

The Acts of the Apostles

LESSON 9-10

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Chapter 3-4

The Healing of a Lame Man (Acts 3:1-8)

Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; 3 who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. 4 And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." 5 So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6 Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." 7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them--walking, leaping, and praising God.

Let's break this section down phrase by phrase. Peter and John were often seen walking and ministering together (Acts 3:1). The apostles were accustomed to ministering by twos. This is how Jesus had sent them out in team ministry (Luke 10:1). Peter and John, two of the more prominent apostles, seemed to have been a team in life and in ministry (Acts 4:13; 8:14; Gal. 2:9).

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:14-15

They had been friends well before this. They had been partners in business (Luke 5:10). Jesus paired them up for work assignments (Luke 22:8).

And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat."

They were both part of Jesus inner circle with James (Mt. 17:1; Mark 5:37; 14:33). They both came to the tomb of Jesus together (John 20:3-4). They both shared a ministry to the Jews (Gal. 2:9).

They were totally opposite in many ways.

Peter	John
Older	Young
Man of Action	Man of Love
Didactic	Prophetic
Teacher	Visionary

God enjoys the blending of opposites in accomplishing His work.

Peter and John were going to the temple as they often had before (Acts 3:1). The Jerusalem church never really abandoned their normal temple involvements. While there is no specific mention of animal sacrifice, they did seem to maintain their prayer life and some vows according to the Old Testament ceremonial order (Acts 21:23-25).

Therefore, do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law. But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.

We will discuss this more later when we get to chapter 15.

As the Book of Acts unfolds, we will see how the Jerusalem church had some difficulty understanding how the New Covenant affected the Old or the Mosaic Covenant.

Peter and John came to the temple at the ninth hour. The ninth hour was about 3:00 p.m., between noon and sunset. The ninth hour was the time of the evening sacrifice. It was a time when God promised to meet with His people (Ex. 29:41-42).

And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; and you shall offer with it the grain offering and the drink offering, as in the morning, for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you.

It was a time when the end of the day was approaching. The end of the day for the Jew was 6:00 p.m. or sunset. It is a time when Cornelius received heavenly vision (Acts 10:3, 30). It is a time for prayer and seeking God.

Peter and John encountered a man who had been lame from birth (Acts 3:2). This man was born lame (Acts 4:22).

For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

This fact that Luke, the physician, is careful to point out only magnifies the extent of the miracle that would be done in this man. There would be no doubt of this man's healing when it occurred.

It should be noted that because of where this man was placed by his friends daily, Jesus most likely passed by this man on numerous occasions.

Peter and John encountered this man at a gate called "Beautiful" (Acts 3:2).

It is not certain exactly which gate is being referred to in this verse. The most probable conjecture is that it is identical with the gate of Herod's temple which was known as "the gate Nicanor." This was on the east side of the "Court of the Israelites" and was reached by a flight of fourteen or fifteen steps from the "Court of the Women." In other words, it was the main entrance from the east into the innermost court. All the temple gates to this innermost court had folding doors, covered with gold and silver; but Josephus tells us that this one was much larger than the rest, being fifty cubits high and forty cubits broad. It was made of Corinthian brass, "adorned after a most costly manner" with thicker and richer plates of gold than the other gates.

Note the contrast here. You have a gate called "Beautiful" with a man sitting at it who is very much less than "beautiful" by virtue of his condition.

Peter and John were asked for alms (Acts 3:2-3). All he wanted from the disciples was alms. He didn't know that they could offer something better.

The word "alms" originally meant "pity or mercy" and then later it came to mean the outcome of mercy in the form of charitable gifts.

A man in this condition could do nothing much more than beg to meet his basic needs. This was a good spot to beg.

- People are more prone to give while on their way to worship.
- Women would be more likely than men to express pity (near the Court of Women).

Peter and John ministered to the man in need (Acts 3:4-7). Peter was willing to establish eye contact with the man. He told the man to look at them.

Notice the contrast later when the crowds would acknowledge this miracle. Peter says, "Why do you look so intently at us?" (Acts 3:12).

So, when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

Peter built on the expectation in this man. The man expected to receive something. Little did he know that what he received would be neither silver nor gold. Peter indicated that he did not have silver and gold to give him. Peter had no silver and gold (literally, "Silver and gold I do not possess."), but he had something of much greater value.

What Peter had was a gift to be given. It was a gift of grace or unmerited favor. You cannot give what you do not have. What Peter had he was willing to give. Some people have things to give but they are unwilling to give.

Peter used one of the Keys of the Kingdom to set this man free. Peter used the key of the name of Jesus. The name includes all that Jesus stands for, including His authority, His teaching, His life, and

most especially, Himself (see Mark 16:17-18).

And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.

Peter saw immediate results (Acts 3:7).

...immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

The word “immediately” is a favorite word of Luke. It only occurs outside of his writing once in Matthew 21:19-20 when Jesus cursed the fig tree and it immediately withered (See Acts 5:10; 9:18; 12:23; 13:11; 16:26, 33). This was not a gradual healing that would be experienced over time. This word means that it happened “at once” or “on the spot.” This happened to Paul when he was prayed for by Ananias to receive his sight (Acts 9:18).

Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

Christ’s miracles were all characterized by the features of immediateness and completeness. They are miraculous in every way and cannot be explained by or ascribed to natural causes.

The man’s feet and ankle bones received strength. In this verse we see Luke’s medical terminology coming through. This is the only use of these words in the New Testament. The man was restored to perfect soundness (Acts 3:16).

And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

This word denotes integrity of parts, freedom from defect; and it here means that the healing was perfect and entire and that he was completely restored to the use of his limbs.

Peter and John witnessed the man’s response to the miracle (Acts 3:8). He leaped up, stood, and walked (Isaiah 35:6). He had been lame from a child. He had never walked, and there was more in the miracle than merely giving strength. The act of walking is one that is acquired by long practice. All of this was bypassed.

His response was to praise God. The disciples must have performed miracles in such a way that pointed men to God rather than to themselves. Notice that the healed man didn’t even thank the disciples. He praised God. Notice that the apostles did not have to teach him how to praise God. It was a natural response to the grace of God.

The Response of the People (Acts 3:9-11)

And all the people saw him walking and praising God. Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch, which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed.

The people reacted in wonder and amazement. Wonder and amazement are the common reactions of natural man when confronted with divine power and the unexplainable. The word translated “amazement” is more one of astonishment and denotes a state of great disturbance or distraction of mind arising from wonder or terror. It occurs three more times in Acts (Acts 10:10; 11:5; 22:17) and is usually translated “trance”

The people came together at Solomon’s Porch. The porch adjacent to the wall on the east side of the Court of the Gentiles was about 600 feet long and consisted of two rows of white marble columns. The roof of carved cedar provided protection from the weather. It was called Solomon’s because it was thought to have survived from the time of Solomon. It was a favorite meeting place of the early Christians (Acts 5:12).

And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch.

The people wanted to magnify the apostles. Peter said, “Why look at us?” Peter turned them away from himself unto God. It wasn’t because of their own goodness that they were able to help this man. It was not about them; it is about Jesus. This is God’s power. It is His mercy.

The Healing of the Lame Man Seen Symbolically

The healing of this lame man can be seen as a parable or type of God’s healing of a lame church. This is not an interpretation of this story but an application of this story to this present generation. This can be applied because of the key focus of this incident and this chapter is restoration (Acts 3:19-21).

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

The word “restoration” in this passage means to “restore a thing to its former situation, as restoring a dislocated limb to its former soundness.” This can be applied because of the prominent place given to this miracle in the Book of Acts (all of chapter 3 and much of chapter 4). The prominent place suggests that it has significance beyond the local setting.

There are many things in this story that parallel what God is doing today to bring healing to the

church. The healing came at an appointed time. The ninth hour or time of the evening sacrifice was God's appointed time. There will be an appointed time for God to favor the church (Ps. 102:13).

You will arise and have mercy on Zion; for the time to favor her, yes, the set time, has come.

The healing came to a man who had never walked.

While the Early Church certainly functioned the way God originally intended, the church of today has never really walked. This man was in a helpless and hopeless condition apart from the miraculous moving of the Holy Spirit.

The healing came from a source other than the established religion of the day. This man was in a place where religion and charity could have been expected, but he was not strengthened by the "isms" of his day. He was sitting at the gate "Beautiful." One must wonder how the gate got its name. Was it just a beautiful gate or does the name speak of some beautiful experience at the gate? In either case it retained the name, but it had lost the power of the name.

The healing came to a man who had misplaced expectations. This man had been disappointed so long that he no longer had a desire for the thing that he needed the most. He thought that money was the answer. What he really needed was the power of the Name of Jesus.

The healing came when the man received unlikely messengers. These messengers did not come in priestly robes. They were common men who had experienced something powerful. When he received God's messengers and the message that they brought, he experienced the transforming power of the name of the Lord. It is important today that we do not react to the messenger and miss the message that God want to bring to His church today.

The healing cost the man his relationship to established religion. Little did this man know that when he entered his healing he would no longer be accepted by the established religions of the day. Not everyone was excited about his healing. He would be forced to deny what had taken place or leave.

The healing resulted in full and complete restoration of the man. The word "restitution" means to restore a thing to its former situation, as restoring a dislocated limb to perfect soundness."

This included a restoration and new release of praise and worship. This included a restoration of proper placement and alignment (the body coming together). This included a restoration of the man's walk. This included a restoration to perfect soundness or unity.

The healing was a catalyst for two conflicting events. It was a catalyst for the first real persecution of the church (Acts 4:13-21). It was a catalyst for a great harvest (Acts 4:4).

However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so that the number of

believers totaled about five thousand men, not counting women and children. –NLT

Peter's Message to the People (Acts 3:13-26)

Peter took advantage of this opportunity to preach the Gospel. Peter assumed the role of preacher again in this context and once again reached out in his particular ministry to the Jews (Gal. 2:8-9).

For the same God who worked through Peter for the benefit of the Jews worked through me for the benefit of the Gentiles. In fact, James, Peter, and John, who were known as pillars of the church, recognized the gift God had given me, and they accepted Barnabas and me as their co-workers. They encouraged us to keep preaching to the Gentiles, while they continued their work with the Jews.

Throughout the Book of Acts signs, wonders and miracles were a catalyst for gathering crowds and preaching the Gospel (Acts 8:4-8; 14:8-11).

Peter tied this event to the past Jewish history. Peter tied this event to the past. He wanted his audience to know that what was taking place here was not the establishment of a new religion, but it was the outworking and fulfillment of the promises given by God to the patriarchs.

He tied everything to the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Acts 3:13). He indicated that what was taking place (even Christ's suffering) was a fulfillment of prophecy (Acts 3:18).

But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

He quoted from Moses and the prophets who had foretold of Jesus' coming and "these days" (Acts 3:22-25).

Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. Acts 3:24

The authority of Moses among the Jews was absolute and final. It was of great importance, therefore, to show not only that they were not departing from his law, but that Moses had foretold these very things.

Peter contrasted what God did and what many of the people had done. Peter called them to personal responsibility for what had been done. God did one thing, and you did another.

On the one hand, the people acted negatively when they...

- Delivered Jesus for trial (vs. 13).
- Denied the Holy One in the presence of Pilate (vs. 13-14).
- Asked for a murderer to be granted to them instead of Jesus (vs.14).
- Killed the Prince of Life (vs. 15.).

On the other hand, God was at work positively when He...

- Sent Jesus to bless the people (vs. 26).
- Raised Jesus from the dead (vs. 15).

- Glorified Jesus (vs. 13).

Peter gave the people the benefit of the doubt. He addressed them as brethren (Acts 3:17). This expression shows that he regarded them as of the same nation as himself, as having the same hopes, and as being entitled the same privileges. The expression also shows that he was not disposed to exalt himself as being more holy than they.

He indicated that what they had done they had done in ignorance (Act 3:17).

Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers.

The crucifixion was a sin of ignorance for most of the Jewish people and for some of their rulers as well. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34). Paul said, “For had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory” (I Cor. 2:8). Paul indicated that what he had done to persecute Jesus and the church he had done in ignorance (I Tim. 1:12-13).

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

God treats sins of ignorance different from other sins. In the Old Testament He provided a sacrifice for sins of ignorance (Lev. 4). Sins of ignorance often find mercy (I Tim. 1:13). He also indicated, however, that now was the time to repent (Acts 3:19; Compare Acts 17:30-31).

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead. Acts 17:30-31

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord... Acts 3:19

To repent and be converted means to change your way of thinking and turn around and walk the other way. Without true repentance, their sins could not be blotted out (literally, “erased or wiped away”). He indicated that true repentance would lead to times of refreshing (Acts 3:19). He indicated that Jesus would be coming again when all was fulfilled (Acts 3:20- 21).

...and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

He indicated that the Gospel was to come to the Jews first (Acts 3:26). God offered salvation to the Jew first. Paul also followed this approach in every community that he entered (See Rom. 1:16-17; Acts 13:46).

Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of

everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.” Acts 13:46

The word “first” here also implies that the message will be taken beyond the Jews, again setting the stage for Paul’s later ministry.

Peter exalted Jesus throughout as he did in all his preaching. Notice the titles that are ascribed to Jesus by Peter.

- The Servant of God (vs. 13, 26)
- The Holy One (vs. 14, Compare Luke 1:35; 4:34; Mark 1:24; Ps. 16:10)
- The Just One (vs. 14, Compare Mt. 27:19; Luke 23:47; Is. 53:11)
- The Prince of Life (vs. 15, Compare Acts 5:31)
- Abraham’s Seed (vs. 25, Implied)

He indicated that Jesus alone was the source of their power (Acts 3:16). Their power was not the result of their own strength or goodness (Acts 3:12).

So, when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?”

Their power was because of the name of Jesus (Acts 3:16).

And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

They accessed that power by faith in the name of Jesus (Acts 3:16).

Peter and John Arrested (Acts 4:1-4)

Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

There were different responses to the preaching of Peter. There were those who rejected. It is interesting to conjecture as to why the three groups were present to listen to Peter in addition to the people.

The priests were there because the apostles were teaching in the temple area. Teaching was the official duty of the priests, and if anyone was going to teach, they were going to do it. The priests were “greatly disturbed” that these ignorant fishermen were teaching the people.

The word of the Lord had passed by Annas and Caiaphas under John’s ministry. The power of God had passed them by under Jesus’ ministry. And now that the disciples were teaching, they were being passed by again.

The captain of the temple was there because he was the head of the temple police force. It was his duty to keep order and was concerned about the commotion or confusion that was caused by this miracle. He was there to keep order and quench any potential for riot.

The Sadducees were there because the apostles were teaching resurrection doctrine and they needed to guard the faith and warn the people (Acts 4:2 with Acts 23:8).

There were those that accepted (Acts 4:4).

However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

There were many who accepted the message and now the number of the believers is growing dramatically. Persecution has never done anything but cause the church to grow. The 5000 referred to in this passage could represent men only, in which case, the total number of disciples could have been closer to 20,000 people. For those who like “small churches,” this is the kind of church that God likes and inspires.

Peter and John were put into prison. Unfortunately, those that rejected the preaching were the ones who had the power to have the disciples arrested. The expression used in verse 1 implies that when they came upon the apostles, they came upon them in a violent manner. As you go through the Book of Acts and observe the relationship of apostles to authority it is clear that they never resisted the authorities or incited a riot. If the scene contained violence, the violence was inspired by their opponents (Acts 5:17-18, 26).

Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the

Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. Acts 5:17-18

Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. Acts 5:26

They put them into prison overnight because it was too late to have a legal trial. They did not take this same step when it came to trying Jesus.

Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:5-22)

Peter and John were called to give an account for their behavior (Acts 4:7).

And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, “By what power or by what name have you done this?”

The religious leaders wanted to know who authorized them teach and to heal. Peter and John made the source of their commissioning clear (Acts 4:8-12).

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, 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 stands here before you whole. 11 This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Peter and John had some serious evidence on their side. There was the matter of the man who was healed (Acts 4:14-16).

And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, “What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.”

There was the matter of the approval of the multitudes (Acts. 4:21).

So, when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done.

Peter and John were forbidden to teach and preach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:13- 18). This was an all-out attack on the name of Jesus. The key word in this section is “the name” of the Lord (Acts 3:6, 12, 26; 4:2, 7, 10-12, 17-20, 30). Notice how the religious leaders avoided using the name of this condemned man—Jesus (Acts 4:17).

Peter and John were threatened (Acts 4:17, 21). Peter and John made it clear how they would treat the sentencing (Acts 4:19-20).

But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”

Notice that even though the apostles felt it necessary to resist the higher authority, they were

doing in on the grounds that they had receive opposing instructions from a higher authority—God (Mt. 28:19; Mark 16:15).

The Disciples Pray for Boldness (Acts 4:23-31)

And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: “Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, 25 who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: ‘Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? 26 The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the LORD and against His Christ.’ 27 For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. 29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” 31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Notice several things about this gathering. The apostles did not take the threats of the Sanhedrin lightly. The apostles did not presume that they would have the power to continue in their own strength. The apostles understood the strength that comes in the relationship to the other members of the Body of Christ. The apostles were not backing down from trouble, in fact, they were asking for more trouble. They were praying for the very things that got them into trouble in the first place. The apostles' answer to prayer came in the form of a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit.

These men who had been born of the Spirit and baptized in the Spirit were now filled with the Holy Spirit (See Ephesians 5:18).

The Nature of the Early Church (Acts 4:32-37)

Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. 33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. 34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. 36 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

We will discuss this section a bit more in the next lesson but notice the qualities that were possessed by the Early Church.

- They were filled with or full of the Spirit.
- They were bold in their witness.
- They were in perfect unity (one heart and soul).
- They were selfless in their attitude toward others.
- They had great power to give witness to Christ.
- They had great grace upon them.
- They were extremely generous with those in need.
- They saw their possessions as tools for kingdom expansion.

The True Source of Boldness

The apostles in the Book of Acts understood the need for boldness if they were to fulfill the commission that Christ had given to them. Boldness is important for the spread of the Gospel. The word “boldness” means “frankness, bluntness, openness.” It speaks of speech that is unreserved, free, fearless, and confident. It refers to those who are brave, courageous, and daring.

When we speak of boldness, we are not talking about being obnoxious, reactionary, abrasive or abusive, but bold in faith, convinced of our message and full of the Spirit and power of God. Boldness is the opposite of silence, timidity, and shame. It is the opposite of cowardly, fainthearted, fearful, and chickenhearted.

We are not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16).

Boldness was demonstrated by the apostles in the Book of Acts. Peter was bold and spoke frankly before the gathered crowd on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:22-23, 29, 36). Peter and John spoke boldly before the Sanhedrin and religious leaders (Acts 4:13). Paul spoke boldly before kings and officials of government (Acts 26:26).

Boldness is not a natural quality. The natural tendency is to be silent when your message is controversial. The natural tendency is to draw back in the face of threats or persecution (John 7:13).

The apostles understood this problem and took specific action to overcome it (Acts 4:24-31).

No longer was Peter boasting as to how he would never deny the Lord. They were familiar with their own weakness and failures. They had demonstrated many weaknesses when they were with Jesus.

- They had failed the compassion test (Mt. 14:15; Luke 9:54).
- They had failed the humility test (Mt. 26:35).
- They had failed the prayer test (Mt. 26:40).
- They had failed the faith test (Mt. 8:26).
- They had failed the servants' heart test (Mark 10:35-45).
- They had failed the prejudice test (Mt. 15:21-28).
- They had failed the loyalty test (Mark 14:50).

Paul realized the tremendous temptation to back off in times of pressure (Phil. 1:14; Eph. 6:19-220 Col. 4:2-3; Phm. 8).

Of all the things that Paul asked people to pray for him, the primary thing was boldness. The prayers must have worked because at the end to the Book of Acts we find Paul in prison but speaking boldly the things of the kingdom of God (Acts 28:31).

Boldness can be a testimony in and of itself (Acts 4:13).

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

Boldness is not dependent upon personality or natural training (Acts 4:13). The boldness of the apostles was dependent upon five things. Their boldness was dependent upon their relationship to Jesus (Acts 3:13).

Now when they saw the boldness and unfettered eloquence of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned and untrained in the schools [common men with no educational advantages], they marveled; and they recognized that they had been with Jesus. –Amp

The closer that you are to someone, the easier it is to defend them. Their boldness was dependent upon their personal experience of salvation (Acts 4:19-20).

But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Their boldness was dependent upon their understanding of their message (Acts 4:12).

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Their boldness was dependent upon their hearts of love and compassion for the lost (II Cor. 5:14).

Whatever we do, it is because Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for everyone, we also believe that we have all died to the old life we used to live. – NLT

Their boldness was dependent upon the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31).

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

When you are filled with the Spirit...

- You have a greater boldness and power to witness (Acts 4:31; 11:24).
- You have a greater sensitivity to operating in the gifts of the Spirit (Acts 6:8).
- You become more qualified and effective even in natural tasks (Acts 6:3, 5).
- You become more of an encourager in the House of God (Eph. 5:18-19).
- You experience greater freedom and liberty in spiritual realms (II Cor. 3:17).
- You are able to forgive others more easily (Acts 7:55-60).
- You will be able to challenge the demonic world with greater authority (Acts 13:9).