



Introduction

To prepare for this lesson, resource The Moody Bible Commentary page 1681–1682 (Acts 4:1–22). This will be a helpful framework for the text.

Do you remember what it was like when you first became a Christian? For many, those earlier weeks can feel really exciting. You praise God for a good parking spot, you can't wipe that Jesus smile off your face, and you can't stop telling people about what God has done in your life. But as you grow in your relationship with Jesus, you begin to realize that following Christ isn't always easy. In fact, sometimes it can be harder.

Peter and John had experienced a move of God that resulted in thousands of people being “added to their number.” They were gathering together—often and joyfully—and experiencing favor with all people (Acts 2:47). But then a shift takes place. After the lame man is healed, Peter and John are imprisoned. The disciples go from favor with the people to imprisonment by the religious leaders. Even so—they continue to speak the name of Jesus and praise him with unshakeable faith. As we dive into this study, may we be empowered to do the same.



HOW IS WHAT I
KNOW INCREASING?



HOW IS MY WORSHIP
BEING TRANSFORMED?



HOW CAN I TAKE WHAT I'VE
LEARNED INTO THE WEEK?

Scripture Text

Acts 4:7–13, 18–20

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.

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.

Head

Read Acts 4:7–12. Peter, empowered by the Holy Spirit, speaks the same message he's preached since the day of Pentecost. It is by the name of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus that this lame man walks. Why do you think it was important then and continues to be important now that the movement of God came through Jesus Christ? (*ideas: God's plan was for salvation to come through his Son, this is what separates us from any other religion*)

Read Acts 2:47 and Acts 4:3–4. There's a shift that takes place between the day of Pentecost and when the lame man is healed. What is the same in these passages? What is different? (*same: people were being added to the faith in both instances; different: they have favor with all the people, they don't have favor—they've been imprisoned*)

What is being demonstrated here that is important to understand about the Christian walk? (*ideas: it's not easy, speaking the name of Jesus may lead to difficulty, sharing our faith even in hardship can bring people to faith*)

Heart

Read Acts 4:13. Peter and John were uneducated, untrained men but they had been with Jesus and it showed. When you interact with other people who are not believers, do you think they can recognize you've been with Jesus? How do you know?

Read Acts 4:18–21. The religious leaders told Peter and John to stop talking about Jesus and even threatened them but they couldn't stop! Even being thrown in jail didn't silence them. Do you see this type of unshakeable faith in your own life? Or when difficulties come, is it harder to share your faith?

Hands

Last week we considered those we interact with regularly and were challenged to seek out ways to offer the hope of Jesus to them. Did you have an opportunity to share? Did any circumstances prevent you? How does thinking about Peter and John's circumstances change your perspective?

Read John 14:6. In a world that resounds, "Find your own truth," Jesus sets us apart. But it can be easy to revert to a more universal language that other religions share. When you share your faith or talk about going to church, do you find it uncomfortable to speak the name of Jesus? If so, why do you think that is the case?

Is there anything else you would like to discuss from Patrick's sermon?

Conclusion

Acts 4:8 begins: Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them...
No amount of willpower or bootstrapping can move us to speak boldly about Christ and the power of His resurrection. We need the power of the Holy Spirit.

Peter and John had an unshakeable faith. They boldly proclaimed Jesus both when the crowd was for them and when the crowd was against them. May we do the same.

Pray

Let's take time to pray that we might demonstrate unshakeable faith no matter our circumstances.