 118:22

The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone ...

... made sense. That points to Jesus. **Psalms 2**, why did the Gentile kings rise up against Your Holy One? All of a sudden the Scriptures start to fall together, and they start to make sense. We center our lives on better understanding of the Scriptures.

Then last of all there is an **Indivisible Unity**. When the Spirit of God reigns in a church, that church is impossible to split and to divide. That's why Paul says in ...

Ephesians 4:2-3

² ... (be diligent, fight hard) ³ ... to maintain
the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

At our Tuesday morning reading in **Proverbs** here with the men, we were in **Proverbs 6**, and we spent some time musing on that section, it says ...

Proverbs 6:16

¹⁶ There are six things that the Lord hates,
seven that are an abomination to him:

And he lists all the things and you go, “Yeah, I can see why God would hate that, a lying tongue and hands that shed innocent blood, and all that. But you get all the way down, and it said the whole structure is to put the emphasis on the seventh, and the seventh is “he who spreads strife amongst brothers.”

Start following the theme as we follow it through **Acts**. They were all together. They were all of one mind and one heart. They had all things together in common. You get that great Lincoln Honda commercial. They were all together in one “accord.” They’re constantly united together. The power of the church is when it stands unified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

40:02

Now they’d been heard. The miracles attested to. The **Deuteronomy 13** responsibility of the Supreme Court is to lead the worship in the praise and exaltation of the power of the healing God. Instead they send them out and say, “Just be quiet, and don’t use His name anymore.”

Now in the middle of his defense, Peter hit on a subject they didn’t fully understand. He said, “This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you the builders which has become the chief cornerstone.” Now what you and I don’t grab onto right away, they would’ve connected with immediately. In the book of **1 Kings 6** when it talks about Solomon building the original Temple, it says that it was a silent erection in that there wasn’t a hammer or a chisel used on the Temple Mount. All of the stones to build the Temple were carved and prepared in the quarry and then transported to the Temple Mount where they were assembled.

Jewish history says that early in the construction process each of the stones came in cut and labeled ready for installation, but there was one large, square stone that was brought to the Mount, and nobody could figure out where to put it in. And so they continued to trip over it or go around it day after day until finally somebody said, “Somebody at the quarry made a mistake. We have no use

for this stone.” So some of the workmen simply took it to the precipice of the Kidron Valley, and they shoved it over, and it rolled down and was lost in the weeds.

Months later when the construction was complete they were missing the final stone, the primary stone, the cornerstone. They sent messengers to the crew at the quarry and said, “Guys we’re short one stone.”

And they said, “We sent that stone months ago.”

Somebody on the worksite remembered. “We kept working around and stumbling over, and we pushed it into the valley.” And they went to the Valley of the Kidron, and they brought up the stone, and it fit perfectly in the construction.

Peter has just declared to them that because you didn’t see any use, and you couldn’t figure out how Jesus fit in, that you chose to throw Him into the Kidron Valley, you rejected Him. But God went into the Valley and brought Him up, and He has made Him the cornerstone.

Ritualistic Religion builds on the sands of traditions.

It will fight to maintain its authority. It will interrogate and threaten in order to maintain its control and its power. It has nothing to stand on but tradition itself, and tradition can’t hold the weight.

Real Christianity builds on the firm foundation of a living relationship with Christ Jesus, the Cornerstone.

That’s the difference between religion and Christian faith. Peter’s question to us would be ...

Upon what will YOU build?

Lord, I thank You that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One. He is the One that we have waited for. He is the one who is come in order to rescue us. He is the one and only name by which we can be saved.

Lord, it's possible that we have a friend here worshiping with us this morning who has built their whole lives and their hope on failed tradition. It seems comfortable because of its rituals, but they always leave with a sense of need and emptiness and sadness and dissatisfaction. We want to believe that Your Holy Spirit saw their need and led them to join us this morning so that they could be told that it is in Christ Jesus alone, in his name alone, by faith alone, in his name alone that they are saved.

Lord, would you be so gracious to lead our hungry and our lost brother and sister to the foot of the cross and to the Savior who is the cornerstone of God's creation from whom all things hold together. Give them the faith to believe in him I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.