

Acts 4:13-37

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is* manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny *it*. 17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. 21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all *men* glorified God for that which was done. 22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed. 23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. 24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: 25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. 27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. 29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, 30 by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. 31 And when they had prayed, the

place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. 32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 and laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. 36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet."

Introduction

[Audio version: <http://resources.ccphilly.org/SPM599>]

"We look at chapter 4, a continuation of the circumstance borne out of chapter 3, Peter and John going up to the Temple at the hour of prayer, encountering a man by the Beautiful Gate who has been crippled for over forty years, from his birth, a man who Jesus no doubt had walked by many times, and he had healed others in that area. No doubt, someone who may even have felt slighted in regards to the Lord not having time for him, or the Lord reaching out and healing others, maybe even friends of his that had been crippled, were begging, blind, had been healed. And yet this man, it seems had been passed by, until this incident with Peter and John, maybe the man thinking that Christ had been crucified, maybe he felt more hopeless, maybe he had heard rumors about the resurrection. But Peter and John saying to him **'Silver and gold have I not, but that which I have give I unto thee, in the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk,'** and the man, again, being healed. And again, talk to a therapist, talk to a physician, talk to anyone who really has a technical knowledge of what it means for someone to be crippled from birth, for over 40 years, all of a sudden to stand up and start

leaping, and jumping and walking and praising God. That means there were nerve connections that never existed, muscle tissue and tendons that were never developed, you know, the miracle is very profound. And God had saved this man until then, this spectacle as it were, and it's never that in and of itself, it's always a means to an end. God is a good steward over all of his acts, and there were 5,000 souls that would come into the Kingdom because he had waited to heal this man, until this particular time. And as the crowds come running together, and Peter and John are addressing them, that it was through Jesus, **'Don't look upon us as though there was something here inherent in us,'** they end up being taken into custody by the religious leaders. And then Peter stands forth to address them on the next day in regards to what has taken place. And we see Peter there in verse 8 of chapter 4 standing up again, filled with the Holy Ghost, a man who had been very intimidated by these same people earlier, had denied Christ three times, now this same man. We know, having met with Christ resurrection morning, he has appeared unto this one and that one, and unto Peter, Jesus met with him somewhere privately after his denial. And Peter telling us in his Epistle **'He hath begotten us unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.'** And this man now again, filled with the Holy Spirit, I think for you and I to know the risen Christ, and more than that, you know if we lack boldness in our lives, as we feel that there are opportunities that have gone by and we haven't spoken up, and we haven't shared when we should have. A great freedom that we have, and an encouragement from the Lord in Luke chapter 11, is to ask the Father, **'How much more will the Father give the Spirit to those who ask,'** so Peter now, this same man, standing up with great boldness, filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter filled with the Spirit. And again, it's having been filled, the sense of the Greek is it happened right then, he's filled afresh, he said unto the rulers, **"Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,"** notice, "ye" is plural, **"whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner."** (verses 8b-11) And I can't help but thinking Peter, his name was changed to stone [literally 'small stone, pebble,'], the Lord changes his name

to stone, Peter. Those things are, we hear some very specific things in his Epistles and in his sermons that stuck with him, the Lord had spoken to him, that the Lord had spoken. There are some things that stick with us too, if the Lord gives them to us. But Peter is very sensitive to that idea, Christ is the stone the builders have set at nought, and I'm sure he feels much that way. He had denied Christ before these leaders, in and of himself has was nothing, but now he's encountered the risen Christ, now he's filled with the Holy Spirit, now he finds within his own life that God is able to use him, even in all of his failings.

*“For There Is None Other Name Under
Heaven Given Among Men, Whereby We must
Be Saved”*

So, takes the light in saying ***‘This is the stone that you builders set at nought,’*** he says, ***‘he’s become the head of the corner,’*** and he says **“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (verse 12)** notice, **“given among men”** not just Jews, but mankind, **“whereby we must be saved.”** So, New Testament doctrine being laid down, line upon line for us. This is the exclusivity of Jesus Christ, ***‘there is no other name given under heaven among mankind whereby we must be saved.’*** There are great names, men that have done great things, some of them even call themselves great, Alexander the Great, he was great for a lot of stuff. But this is ***the name, there is one name.’*** It tells us in ***Philippians chapter 2, ‘that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,’*** that God has given him ***The Name*** which is above every, definite article. So here's Peter saying ***‘this is The Name, given among men under heaven, the name of Jesus, whereby we must be saved.’*** It isn't *‘Well what about Buddha?’* look, Buddha's in his grave, so is Mohammed, so is Elvis, get over it. There's an empty tomb in Jerusalem, there's an empty tomb in Jerusalem. I don't know what's going to happen in Israel, we have a planned trip, a trip planned, I feel better now. We have a trip planned for February, and either we'll all be in Israel by then, I think, if we go, we go the last day to the Garden Tomb there and sit there

and have communion, and see people in African garb, you see people from Korea, people from all over the world, singing hymns that you know, you don't understand what in the world they're singing, you know the melody, you know the lyrics, they're signing familiar hymns, you hear this praise, as it were in tongues and all these different languages going up, as you sit there and you look at that empty tomb and remember what has happened. So, his name is a name that is different than any other name, and it's the name given among men whereby we must be saved. And you don't have to believe that, but don't say the Bible doesn't teach it, because the Bible clearly teaches the exclusivity of Jesus Christ.

*Sometimes I Don't Think We Realize The Power That We
Have In Us*

Now we come to **verse 13**, it says, "**Now when they saw**" the religious leaders "**the boldness of Peter and John,**" if you need boldness, ask God to fill you with his Spirit, "**when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men,**" they think that they perceived, that is that they haven't gone through their seminary, their education, their training as it were, they were Galileans, they certainly weren't unlearned and ignorant, they were trained by Jesus, by Yahweh God for three years, but they perceived they were unlearned and ignorant men as it were, "**they marvelled;**" because of their knowledge of the Old Testament, because of his boldness, because of the things he's saying, "**they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.**" (**verse 13**) Now they're wrong, they were wrong in chapter 2 when they thought they were drunk on the day of Pentecost, they're wrong now, these are not men that had been with Jesus, these are men **that are still with** Jesus. You know this is the Sanhedrin gathered together, 71 against three, Peter, John and Jesus. And when it's you John and Jesus, you're always the majority. So, their problem at this point, confronting two fishermen and getting whupped by them, is that these are not men that had been with Jesus, these were men that were still with Jesus. And in the Book of Acts Luke says "**The former treatise O Theopolis I've written to you of all that Jesus began to do and teach,**" inferring the Book of Acts is that which Jesus is continuing to do and teach. And here God is using these two men who they

perceived as unlearned and ignorant, and they look upon them, they took note they had been with Jesus. Now, by the way, look, that should be an encouragement to most of us. You know, it says, Paul will say in **1st Corinthians (1:26-29)** ***'That there are not many wise chosen,'*** he doesn't say "not any" because he was one of the wise that was chosen. He says there's not many, not many noble, God has chosen the salt of the earth, he's chosen the blue collar worker, he's chosen the carpenter and the mechanic and the computer programmer, he's chosen the human being whose born-again by his Spirit who loves him, as his instrument to share with an unsaved world. And by the way, sometimes, the most brilliant or intellectual people are just astounded by the truth they hear from a simple child of God, a simple child of God. I would rather have somebody who was born-again two weeks ago sharing Christ with my unsaved family than someone who has a diploma from a theological seminary whose not born-again. I'd just rather have that saved, born-again babe of Christ pouring out truth and light, it's so important. I don't know if any of you happened to see last night on Fox, the son of the Hamas leader who had come to Christ, but he said it was through somebody street-witnessing who just said *'Can I share something of the Bible?'* *'Sure,'* *'Love your enemies, Jesus said Love your enemies,'* it just took his feet out from under him, it slaughtered him, it blew his mind. He said *'I went back and started to compare the Koran and the Bible, and I knew which book was real, was from God,'* and he got saved. You know, just so simple for you and I, sometimes we take for granted, the opportunities we have to share Christ, Jesus said ***'he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than John,'*** that's after he tells us that John is the greatest prophet ever born, greater than Elijah, greater than Jeremiah or Ezekiel, that John is the last of the prophets, and he's the greatest of those born among women. But he says ***'he who is least in the Kingdom is greater than John,'*** in the sense that John was greater than all the other prophets because he was able to point at Jesus, physically, and say ***'Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.'*** All the other prophets longed to do that. But John also is the one that said ***'Are you the one that's to come, or do we look for another?'*** In a difficult time, he, John, was disillusioned, Jesus had disappointed him in the sense where he thought *'This is the one,'* he had this witness of the Spirit, and he had preconceived ideas of what Jesus was supposed to be and do, and now he's thrown in prison, and it says when John was put in prison the Lord left the area of Judea and

went to Galilee. John thought, *'Hey, he's going to turn everything upside down,'* and then he gets the report *'Well the Lord left, he went up north.'* And John the Baptist in prison thinking *'Well, you know, is he the one?'* You and I never think that, we understand he came to die, to be an offering for sin. We understand he's coming back in power, we have a much broader picture than John the Baptist had, even though he was the greatest of the Old Testament prophets, he who is least in the Kingdom is greater than John in regards to clarity. And sometimes we forget, I think the enemy in some ways is terrified of us, because we're bumbling around down here with that treasure, God says, of the Gospel, in these earthen vessels, and sometimes we don't understand the power of that to change and transform lives. And I think the time we have and the day we live in is very critical, and I think each day now we should be asking for boldness, saying *'Lord, who are you going to put across my path today that I might share Christ?'* because here are these fishermen, Peter and John, and they're standing in front of the religious leaders of the world, as it were, of the one true religion, who understood the one true God, who were still in darkness and not in the light. And these two fishermen are there, filled with the Spirit, Jesus with them, giving testimony. And it says they listened to them, and they're amazed, they saw their boldness, they were astounded, because they perceived ***'Well these men are ignorant and unlearned, but they did take knowledge these are men that had been with Jesus,'*** ***"And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it."*** (verse 14) Peter's saying ***'Hey, are you guys really putting us on trial because a crippled man was healed? Is that really what this is all about because a good thing was done? Can't you find any bad guys to prosecute?'*** and they're saying as they look at them and they look at the crippled man standing there with them, it says they really have nothing to say.

The Sanhedrin Put Peter & John Out And Deliberate: We Have An Eyewitness Record Of What They Said

So ***"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 that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem;***

and we cannot deny it.” (verses 15-16) Now this is an interesting picture, because Peter and John are put outside, because they don't want them to hear what kind of deliberation they're going to have. What this tells us is, Saul of Tarsus was still a member of the Sanhedrin at this point in time. Luke, who wrote the Book, at some point must have said *'What did you guys talk about when you put Peter and John out?'* And evidently Saul of Tarsus was still a member of the Sanhedrin gives to Luke the contents of the conversation they had that the apostles themselves hadn't heard, so it's a very interesting picture. The council, they confer, they put them outside, and then they said to themselves, Saul of Tarsus still being there at this point in time, ***'What shall we do to these men?'*** ***“For that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them,”*** they don't have that part straight, it wasn't them that did it, ***'and that is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, we cannot deny it.'*** You know, if he was over 40 years old, no doubt he'd been laying at the Beautiful Gate for at least again 30 years, no doubt he had seen Anna and Simeon, he was a boy, had seen the likes of remarkable people in the Temple courts, and everyone had known him, and here he is standing there whole, and they said ***'this notable miracle's been done, and it's manifest to everybody who dwells in Jerusalem, what are we gonna say? What lame man?'*** *'Produce the lame man,'* is what they could have said, they couldn't at that point in time.

*The Early New Testament Church Goes Into Civil
Disobedience Because They're Told They Can't
Preach In The Name Of Jesus*

“But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.” (verse 17) now we're not exactly sure if the “it” is relative to the healing in the name of Jesus, watch, **“But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.” (verse 17-18)** So we have a crisis now in the Church, which authority does the Church submit to? Now at this point it's going to be civil disobedience. Because the Sanhedrin had

their own Temple police, they were a part of the local authority under Rome's auspices, but they're being told now, not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus. And yet we're going to see them go out and do that, so there's a crisis. They're going to say **'Hey, you guys decide, whether we should listen to God or you, you figure it out.'** But it's important for the Church to see. Look, I am not in favor of civil disobedience in the sense that we see it sometimes done in the name of Christ. Again, I think anyone who shoots an abortion doctor is a lunatic, not a Christian, you're just killing a full-grown baby to save babies, doesn't make any sense to me. [Also there are elements of Christianity who act rabidly hateful toward gays, lesbians, per se, instead of reaching out to them, presenting them with the Gospel in love. The whole unsaved world is composed of sinners who need the Gospel presented to them in love, regardless of what their sin is. Christians who are rabidly hateful toward any one kind of sinner are just plain stupid and getting in the way of what God wants them to be doing, getting the Gospel out to the sinning world in love, not hatred. Jesus died to save sinners. Read John 3:16 for yourself. Many of what we call Evangelicals are infected with this *rabid hatred* disease. Do you realize (Pastor Joe does, is in correspondence with some of them) that God has called and given his Holy Spirit to some serial killers that are in prison right now, and they run prison ministries inside the prisons they're incarcerated in? It's true. I believe *son of Sam* is one of them Pastor Joe has corresponded with. It doesn't make sense to beat up those you're trying to reach with the Gospel, now does it? Christianity isn't tied down to any one nation or political party either, Christians shouldn't be waving the flag of their nation above another, because we're all one blood in Christ. True Christianity knows no borders, we can't be flag-waving Christians (see <https://unityinchrist.com/topical%20studies/America-ModernRomans1.htm> and read through that entire document).] The Lord hasn't told me to go out and shoot anybody. There are certain things done in the name of Jesus in regards to civil disobedience that are just wrong. And Peter, Paul will tell us to submit to the authorities that be, because they're ordained of God. Yet, Paul will be beheaded for civil disobedience, and Peter will be crucified upside down for civil disobedience. There is a point, and I'm thankful we haven't seen it in this nation, there are Christians around the world today, who are dying for the name of Jesus Christ, because they'd rather own Christ than live. They're being told, in their nations and in their countries, you can't profess Christ, you

can't share Christ, you can't own a Bible, and there are those who are laying down their lives relative to those things. It hasn't come to that point in America yet. But look, we're being dumbed down spiritually, like we're being dumbed down in so many other ways. It may come to the point, I don't know that, again, I'm an escapist, I want to sing songs, teach the Bible and get raptured. That's my prescription, if the Lord's taking suggestions. It may not happen that way. Persecution is certainly mounting here, to degrees, it looks fairly benign at this point in time, but it is stirring in the pot. And what will we do if they tell us you can no longer preach the name of Jesus – *'You can no longer speak about morality, you can no longer say sin is sin, you can no longer say that Jesus is the only way to be saved, we don't want you to preach in his name anymore,'* what will we do? Here we see this crisis, I mean, then it's time for me to have a prison ministry, but, we see this crisis here [in Acts 4:18], they're being threatened, they're told not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus, **"But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."** (verse 19) *'What is right, for us to listen to God, or to listen to you guys?'* **"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."** (verse 20) their testimony, their witness. And it's the same with us, we should be open about the things we know, we have a testimony, God has worked in our lives [and for each of us, it's a different and personal testimony], that's why we're sitting here. And that testimony has power to change lives, as it's yielded to the Holy Ghost. **"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people:"** they're afraid of the people, **"for all men glorified God for that which was done."** (verses 20-21) Jesus had told them, and maybe they're remembering, *'Let your good works so shine before men, that they'll glorify your Father whose in heaven.'* So much had been planted in these men, so people were glorifying God for the things that were done, **"For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed."** (verse 22) It tells us in chapter 3, that he was born that way, so well-known in this environment there in the Temple in Jerusalem.

One Powerful Prayer-Meeting

“And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.” (verse 23) now it tells us, they went to their own company, it’s important for you, by the way, to have your own company, to have your own group of believers. **“And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?” (verses 24-25)** this group of believers, no doubt with the other apostles. Now, they’re talking to Jesus, they had no problem with the deity of Christ here, **“Lord, you are God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is...”** John had written *‘In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God, all things were made by him, there was no thing that was made without him, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.’* Here they say *‘you are God, Lord, you’re the one whose made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything that is in them, certainly we should listen to you and not these religious leaders,’* **“Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? [Psalm 2] The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.”** the Psalm says “against his anointed, against his Christ, which means anointed, **“For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” (25-28)** They sing in that Psalm, *‘Why did the heathen rage?’* singing about Herod and Pontius Pilate, *‘why did the people imagine a vain thing, why have they lifted up their hand, Lord, against you and your anointed, certainly you sit on the thrones and on your throne in the heavens, and you laugh, you hold them in derision, and you say I have set my King on my holy hill Zion, and so forth,’* you read Psalm 2, and here they see the fulfillment of these things. Look, great for us, same God, but here’s two fishermen, threatened, they’re outnumbered, there was at this point about 8,000 adult believers, we’re going to find out, 5,000 through this incident, 3,000 through Peter’s sermon, that’s 8,000 adults. But your population in

Jerusalem is 250,000 to 300,000, so it's a very small, they're a very great minority in an environment that's growing hostile. You and I are a very great minority in an environment that's growing hostile. When we see the news, we see the things that are going on around us, we need to remember that the Lord that we serve is the Lord that created the heavens, and the earth, and all the things that are in them, and that God told you and I that the heathen would rage, the nations would raise themselves against his Christ [that technically means 'his anointed' and we also are *his anointed*, we've been anointed with the Holy Spirit], and we need to remember as we look at the news that he's seated upon his throne in the heavens, and he laughs at the rebellion of man against his Plan of Salvation, that he holds them in derision, because he's already made his decision about who the King of kings and the Lord of lords is going to be, and he has set him already in his place, and the Psalmist says **'Kiss the Son while there is time, lest he destroy you.'** So, we need to keep these things in mind. Look at the economy, yea, I'm bothered by that. Look at Israel and what's going on, yea, I watch that, I watch it all the time. Sometimes I get phone calls from people that tell me things I wished they wouldn't call me and tell me about. Look what's happening around the world, I talked to someone this morning involved in the infectious disease world, and there's still that threat of the Avion Flu, we've forgotten about that because now we're worried about the economy or worried about other things. We live in a very tenuous situation that could easily fall apart. What we need to remember, is our God is sovereign, all of this is under his control, he's made it all, he sits in the heavens, he's the one who rules over it all. And they have a great sense of it here, look, for you and I we're looking at the history of the Book of Acts, understand, they were standing in the midst of threats, in the midst of things they hadn't faced before, this was new to them. It will be new to us the first time we face it. They say **"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."** (verses 27-28) Isn't that interesting? [predestination of God in control of free will of man, I'd say.] What a perspective they have of God's sovereignty here. Pontius Pilate, Herod, the Romans, the religious leaders, they were gathered together to do whatever you predetermined their behavior should be. Peter understood that on the day of Pentecost when he says **'that he was crucified by the determined counsel and**

foreknowledge of God.' But he held them responsible, he said **'You handed him over to be crucified by wicked hands.'** Very interesting blend through this, of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. Look, the early Church is not sitting down arguing over it, they're just presenting the truth of these things. Again, Warren Wiersby a number of years ago spoke at a Calvary Chapel pastors conference, and during a question and answer period they asked him "Are you a Calvinist or Arminianist?" he said "I'm neither, I'm no man's disciple, I don't want any man to be my disciple, and if you're too much of a Calvinist you rob man of his responsibility, if you're too much of an Arminianist, you rob God of his sovereignty," he said, "I'm not interested in robbing anybody," he said, "besides that, you men are pastors, you're called to feed sheep, not giraffe's." So, you know, his idea is *'Keep the food down where it's practical, because both of those things are in the Bible.'* And again, my answer and your answer should be Paul's answer, when he talks about predestination, he says **"What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us."** that's the correct answer. All that mind-blowing stuff should do for us is make us realize **'Wow! God is for us! He is for us! And he handed over his Son by his predetermined counsel, into their hands, to be done to him what he had determined beforehand for you and for I, if God is for us who can be against us, who can separate us from the love of God (cf. Romans 8:35-39).'** That's the beauty of the truth of his sovereignty, I have no problem with it. **"For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."** (verse 28) Remember that as you watch the news today, please. Paul told us very specifically that in the last days, 1st Timothy 4, 2nd Timothy 3, Peter tells us that what's going to characterize the day we live in, if you look at the news, we're right on schedule. All of the Old Testament prophets talked about Jerusalem becoming the stumbling block, the cup of trembling to all of the nations of the world. We're right on schedule, we're right where the Bible says we would be. And you see some Christians going *'Eewe,'* getting ulcers, seeing their analysts, we're right on schedule, the King of kings and the Lord of lords is coming, and he has everything under control, everything is under control. And we are supposed to be able to give an answer to every man for the hope that we have. They say **"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, thy slaves, doulos here "that with all boldness they may speak thy word,"** (verse 29) isn't it interesting, they don't say *'Lord, remove the threat, remove*

*the circumstance, then we'll be happy,' I might have said that. What they say is **"Lord, behold their threatenings, Imagine that Lord, you're in charge of everything, you're sovereign, you're on the throne of the universe, we're your kids, and they're threatening us? Lord, grant us great boldness, they just threatened us and said 'Don't preach in this name,'** they, in the face of that say **'Lord, grant us boldness, that we may speak thy Word,'** **"by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus."** (verse 30) "thy hand" they knew it wasn't Peter and John. "thy holy child Jesus" that his name would be glorified, and that's the center part of their prayer, they're praying according to his will. We know that anything we pray according to his will, we know that we'll have the petitions that we ask for. Look, prayer is not for you and I to get the Lord in a Full-Nelson and make him do things according to our will. Somebody asked this morning, asking about fasting, and I said *'Ya, it's a great thing, if you don't have diabetes or hypoglycemia, ya, it's good for you, fast for a day, but make sure you're not trying to hold the Lord in a Full-Nelson and say 'I ain't gonna eat till you give,' that's not the way it works.'* You say, *'Here I am Lord, setting aside my life for you, I have ideas of what I want out of this, but Lord, override them all, and whatever you want to do in my life I will set aside, Lord, please let that be the priority.'* So I'm curious to see what will happen, I hope he says *'Pray for your pastor.'* But they're praying according to his will here, **'Glorify thy Son, let the name of Jesus be glorified.'** Once or twice in my life I had a very great sense of that. One time a baby was healed in our presence, we were praying, and the plea was very real, *"Father, your Son told us when he walked among us, when we lifted his name before you that you would respond, and this child, an infant, Lord, I don't believe this child is being chastened, disobedience, it's nothing like that Father, this is a situation where your Son would be glorified,"* and immediately the child stopped screaming, we looked down, and the thing that had been wrong was gone. You know, the interesting thing is there's no where to go then. Normally when we pray for the sick, we say *'Let us know what happened,'* and you're on your way. But when it happens in front of you, the prayer-meeting continues, there's nowhere else to go. Again, Calvary Chapel Whittier on the West Coast, before Cathy and I were back, in '81, this mom brought her little boy every Sunday night, she didn't come Sunday morning for some reason, I don't know if she went to another church, but she brought this little boy who was blind and deaf and dumb, and asked*

for prayer. And we were glad to pray for her, was anointed with oil, all this different stuff, but after about two months you're kind of 'Come on mom, we know you're here, but,' it was an important lesson for me, because she came at the end of the summer, and she came every week for a year, and we prayed for that little boy, and the next summer, a year later, one night, when we were the least expecting it, had the least amount of faith, that little boy received his sight, and God healed him. Why didn't he heal him the first week? I have no idea. Maybe because he wanted to heal something in the elders, because we were blind to the fact that sometimes God wants us to pray for a year for something. Maybe we were supposed to see something. And I certainly did. But you know, he's the same, he does those things. And the name of Jesus was glorified in that circumstance, and that little boy received his hearing, and the last I heard, six or seven months when we were back here, he's starting to become audible and they were putting him in a program, trying to get him caught up in school. God does those things, he's done those things here from time to time, but the center of that is Jesus should be glorified out of it. It should be something that glorifies Jesus, not the church, not the elders, not the pastors, not, you know, human hands, certainly. They say [pray] **"Stretching forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus."** (verse 30) **"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."** (verse 31) It was not an earthquake, ok. Don't even tell me that, the skeptics want to say that, this is a real prayer-meeting, when you say 'Amen,' and the building shakes, we could use one of those. ***"The place where they were gathered was shaken,"*** **"and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,"** notice **"and they spake the word of God with boldness."** that's what they had asked for. There's a higher law, God did not honour the law of the civil authority who told them to be quiet, God honoured the higher law of proclaiming the name of Jesus, filled them with the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit] and then granted boldness. Now it says here they were filled with the Holy Ghost, look, these are people that were filled with the Holy Ghost on Pentecost. It says they were all filled, spoke with tongues, there's no tongues here, there's no fire here, but there's a fresh filling of the Spirit, and that's what our Greek language means here, ***'having been filled, right at that instant,'*** that is a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit again. You know, for me, again, it's instructive that I should

constantly be seeking God for a fresh filling of his Spirit, relative to the things that are in front of us today, and tomorrow, just asking *'Lord, fill me afresh with your Spirit, Lord, your mercies are new every morning,'* I can think of junctures in my life when there were spiritual things that happened, that were supernatural, and we love it when those kinds of things happen. But you and I both know too many people who ride on their, *'You're only as good as your latest hit,'* you know, kind of thing, and all they do is talk about what God used to do, and God did this in those days...I don't want to hear about that, I want to know what he's doing today and tomorrow, that's where I want to be. And I want a fresh filling of his Spirit, and I look at this, ***'God filled them afresh and they spake the Word of God with boldness,'*** I appreciate that so much.

A Moving Of The Holy Spirit Was Coming Into This New Church

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." (verse 32) Now you know the Holy Ghost is doing something here, don't you. This is not, you know people say *'Well, what it was is'* and partially it may be true, you had Jews that had come from all over the known world, and many of them were not prepared to stay and became part of the Church and stayed, well some say *'That's why they're being so gracious, they're helping to sustain those who had come,'* that might be part of the truth. They can put any number of reasons to this, they were expecting the coming of the Lord, I think they were expecting the coming of the Lord. But I think the overriding thing is here, is there was a moving of God's Holy Spirit that was genuine, people were being healed, the building you're in is being shaken, *'We have a prayer-meeting tonight, give us boldness to share Christ,'* and when we finish praying the whole sanctuary starts to rumble, when that's over everybody's going *'Whoa!'* and somebody says *'You know, I don't have bus fare to get home,'* you say *'Here you go, let me help you,'* you know, you're in that environment where the material means so much less, because the spiritual is so real, there's a greater reality in the eternal and the spiritual than in the material. You know, it's hard for us,

when the Bible tells us ***'Lay up treasure in heaven, not on earth, where moth and rust corrodes these things,'*** that's very hard for us, because the tangible is around us all the time. And the Bible is asking us in faith to look at the eternal, and to live our lives with that in view. Look, our morality should be Biblical morality. Why? Because eternity is our home, we're going to stand before an eternal God, who tells us the way that he wants us to live, a God who knows tomorrow, he knows next week, he knows next year, he knows what's best for us, and he's prescribing for us that which is healthy for us. He tells us how we should live, and the challenge is always are we living with the eternal in view? If we're living with the eternal in view, we're going to be laying down our lives. Husbands are going to be treating their wives the way they're supposed to be treating their wives in greater and greater measure, as they belong to the Lord, as he is the Lord of their life, and not just their Saviour. As they understand these things, even marriage needs to be lived out in light of eternity. Wives, the difficult things they are challenged with in Scripture relative to their husbands. Is eternity in view? Are we living that way? Here, these folks are filled with the Holy Ghost, they're filled with boldness, there's a genuine move of God in their midst. How wonderful and how we long to see that, and how we should pray for that. And it says they were of such an attitude that there was a multitude that believed, but they were of one heart, they were of one soul. Isn't that kind of unity wonderful? When you have a lot of people together somebody's always bickering with somebody, or somebody's always pointing the finger at somebody. **"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."** (verse 32) this is not saying it has to be a pattern for us, this is telling us historically what was taking place. **"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."** (verse 33) and the witness, power to be witnesses, is always relative to the resurrection as we go through. Notice it doesn't say this, it doesn't say *'With great power gave the Clique witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.'* People love to do that in church, *'Oh there's a clique.'* We'll there was a clique, there were 12 guys who had been with the Lord from the Baptism of John up to his resurrection. I remember years ago we were at a pastors conference and the pastor's wives broke off, and Rosemary Gallatin was talking to them, and one of the pastor's wives said *'What do you do if you think there's a clique in your*

church?’ She said ‘Well the first thing you need to do is pray, because you’re probably a trouble-maker,’ because she said ‘you know, there probably is a clique in your church, there’s a group of men that the Lord has brought together that have married people and buried people, wept together, they’ve laboured together, it was God’s design to do that, and it’s hard to step into that and make yourself part of that.’ Here are these guys, and God has brought them together. And we’re going to see there is complaints about that, there’s going to be persecution. But it’s wonderful at this point in time, because there’s a moving of the Spirit, there’s a spiritual lens, a spiritual grid that he’s putting everything through, to just they’re seeing the Church is one, they’re recognizing the position of the apostles, God is using them in specific ways it says, to witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, **“and great grace”** not just regular old grace, **“great grace was upon them all.”** It sounds like it, doesn’t it? Sounds like a great grace is upon them all.

We’re Headed Toward A Sharp Contrast

Now look, we’re headed somewhere with all of this. Because when we get to chapter 5, verse 1, which is where we’re headed, there’s a certain man named Ananias and Sapphira his wife. The great grace we’re reading about now is going to be in contrast to that. It is with great grace people are giving, saying the things they have are not their own. **But**, that chapter 5 begins with a conjunction, **“BUT there was a man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife...”** Now we know something about that. You know why? Because I’ve dedicated babies for years here in our church, and I’ve never dedicated a Sapphira. Nobody names their kids Ananias and Sapphira, it just doesn’t happen. So we have something lingering in our minds about them, we know these are the guys who dropped dead **snap!** they messed up, they did something they shouldn’t have done. But in contrast to them, the Scriptures are being staged for that lesson, it is telling us the environment and the great grace that was being manifest, the level of love that was being demonstrated, not only did they have boldness to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but their lives were in step with the testimony they had. By the way they lived, they also bore witness to the fact that they genuinely believed the things they were saying. Jesus said **“Let your light so shine...”** light is not heard, light is seen. He said **‘You’re the salt**

of the earth,” it’s emphatic, ***‘you alone in contrast to all others are the light of the world, the salt of the earth.’*** The salt is not heard, it’s tasted, it’s partaken of. And there was something about their lives that was undeniable, and it says here it was great grace, how wonderful, ***that was upon them all.*** **“Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid *them* down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.” (verses 34-35)** Look, there’s no edict, this is not forced, there’s no begging, nobody’s asking for you to sign some kind of a pledge or something, this is not a building project, this is not the apostle’s gouging God’s people for money. None of that’s going on. There’s something very much akin to what happened in the Old Testament, remember when Moses came down from the mountain, and he talked to the people about giving to build the Tabernacle, and this is a people who had come through the Red Sea, this was a people who had seen the face of Moses shine, this is a people whose hearts were very stirred, and it said they actually had to restrain the people from giving. There was a moving of God, there’s great grace there when that happens. And here, it says **“Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,”** again, not under any pressure, not being begged, where there’s no television, radio attached to this, just a wonderful thing to observe, **“and they laid *them* down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.” (verses 34-35)** So there’s great unity here, it’s evidenced by a great moving of the Spirit, which is part of the evidence we see in the moving of his Spirit. **“And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles’ feet.” (verses 36-37)** Now isn’t it interesting, his name is Joses, they change his name to Barnabas. I wonder if Peter’s involved in that? Because he got his name changed in John chapter 1, so maybe he’s a name-changer, thinking *‘it’s been a blessing in my life, I’m going to fix you up too, Joses.’* But he changed his name to Barnabas. Now we’re going to hear the name of Barnabas, and what a remarkable man he is, and we should look forward to standing with this man some day around the throne. We’ll hear his name 25 times in the Book of Acts and 5 times through the Epistles. This is

a notable character in the New Testament, as the text is being put to the page by the Spirit. **“And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,” (verse 36)** Now the reason that they changed his name to Barnabas, because he was a great consolation to them. Why? Because they had just been threatened by the religious leaders, not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus. Now, here is this one who comes to them who is in fact a Levite. We’re going to be told in chapter 6 that many of the priests came to the Faith. And Barnabas may have been part of that. But now here’s Barnabas this one, you know, they’re being threatened *‘Don’t speak anymore,’* and the religious leaders are threatening them, they pray, they ask God for boldness, there’s great grace being given to them, and all of a sudden one of the Levites comes forth. And we’re not given the details, but he says *‘I know that this is true, I know that Jesus Christ is the Messiah,’* and they change his name from Joses to Barnabas, son of consolation, *‘You’re such a consolation to us, Joses, and your profession and your willingness to give, a great consolation.’* And so he would be to the Church. They change his name to Barnabas, which is being interpreted The son of consolation, he’s of such a nature that Paul will be on his first missionary journey, and the Holy Spirit will say **“Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul for the ministry I have called them to.”** So, a remarkable man in many ways, no doubt. **‘He is a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it.’** Now, that’s an interesting problem, because the Levites were not to have land, at least in the nation of Israel. So evidently he had land that his family owned in Cyprus. In the land of Israel they lived in the Levite cities, they were not possessors of those lands, and they could not sell them, evidently coming from Cyprus, and now his family being there, a Levite, possibly coming to Jerusalem as a young man like Saul of Tarsus coming to train in the School of Gamaliel. Ah, he sells the right to whatever property it would seem that he owned in Cyprus. It says he had land, he sold it, and he brought the money, and he laid that at the apostles’ feet. Persecution is mounting, Levites and priests are coming to the Faith, the religious leadership is being more and more straightened and worn out, and yet these remarkable things are happening. And it says here, that he comes and lays all of this down at the apostles’ feet, and the next chapter begins with the word **“But”** in contrast to all of this giving and this right spirit. We’re going to meet a man named Ananias and his wife named Sapphira. They have a piece of

land that they sell, and they only bring part of it to the apostles, and they lay it down like they've given the whole thing. Wanting to give the wrong impression to the people. Evidently they're watching everybody else get some kind of attention that they're jealous of, because they're bringing things genuinely and laying them down at the apostles' feet. Ananias and Sapphira, for some reason, still not wanting to give everything, but wanting people to think they're giving everything, they come and do that. Peter's going to say, **'Why are you doing this? You're lying to the Holy Ghost, you're not lying to man, you're lying to God. While it was in your control, wasn't it yours?'** The New Testament Church was not demanding, there was not a communism, it wasn't demanded of them that they do this. He said **'it was yours, we're not asking, we're not demanding. Why are you being deceitful?'** Well, you know, it's 8:29, we're not going to tackle Ananias and Sapphira in one minute. They lasted longer than that, an hour maybe. But read ahead, if the Lord tarries, we're watching the news, it doesn't tell us Ananias and Sapphira were lost, they were just dead. Hopefully they'll be in heaven [in the Kingdom of heaven, which comes to earth (cf. Revelation 21:1-23)], you know, they were part of the Church, get to say *'Oh you were,' 'Ya, ya, I wished they'd changed my name to something else, they change Joses name to Barnabas, call me Charles, it would clear up everything for me in heaven.'* But we get a new name when we get there. But just read ahead, ah, next week, the first case of deliberate deception amongst the believers, that is pointed out to us, and the way God deals with that. Look, you know sometimes we say *'Lord, why don't we see the power that we see in the Book of Acts, why don't we see the healing, why don't we see...?'* But remember, in the Book of Acts there was a holiness and a purity, it says **'Fear came upon all of the believers,'** in regards to those things. Do we really want? think of what we're saying. If we're singing *'Lord, you're all I need'* how many of us would drop dead while singing the song, if we weren't being genuine, if we were praying or singing to the Lord that our hearts and desires are set on him, and you're looking at somebody else, your sitting there scoping out a girl in the church, or vice versa, and you see people going down, ***baboom! baboom!*** *'Ah, don't bother with a wheelchair, we'll get them after the service, they're gone,'* I mean, there was that purity, that purity and that power and holiness that the early Church had. And I trust, I trust, that if God decides to do that, his grace will include us in that, his grace will work in our hearts, beautiful things will transpire in all of us, in keeping...So read

ahead, pray for boldness, realize that the Lord delights in using what the world perceives as unlearned and ignorant men and women. We are not, we are instructed by the greatest teacher in the universe, we are his children, we are head and shoulders above every degree as it were given out in this world, relative to spiritual truth, relative to eternity. I encourage you this week, every day, pray for boldness. I'm hoping one of you will lead the last Gentile to Jesus that needs to be saved before the Rapture, and instead of the Program being held up, the fullness of the Gentiles being gathered in, we're outa here. Let's bow our hearts, let's stand, let's pray, and let's ask him for boldness...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Acts 4:13-37, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

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