

Sermon: **7 Characteristics of a Faithful Witness (Acts 4:1-22)**

Date: **April 8, 2018**

Jesus final words to his disciples before he ascended in the book of Acts are found in Acts 1:8 which says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” The rest of the book of Acts is an account of how the Holy Spirit empowered Christ’s disciples to do just that. The gospel began to spread in Jerusalem and then out from there in Judea and Samaria and eventually to the ends of the earth. In Acts 4:1-22, Peter and John experience the first instance of persecution in the book of Acts. They boldly proclaim Christ to a crowd of people at the temple and this upset the religious rulers in Jerusalem. They were arrested and questioned before being released. In this account, we see what a faithful witness to Jesus Christ looks like. We see what obedience to Christ’s command in Acts 1:8 entails. In this week’s study, we will study seven characteristics of a faithful witness from this text of Scripture and we will evaluate our own lives to see what areas we need to grow in so that we can live as faithful witnesses for Jesus Christ.

What you need for this study: Bible, Notebook, Pen

**Individual Bible Study**

1. Please read Acts 4:1-22 and ensure that you’ve listened to Sunday’s sermon.
  - a. Briefly summarize what has taken place up until this point in the book of Acts.
  - b. What was the main message of the sermon that Peter preached before he was arrested (see Acts 3:11-26)? Why were the religious rulers so annoyed with this sermon?
  - c. What does it mean that the gospel is an aroma of life to life and death to death (see 2 Corinthians 2:15-16)? How does Acts 4:1-4 illustrate this truth?
  - d. What is the source of Peter’s newfound boldness? What does that tell you about what we must depend upon for strength and courage in evangelism?
  - e. What did Peter do when the religious rulers gave him an opportunity to defend himself?
  - f. In verse 12, Peter emphasizes the exclusivity of the gospel. What does this mean? Why is this important for us to emphasize this in evangelism as well?

- g. Read Acts 4:13. Peter and John were common, uneducated men. What does this situation teach us about God's ability to use people? How does this encourage you?
- h. What did the religious rulers recognize about Peter and John (v. 13)? What does this tell us about the role of our relationship with Jesus in preparing us for evangelism?
- i. Why were the religious rulers unable to say anything in opposition to Peter and John (see v. 14-16)? What does this teach us about the power of a Christian's testimony? See John 4:39 for another example of this.
- j. Why were Peter and John unable to keep their mouths shut about Jesus Christ (see verses 19-20)?

### **Group Discussion Questions**

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the sermon and the Bible study this week?
2. Peter was prepared to tell people about Jesus when the opportunity arose. What most often keeps us from feeling prepared to share the gospel when opportunities arise? How can we address those obstacles and fears?
3. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in evangelism? What are some ways we can trust in ourselves instead of depending upon the Holy Spirit in evangelism? How can we seek to be more filled with the Holy Spirit?
4. What are some examples of evangelistic opportunities that God might bring into our lives? How can we ready ourselves to share Christ in these situations?
5. How does the fact that Peter and John were common, uneducated men encourage you? Why is it important to daily cultivate a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ in order to be a faithful witness? How can we do this?

### **Accountability Question**

Is there an opportunity in your life right now to share Christ with someone? How can we hold you accountable to do so?