



Message Guide

FOR JUNE 29, 2025

THE STORY UNLEASHED- 2: UNLEASHED THROUGH TESTIMONY



Acts 3-4:31

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We are in week 2 of 7 of our series of messages called, *The Story Unleashed*. The New Testament book of Acts records how the early church was unleashed through the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the good news of Jesus and his Kingdom! This week we will be in Acts chapter 3 and 4, where we see the church being unleashed through TESTIMONY!

1. What are some things that come to your mind when you hear testimony?

Before we dig into “testimony” in chapters 3 and 4, here is a recap of chapters 1 and 2:

In Acts 1-2 we see Jesus ascend, and leave his disciples staring at the sky like “um what? He really meant what he said.... he was going to heaven to prepare a place for us.” They then receive the Holy Spirit and then we see in Acts 2 at Pentecost their numbers grow from some ragtag disciples (who had just weeks before thought it was game over) to a movement of the spirit and 3,000 followers of Jesus professing their faith and following Jesus!

Read Acts 3:1-13

Then, starting in chapter 3, verse 14 we read about these events:

- Peter tells the crowd they rejected Jesus, the Holy One, and chose a murderer instead. But God raised Jesus, and through faith in His name, the lame man was healed. Peter urges them to repent so their sins may be forgiven, and times of refreshment may come. Peter connects Jesus to Old Testament prophecy and warns against rejecting Him.
- While Peter and John are preaching, the religious leaders arrest them. Still, many believe—growing the number of male believers to about 5,000.
- The next day, Peter and John are questioned by the high council. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter begins to speak boldly in front of the council. This is what we read in chapter 4, starting in verse 8:



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"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers and elders of our people, are we being questioned today because we've done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? 10 Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene,[a] the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says, 'The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.' There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.' Acts 4:8-12 (NLT)

Summary of 4:13-31:

- The religious leaders are amazed by Peter and John's boldness, knowing they were ordinary, untrained men. But since the healed man is standing with them, they can't deny the miracle.
- They warn Peter and John to stop speaking about Jesus, but the apostles boldly refuse, saying they must obey God rather than men.
- After being threatened and released, Peter and John return to the other believers and report everything. The group prays together, asking God for boldness to keep preaching. The place where they're gathered is shaken, and they are all filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking God's word with boldness.

2. Do you find yourself also amazed by Peter and John's boldness? If the Holy Spirit gave ordinary, untrained men the ability to boldly speak the truth about Jesus, what does that say about you, if you too have the Holy Spirit?

This is a cool story, but this can be our story too! Here are some key points from this story that we, as believers, can very much learn and apply.

Key Thought 1: Testimony begins with compassion, and presence (Acts 3:1-10).

A common question as western Christians 2,000 years later can ask is this: *Why would Peter and John be going to the temple to pray at 3pm if they were following Jesus now?* Peter and John were going to their community. Because of Jesus being the risen messiah and culmination and crowning work of what the prophets and the law were pointing to, their community and place of worship, the synagogue became their mission field.



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Peter and John going to the Temple to pray at 3 PM, even after following Jesus, isn't a contradiction but rather a reflection of several key points about early Christianity and Jewish practice:

- **There was continuity with Jewish Tradition:** Jesus and his early followers were devout Jews. They observed Jewish customs, including regular prayer times and synagogue attendance. The Temple was the central place of Jewish worship, and prayer at the "ninth hour" (3 PM) was a long-standing Jewish tradition associated with the evening sacrifice. For them, following Jesus wasn't about abandoning their Jewish heritage, but fulfilling it.
- **The Temple as a Place of Gathering and Witness:** The Temple continued to be a significant place for the early believers, not just for prayer, but also for teaching and fellowship. It was a natural place to gather, and importantly, it was a place where they could encounter and share the message of Jesus with other devout Jews. The healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate in Acts 3, which happens at the hour of prayer, provides a perfect example of this. *Their presence at the Temple for prayer led to a public miracle and an opportunity to preach the gospel and it had no Contradiction with Jesus' Teachings.* Jesus himself taught in the Temple. His followers continued to participate in these as they understood them in light of his teachings and resurrection.

So, this leads to the moment that Peter and John, who were on their way to their normal life and routine, led with their compassion and presence. Peter and John, seeing the lame man, stopped and engaged with him. They did not have what the lame man expected to receive (silver and gold), but they did offer what they did have- Jesus. "...what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"

Peter and John gave what they did have, and all of us can give what we do have. We all can allow God's spirit to use the placement and resources (emotional, physical, mental, spiritual) to open up the door for God's work. For Peter and John, their act of faith becomes a public testimony to God's power. This story is powerful, and the work of what happened is amazing, and people saw the church grow, and change and it says ALL OF JERUSALEM KNEW. Yet, all of the cool stuff happened, because Peter and John, on their way to go pray, in their everyday rhythm, were faithful to their calling.

3. So, think about your everyday rhythms (what we call Networks and Norms). Where has God placed you?

Key Thought 2: Take the opportunity when it arises (Acts 3:12). Peter was ready. He showed up. He was there, in his regular place. When he saw his chance to make Christ known, he leaned in.

When the opportunity arises for us, we must be ready to take it. Some people capitalize on it, but it always requires a leap of faith and dropping our fears.



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Common Fears That Keep us From Taking the Opportunity:

- Will they think I'm crazy?
- Will this be awkward?
- Will I get in trouble with my workplace or school?
- Do I even know what to say?

We must be ready, because God will MOVE.

But we must have the confidence to say, and truly, believe what we say we do, that Jesus is the one who changes things, and then we must capitalize upon it. Sometimes. It might just be a nod and a smile and asking someone how they have been for years.... But then sometimes, the door opens, and God leads the way.

Imagine how Peter felt, the man who had literally just denied following Jesus, was the one who God equipped to preach the gospel and be the spark that caused revival to take over. As an old man, the Apostle Peter knew this firsthand when he was encouraging believers, *"If someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it"* **1 Peter 3:15 (NLT)**.

4. When has there been a time you were "ready" or "not ready" to share about your hope in Jesus?

1st Peter 3:15 stresses so many Christians out because we think it means we must know a lot. While, knowing our Bible is so important, what Peter does not say is *be ready to know all the answers or be ready to debate the Bible*, but rather *be ready to share your hope in Christ*.

But we Christians, hold hope. We hold life. What John and Peter did for the man was to heal him physically, but that was nothing compared to the miracle of healing of the souls of him and the countless others that saw God's movement. So many of us allow ourselves to become of the western culture and we do not allow ourselves to be the ones who bring life, hope, and truth to where we are, because we are scared of it.

5. Wherever you are... will you allow the Holy Spirit to be in front of you, so that when the opportunity arises you share this truth?



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Acts 4:12 says “There is hope in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven that we must be saved.” The gospel is as all inclusive, but we must take our chance to share the hope of Who Christ is. We know where hope, peace, salvation is found, and Jesus has selected you, in your school, your workplace, your family, your neighborhood, to be present.

Don’t you think that when Peter came to that moment—his opportunity—he had to be thinking, Why me?

...I’m the one who looked Christ in the eyes and said, I don’t know Him.

...I’m the one who denied Him three times.

...I’m the one who led the group to hide behind locked doors, afraid we were going to die.

Sometimes we get to that same place—so insecure, so unsure—that we aren’t even willing to say, OK, I’m going to step out in faith and invite. But if we really believe Jesus is the one who can change lives, we’ll feel the weight of it. This isn’t about guilt or manipulation. It’s not about making us feel bad. It’s about waking us up to say: *This is worth my time!*

The Church—the global Church, the local Church—will not grow, will not change, if we don’t treat the transformational power of Jesus like it actually transforms.

6. Where has God placed you? And in this place God has placed you, who needs Jesus? Are you ready to boldly share your transformed life with them?

All of us, have been given the task, the job, to do what Jesus commanded his disciples. And all we have to be humble enough, to allow God to use us, where he’s planted us!