

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

**Date** : 18 Aug 2024

**Sermon Title** : Uncompromising Boldness

**Speaker** : Rev Shannon Chan

**Text** : Acts 4:1-22

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## **INTRODUCTION**

It is easy to live as a Christian in this world if we do not have to give, serve, do costly sacrifice or tell others about Jesus, what He says and what His standards are. But we are not called to an easy life. We are called to courageously take the whole Gospel into all the world in the face of persecution, and to follow Jesus' example in the face of evil.

Today's sermon follows from the two previous sermons based on Acts 3 where Peter and John healed a beggar in his 40s who had been lame from birth. The spectacle of this man walking, leaping and praising God drew a crowd that both Peter and John proclaimed the Gospel to. And hereafter we discover what being good and doing good can mean for true Christians and what the call for them is at such a time.

**True Christians learn that:**

**We are called to Uncompromising Boldness recognizing ...**

### **1. There will be opposition because the Gospel reveals our brokenness (4:1-4)**

Peter and John were interrupted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard and the Sadducees who were upset that they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead (Sadducees do not believe in resurrection from the dead). Peter and John were also accusing the people (which included) the leaders, of killing Jesus, the Author of Life whom God raised from the dead. No leaders guilty of murder would like to have people talking about their actions in front of the people they are supposed to be leading and, as a result, Peter and John were arrested and thrown into prison.

A pastor-theologian asked how members of the Sanhedrin with their daily religiosity of acts of prayer, worship, study of scriptures and religious giving, could still act with such terrible injustice first against Jesus, and then against His followers? It was attributed to how the lure of influence and power over others can seduce and finally dominate human personality, especially when bolstered by entrenched corrupted loyalty, to the point that higher scripturally defined values of truth, love, integrity and justice are unceremoniously compromised or overridden. Once this becomes eroded, everything becomes dispensable in the interest of self-preservation, and preservation of these all-consuming ego-serving interests and goals.

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- True followers of Jesus are called to stand firm with uncompromising boldness in the face of sinful and sin-filled brokenness despite the opposition.

## 2. Spirit-filled Christians are empowered to explain true spiritual power (4:5-14)

### Holy Spirit anointing (Acts 4:8)

The religious leaders are so angry that they threw Peter and John into prison. They were the same men responsible for Jesus being sentenced to death. Peter and John knew this, so likely did not sleep well that night knowing they would be tried in the morning to decide what would be done with them. But Jesus knowing what would happen, had already prepared His disciples in Luke 12:11, telling them that they did not need to be anxious about what would happen when they were forced to stand before the leaders. For in that hour, the Holy Spirit would give them the words to say. So now, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit spoke to the rulers of the people and elders. (Acts 4:8)

We can get a clue on what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit from what is described in Acts 5:17, where we learn that the High Priest and the Sadducees were 'filled with jealousy' that so overwhelmed them that it controlled their actions. This means that all their actions, thoughts and decisions were channelled and viewed through their jealousy.

But Peter, being filled with the Spirit, was under the control of the Holy Spirit. As a Spirit-filled person he was not self-willed but submissive to God's will. It also means a moment by moment dependence on the work of the Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit comes to glorify Jesus Christ, a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit will seek to glorify Jesus alone. A Spirit-filled Christian seeks to glorify Jesus alone and will not even seek to share glory with Jesus.

- Under a special anointing of the Holy Spirit, Peter was answering the Sanhedrin both *defensively*, saying that they were being examined for doing a good deed – the healing of a the cripple in Jesus' name (Acts 4:9) and then *offensively* by accusing the leaders of crucifying Jesus! (Acts 4:10) Peter did not mince his words that they had sinned against God who raised Jesus from the dead. Likewise, sometimes, Spirit-discerning, we have to tell people to their face that they have sinned; otherwise, they might go away thinking there is nothing wrong.

### Jesus, the Chief Cornerstone (4:11)

Peter proclaimed that Jesus Christ, the stone which was rejected by them has become the Chief Cornerstone which ensures the stability of the whole system of our salvation. Jesus was and is the only plan for salvation. The only way to be saved is through Jesus, and there is no Plan B. As a commentator suggested, Peter was making this point to the leaders that if they are looking for a Messiah, no one else is fit to fill that job (Acts 4:12). God did not choose the High Priest or any one from his family. He did

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not choose the best looking, most powerful, richest or smartest man, but chose Jesus to build His Church. Jesus, the Servant King, the spotless Lamb of God was crucified to set us free from sin. So let us not pin our hopes on people, or we will inevitably be disappointed. It doesn't matter how good people look, how religious they sound, whether religious leaders, celebrities, politicians or billionaires, for they cannot do what Jesus has done nor provide what Jesus can. Yet we find people of the world so easily enamoured by these people, spending their lives trying to be like them. What about us? Have we been with Jesus? Is Jesus our role model? Or is someone else?

- **True followers of Jesus live with the been-with-Jesus uncompromising boldness drawing true spiritual power from the anointing of the Holy Spirit, being anchored upon Jesus the Chief Cornerstone**

### **3. Uncompromising obedience to God is the only way of life worth living (Acts 4:15-22)**

The Sanhedrin, like a Supreme Court (of 71 men), ordered Peter and John to stop speaking and teaching in the name of Jesus (4:18). Peter and John spoke the truth but the truth was not what the leaders wanted to hear. Peter responded, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge. For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard (Acts 4:19). Peter and John knew that they could, as Jesus had been, also condemned to die.

If we ever hope to make a difference in our culture, Jesus' name must mean more to you and I than our own lives. Our allegiances are most plainly revealed if we are willing to speak up for Christ at a time and in a place where it is forbidden or is unacceptable. Most of us probably have not faced the kind of persecution we witness in the book of Acts. But if the Holy Spirit provides boldness to proclaim Christ in the face of persecution, then certainly He will provide the boldness to proclaim it where it is merely discouraged. Just to remind: The full gospel of Christ is inevitably offensive, even to certain Christians because it shows up our brokenness and the need for repentance. But as a pastor shared – Had the apostles taken a less offensive approach, had they attempted to cater to the sensitivities of the culture, they would have stripped the gospel of its truth and power.

- **Peter and John proclaimed the full gospel without shame, without fear or favour and the Kingdom of God and the Church amazingly continued to grow. Yet, their gospel presentation was blunt and offensive, and it would cost them.**

### **What does the call for uncompromising boldness by way of uncompromising obedience to the full gospel of Christ mean to us?**

Are we willing to yield to God's way no matter what the cost? Maybe the cost is to be beheaded for being Christian; or when as a student, we face a gunman and are challenged about our faith, but we refuse to deny God; or when as a Christian baker

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we are sued for refusing to bake a cake to celebrate what goes against the truth of God's Word; or when we are penalized or rejected because, as a Christian, we believe that marriage is between a man and a woman; or when we are scorned, because we believe God's plan and purpose as revealed in the Bible are always authoritative, true, and good.

## **CONCLUSION**

After all is said and done, it does not matter what we lose in this life because of our devotion to Jesus, as all these things are temporal at best. Eternity is what finally matters. In this life, we need to have eternity on our hearts because 'where our treasure is, there our heart will be also'. A theologian once asked what can earth do to us if we are guaranteed heaven. To fear the worst earthly loss would be like a millionaire fearing the loss of one penny. The true Christian never loses because the war is already been won by Jesus Christ. May we always "Be Strong in the Lord" and always seek to live with uncompromising boldness for the sake of the full Gospel of Christ.

### **A. Review Sermon Application**

***Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.***

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk!?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?
  
- 2a. Is uncompromising obedience to God the only way of life worth living for you? Why or why not?
- 2b. What does uncompromising boldness by way of uncompromising obedience to the full gospel of Christ mean to you?

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## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

3. Read Acts 4:1-22 slowly and reflectively.
  - a. What areas of your life do you struggle to yield fully to God's call to uncompromising boldness as a Christian: at home, at school/work, in the community or in church?
  - b. How can you build your faith to increase your trust in God? Share some concrete steps you or your Life Group would like to take for this coming week to strengthen your resolve to stand firm in the Lord.
  
4. Have you been with Christ, spent time with Him, walked with Him, heard from Him and know Him? On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the most intimate, rate your current relationship with Christ using these questions.
  - a. Do you think it is necessary and important for you to have a better rating?
  - b. What is one thing you need to change to have a better rating?
  - c. How can your group members support one another to stay committed to achieving 4b. above?

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## **C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action**

***Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.***

5. Share your testimony on how knowing that you are empowered by the Holy Spirit has helped you to proclaim the full Gospel of Christ with uncompromising boldness.

OR

Give thanks to God that despite our brokenness and opposition faced He has given us Spiritual power to stand firm in uncompromising boldness.

6. As a group, seek God's blessings in your areas of need to have a closer, 'have been with Jesus' relationship with Him sincerely. Commit to the actions and concrete steps to be taken for 3b, 4b and 4c, putting your trust only and fully in God. Pray also that in all our church endeavours we will put our trust only in God as we seek to live out the call to uncompromising boldness as a Christian.

### Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. You Hold it All Together – Maverick City  
<https://youtu.be/hSMJa5tlmRU?si=WXNUsLeTDPi4QpDO>
2. Jesus I Come – Awaken Generation [https://youtu.be/KMS6xvfquL4?si=1-k2tSZ3pK\\_yC89g](https://youtu.be/KMS6xvfquL4?si=1-k2tSZ3pK_yC89g)
3. Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me – CityAlight  
<https://youtu.be/hwc2d1Xt8gM?si=K9AFDFxLuZWM0rhS>

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