

Counting the Costs

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[illegible]

I love it. Great. Just a wonderful time in worship and just so appreciative of your engaging in song. And it really is a blessing to me to watch us together worshipping the Lord Jesus.

If you've got a Bible, go to Acts chapter 4. We're in a series now that we've been in for several weeks. And we've been looking at the book of Acts, kind of going verse by verse, chapter by chapter through this book.

We've looked in chapter 1, how Jesus spends those final days before the ascension with the disciples, tells them to prepare. Acts chapter 2, the Spirit comes down on the day of Pentecost.

You have the new covenant coming in as Sinai is reenacted. And so now the new covenant has come. And this mission is going to go to all languages, all peoples, all nations, which is seen in that sign of the ability to speak in different languages.

[1 : 44] Then in chapter 3, we see what happens as this mission moves forward, namely lives are transformed by the power of the gospel as the lame man is healed by the power of Jesus.

And then last week we looked at the fact that the message of this mission is not how to have a better life. It's the person of Jesus Christ and his life accounted to us as righteousness.

That is how we are right with God. The message of the mission is about Jesus every time. Now we come to Acts chapter 4, and we're going to pick it up at verse 1 at the beginning of this chapter.

And so if you are able to stand, please do so as we honor the reading of God's Word and recognize its authority. Acts chapter 4, Luke is writing these words under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

And he says this, And as they were still speaking to the people, the priest and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed, because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

[2:58] And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about 5,000.

On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high priestly family.

And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power or by what name do you do this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, Rulers of the people and elders, if we're being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, Then let it be known to all of you 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 is standing before you well.

This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders who has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else.

For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. And God's people said, You can almost just read that and go home.

[4 : 38] We're not, but you could. Let's pray. Thank you for this beautiful passage that by your grace you've given us. Thank you, God, that by your divine providence, you inspired Luke to write these words.

And here we are on Saturday night, Labor Day weekend, about to unpack them for the edification of our soul. God, you are good to us.

And I pray tonight you would feed us by your word. And Lord, I pray that there are specific things that you would speak to each and every one of us as you know what they are.

You would do so by your Holy Spirit with great clarity, that we would be greater conformed into the image of Jesus. And we pray this in his name and God's people said, Amen.

You can be seated. When Luke Postel was born, he was three weeks early, and he couldn't breathe. He was immediately rushed to the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit, and he would spend the next week and a half there fighting for his life, connected to pumps and tubes and all kinds of blinking machines.

[5 : 53] And after 11 days of fighting for his life, Luke finally got to go home with his parents, healthy and happy. That's the most important thing in the world, his father Danny said.

To have him home with us, I would have paid anything. And while Danny meant that, he didn't actually believe he'd have to do that.

Because you see, when he and his wife, Linda, got their health insurance bill, they were the ones that could hardly breathe. You see, they had already used their \$5,000 deductible when Danny had torn his Achilles early in the year.

Linda's doctor and the hospital that they went to were both in-network providers. So they didn't expect that they'd have to pay any out-of-pocket expenses for Luke's birth.

So you can imagine, and some of you can't imagine, their surprise when a stream of unexpected bills started rolling in. There was \$2,000 bill for the initial neonatal visit.

[7 : 06] There was the \$240 per day charge for Luke's supervision of care. Another \$5,000 bill they didn't expect to receive. To which Danny said, wasn't insurance supposed to cover all of this?

And then, with a little investigation, he soon discovered that the reason for all these unexpected costs was that while the local hospital and doctor were in-network, the neonatal intensive care unit in the same facility was not.

And the moment they crossed that invisible line, everything became out-of-network. Danny's response, according to this article in Time Magazine, was this.

He said, quote, you would think that someone would have told us. Now, there are many of you here tonight, and those of you watching online, that can probably relate to something very, very similar.

And if it's not that exact situation, you can relate to a similar situation, and here's what I mean. Most of you have encountered a situation where you were caught off guard by how much something cost.

[8 : 24] That is, what you expected to pay and what you actually had to pay were very different. Can I get an amen? Anybody experienced that before? And again, maybe it wasn't medical.

Maybe it was something else. Maybe for you, you purchased a new vehicle, and you were surprised. This happened to me. When you got to signing things, it's like, whoa, there was a lot more hidden fees here than you told me about.

Or maybe you started a home improvement project. And it ended up costing you way more than you thought it was going to when you started. Or maybe you went on that family vacation with Chevy Chase.

Right? And one thing after another just kept piling up, and you were overwhelmed by all the expenses you had to pay. Maybe you started your own business, and you realized, whoa, whoa, wait a minute.

This requires a whole lot more money than I thought it would. Some of you, you got to retirement, and you realized you had not saved nearly enough for the expenses you would have in retirement.

[9 : 29] Every one of, and I want you to feel that for just a moment. Like, think about that situation in your life or that feeling that you felt when you're like, wait a minute, this is not what I signed up for. This is not what I expected to happen.

This is costing me way more than I thought it would. And here's why I want you to really hold on to that because in my years in pastoral ministry, and you can see the gray, they've been many, all right, is this.

I think a lot of people sign up for the Christian faith, and they think life is going to get easier. They assume, hey, now I'm a Christian, and guess what?

I won't have any problems again. Somehow we get this idea that when we become a follower of Jesus, the rest of our life will be smooth sailing on the waters of life until we reach that heavenly shore.

That, there's a Greek word for it, nonsense. It's total nonsense, and it's not biblical, and at some point along the way as a Christian, you realize there's a cost to this.

[10 : 40] There is a cost to living out your faith. There is a cost to being a Christian. It will cost you your time. It may cost you relationships.

Some of you, it may be cost you your job. There are people that it costs them their very physical life, but make no mistake about this faith family, Christianity comes with a cost.

But unlike home improvement projects and medical bills, the costs aren't hidden. Nobody's playing a prank on you here.

In fact, one of the things the book of Acts is going to repeatedly remind us so that we're not caught off guard, so that we don't think this is unexpected, so that we don't think this is somehow abnormal, here it is.

There is no mission without persecution. Do not be surprised by that. If you're on mission for Jesus, you're going to experience persecution for Jesus.

[11 : 47] Don't be surprised when these things happen to you. There are no hidden fees here. There are no little small footnotes.

The Bible is very clear with us that there is no mission without persecution. And that is exactly what we start to see here in Acts chapter 4, and we'll continue to see it throughout the book of Acts.

Look at verse 1. As they were speaking to the people, that's the crowd that has been gathered back in chapter 3, the priest and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them.

They are greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. They arrested them, put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.

So you see here, right out of the gate, of course it wouldn't have been chapter 4 for Luke. He would just continue writing the chapters and verses got put in later. But as you enter into chapter 4, you see, listen, Christianity at this point is spreading like a California wildfire.

[12 : 53] A lame man for 40 years who is well known in the community now all of a sudden has moves like Jagger. I mean, this guy is dancing in the street like MC Hammer, right?

I mean, he's going like crazy praising God for the miracle that's happened in his life. Thousands are being converted. We had 2,000 in chapter 2.

We've got 5,000 here in chapter 4. They're being baptized. They're growing in good reputation with those in the community. And worst of all, this man that the religious leaders assumed had been killed once and for all, well, the reports are that he is risen from the grave.

Oh, let's be clear. The religious leaders are having a bad day. It's a really bad day if you're a religious leader because all this you've tried to shut down keeps on moving.

It keeps on moving and they are greatly annoyed. They are so aggravated at this reality. They're just not annoyed only. They are determined.

[14 : 01] We will shut this down. We will end this movement. And listen, they were not the first to try to do so and they would not be the last.

And here's what I'm getting at. Luke is showing us the proof of what Jesus promised. Are you tracking with me? Luke is showing us the proof of what Jesus promised.

You say, what do you mean? Jesus promised the disciples that this was coming. The disciples promised us that this was coming. And church history has shown us that it is true.

Take, for instance, and here's what they said is that there's no mission without persecution. Jesus promised that. Here's what he said to the disciples in John 15, verse 18.

If the world hates you, know that it's hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you. And that's true, isn't it, Faith Family?

[15 : 04] If you're of the world, it loves you. But because you're not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, a servant is not greater than his master.

If they persecuted me, they, what, Faith Family, will persecute you. He said this when we went through the Sermon on the Mount, and Dr. Brand taught on this during my sabbatical, Matthew 5, 11.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven.

The apostles promised this to the church at Philippi. This is Philippians 1, 29. It has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe, but suffer for his sake.

To the church at Thessalonica, this is 2 Thessalonians 1, 4. We boast about you for your steadfastness and faith in all the persecutions and afflictions you are enduring.

[16 : 07] To the churches in Galatia, Cappadocia in Asia, Peter writes this. This is 1 Peter 4, 12. Do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you as though something strange were happening to you.

To the church at Antioch, we'll see this in Acts 14, 22. They were strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying, listen, it is through many tribulations that we must enter the kingdom of God.

And finally, to young Timothy and some of Paul's final words in 2 Timothy 3, 12, he says this. Listen, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted.

There are no hidden fees here. There's no surprise cost. The Bible told you there would be days like this.

That there is no mission without persecution. And think about, just for instance, what happens to some of the disciples and the apostles. Stephen is stoned. Peter and John thrown into prison.

[17 : 10] James and Matthew beheaded. Paul was imprisoned and beheaded. Thomas thrown into an oven. Luke hanged from a tree in Athens. It was some of the most gruesome things that the early church would go through.

Think about what happened from, I'm going to give you a little bit of history. Y'all like church history? Okay. If you don't like history, you got about a three minute zone out, but then you better zone back in. Think about what happened from 100 to about 304 AD.

There were 10 major periods of persecution. Ignatius was drugged through the city. Polycarp thrown to the lions. Thousands of Christians died. In fact, when I was on my sabbatical in Rome, I had the opportunity to go and visit the catacombs.

And this is what the catacombs look like. And what these are is these are underground graves where many of the early Christians who died because of their faith are buried.

And you walk among that and you realize there is no mission without persecution. During the time of 250 to 261 was a decade of horror.

[18 : 20] Thousands of Christians were murdered for their faith. In fact, there were three classifications at this point. There was the martyrs. These were people that died for their faith. There was the laps.

These were people that kind of took a step back and went with the crowd and then tried to get back in. And then there were the confessors. The confessors were the people that refused to deny their faith but they didn't die.

Do you know how you could know who they were? They were the ones that were missing an arm or had an eye poked out or had scars all over their body as they carried with them the marks of persecution.

Tertullian said the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. And of course it wasn't just persecution through physical means during this time in the early church. There's also the persecution of internal theological persecution.

You have false teaching that's arising Gnosticism and Docetism and all types of different counterfeit beliefs of Christianity that people have to fight against.

[19 : 25] Justin Martyr, Aristides, Tertullian, Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, people like this that stood for the gospel and took the persecution that came with it.

Then in 312 to about 500 Constantine makes Christianity the official Roman the religion of the Roman Empire and then you have different types of persecution.

We don't often think about this as much. There's the persecution of comfort. Now think about that. What I mean by the persecution of comfort is it's so easy to be a Christian you think you are one when you're not and you just begin to float along with this culture of Christianity while not actually being a follower of Jesus.

There were many counterfeit Christians at that point because they simply said yes because they didn't want to lose their head but they didn't really bow the heart to Jesus.

They weren't actually a follower of Christ. Then in the Middle Ages you think of all the persecution that takes place with the Catholic Church during all kinds of immorality and corruption that takes place at the highest levels and what do you have?

[20 : 38] You have men like Wycliffe and Huss and Luther and Calvin all of them who are willing to put their life on the line and take the persecution that came for people having a Bible to read in their own language and for justification by faith alone.

16th century Queen Mary you know her as Bloody Mary slaughtered Christians and burned them at the stake and yet you had people like Whitefield and Wesley not me a different Wesley Puritans and others that even helped get the gospel to American soil and they took the persecution that came because they realized there isn't a mission without persecution.

in 1650 to about 1800 you have the enlightenment now the church is being persecuted by human reason and modern science and atheism people like Darwin and Kant and yet from this you're going to have the Great Awakening with Edwards and the Second Great Awakening with revivalism and camp meetings and people who still realize whatever form the persecution may come in whether it is physical or intellectual or whatever it may be we will stand because we realize there isn't a mission without persecution and even today Christians in North Korea Somalia Syria Iraq Afghanistan fear for their very lives because they are Christians and even right here in America there is a cost for us today to say Jesus is Lord and I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ Jesus promised the disciples the disciples promised us and church history has proven it to be true notice it again there is no mission without persecution or to say it a different way notice this on the screen faith family persecution is not a possible reality it's a promised certainty the disciples knew there would be days like this they knew that

Jesus didn't hide anything from them there was no hidden cost here but a clear understanding that for us to embrace this good news and spread it to the ends of the earth will cost us something it did then look at me and it will now it did then and it will now if you take this mission seriously it will cost you something I don't know what it will cost you but it will cost you something and you say I'm so glad I came to this depressing sermon right like I am so energized and encouraged to go out and get beaten up for Jesus let's go it ain't all bad folks look at verse 4 of chapter 4 but many of those who heard the word believed and the number of the men came to about 5,000 in other words there's good things happening here it ain't just all doom and gloom it's not all getting beat up for Jesus or thrown into prison or whatever no 5,000 just men from the crowd to which Peter proclaimed the good news in chapter 3 are saved that's awesome it's worth the punch in the face it's worth the overnight in prison amen okay the goal tonight is not go out and get in prison okay that's not the goal but my point is this is what we've got to realize is that the gospel is a fragrance of life to some and death to others and there are some as we go out on mission that are going to say

I need that I want that I believe and they're going to be saved and they're going to be others greatly annoyed trying to shut you and shut us down and we say bring it on because there is no mission without persecution and we will stand unashamedly for the gospel of Jesus Christ knowing we will be hated by some and others will be saved you with me why here's point number two why was this persecution happening what made these religious leaders so upset to the point that they persecuted these disciples why is it even today that persecution is just a part of the mission as we proclaim the gospel and declare the good news of Jesus why is it a certainty let me give you just three quick reasons why the disciples face persecution and so will we verse two greatly annoyed were the religious leaders because the disciples were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead so here's the first thing if you're taking notes is you need to understand that the gospel challenges people's theology the gospel challenges people's theology in other words theology theology is simply what we believe about

[25 : 57] God and everybody has a theology amen it may be a bad theology and most theologies are bad theologies but everybody has one everybody has some type of presuppositions or worldview about life and God everybody has that the apostles here are proclaiming the resurrection from the dead to Sadducees who guess what they don't believe they don't believe in the resurrection of the dead and why do they not believe in the resurrection of the dead because they have rejected the supernatural which is ironic because they actually acknowledge in verse 14 that the lame man is healed supernaturally figure that one out Sadducee right but they reject the supernatural and because they reject the supernatural they do not believe in the resurrection of the dead and so here's the thing for us to think about there's evidence but they don't want to acknowledge the evidence there's reasons to believe but they don't want to acknowledge those reasons it reminds me and I know others of you share this sense of humor with me but it reminds me of the

Lutheran satire video where Donald and Connell have a conversation with atheist Richard Dawkins here it is but what about all that stuff that defies scientific explanation isn't that evidence of God's existence yeah riddle us that Patrick stuff like what well how about the multitude of miracles in the bible chief among them the resurrection of our lord Jesus oh you sweet little simpletons people don't rise from the dead except for that one time Jesus rose from the dead yeah that was awesome no what I'm saying is that Jesus never rose from the dead and how do you know that Patrick because it's not possible for people to rise from the dead yeah we know that's why it was sort of a big deal when Jesus rose from the dead look I think you're far too uneducated to understand this but if people could rise from the dead then people would rise from the dead if Jesus could rise from the dead surely someone else would have risen from the dead as well other people have risen from the dead like who like all the people in the bible who rose from the dead because Jesus rose them from the dead not long before he himself rose from the dead well obviously you can't count those examples why not

Patrick because they come from the bible and the bible is a ridiculous book full of silly stories that couldn't possibly happen like people rising from the dead exactly right so according to you the resurrection doesn't prove the existence of god because it never happened and we know it never happened because we know that people can't rise from the dead and we know that people can't rise from the dead because no one ever has risen from the dead if you don't count all the people who have risen from the dead it's good stuff isn't it right listen the issue the issue isn't evidence the issue is spiritual blindness the issue is not evidence the issue is spiritual blindness you see those that are in the dark hate the light and they and by the way we're casting no judgment on anyone because I was there but by God's grace that helped me not only see the light but love the light ours is a story of grace we have no upper hand on anybody but listen the issue here is the issue here the issue here is that the gospel challenges what we believe the way we view the world the things that we think are real the gospel is calling you to a faith that isn't natural it's super natural to believe the gospel means you must surrender your theology to what God has revealed things like virgin births and miracles and the incarnation and yes the resurrection from the dead

I assure you and it has happened to be on many occasions when you start going out proclaiming the good news at the center of that is the resurrection of Jesus Christ you will be persecuted for that belief because there are many who refuse in their blindness to believe one of the reasons why the apostles face persecution and so will we is that it challenges our theology number two look at verse four but many of those who heard the word believed and the number of the men were about five thousand look at verse six with Annas and the high priest and Caiaphas and John Alexander all who were of the high priestly family so the second thing here is the gospel removes our authority the gospel removes our authority listen I don't have the time tonight we tease about how long the sermons go I don't know they're too long but if I could give you more context here I would but here's here's the short version the Sadducees were rock stars in this day and time

I mean I read you the names Annas the high priest Caiaphas John and Alexander who were of the high priestly family listen these were people that had lots of authority in the community these were the big dogs these were the politicians these were the people that listen they had all the reputation all the power all the money all of that they were a big deal and guess what five thousand men plus who knows how many other people are now following the movement of Jesus which means what they're no longer following us and they can feel that authority slipping from their hands they can feel that power shifting away and they will not lose their authority they will not let go of their power oh they are not about to let this happen and here's what we must understand faith family it's happened to us maybe to not that scale but to believe the gospel means you give up your authority are you ready for this you don't run your life anymore when the gospel comes in when Christ comes in

[32 : 19] I don't know if you know this but Jesus is king of kings and lord of say it lords he doesn't share his authority with you so when he is king of your life when he's lord of your life guess what whatever he says goes and there is something about that even for us Americans that hate that and there are going to be people listen as you proclaim the good news of Jesus that are going to say no way will I listen to you because I'm not going to give up my throne as Tom Petty said it's good to be king if just for a while you would be humming that song later all right listen I want the authority of my life I want to be the one that calls the shots well listen you can't follow Jesus and be your own king and so persecution happened because this power that people want and authority they want on their lives begins to slip away you are not in control you're not in control of your money you're not in control of your time you're not in control of your life

Jesus is and there are some that simply refuse to believe and follow that here's next not just does the gospel challenge our theology or our authority but notice in verse 11 one more this Jesus the stone that was rejected by you the builders which became the cornerstone and there is no salvation there is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved that is the gospel reveals our inability the gospel reveals our inability quick I gotta hurry up what what what's at the core of their religious system I say I gotta hurry up but we got nothing else to do so I just slow down but think with me for a minute what's at the core of their religious system these Sadducees the core of their religious system is this I'm trying to earn

God's favor through my obedience I'm trying to earn God's favor through the law I'm trying to keep the Mosaic law or keep the things the eyes of God listen what's at the core of the gospel you can't you can't do anything to make God pleased with you outside of faith in Jesus Christ amen here's my point it is very difficult to tell people who are trying hard to be good enough that they'll never be good enough I mean you want to be persecuted try that message out for size go tell people who are trying to get there on their own that they'll never be able to get there on their own and they will hate you but by God's gracious work in their life by which they see that reality and repent and trust

Christ alone faith family to believe the gospel means you admit that no one that you can't save yourself that salvation is only what Jesus there is no other name under heaven by which you can be saved you will not be saved by your own name it is in the name of Jesus only is it any wonder why the disciples were persecuted because by the very message of the gospel it challenges people's theology it challenges their own personal authority and it challenges their inability to be right with God on their own people don't declare it and yes and yet they must and we must be the ones that declare it to them because in doing so God brings people in to his family there is no mission without persecution so if there's no mission without persecution and if the gospel is by itself going to create that level of persecution then what do we need and

I will close with this point what do we need if we're going to be faithful to the mission that God has called us to answer boldness courage look at verse 13 now when they saw the what boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated common men they were astonished and they recognized they'd been with Jesus verse 29 and now Lord look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness verse 31 and when they had prayed the place in which they were gathered together were shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with this word is repeated three times in this passage which means we should stop and make it a main point the response to this persecution by the early church is this they didn't let the persecution deter them from the mission they didn't say oh this is getting too hard oh my goodness

[38 : 00] I never thought I'd end up in prison like I'm losing a lot of friends over this they had boldness they had courage they did not let any of this persecution deter them oh I'm sure it hurt them and I'm sure it was a struggle why they're human beings just like us but they had a courage in Christ that they were not going to be moved to the right or the left they were going to stay focused on the mission and I tell you that is a sermon for churches today in the church life that can just get you pulled off to the side on a whole bunch of nonsense you know what the apostles did said I'm not going to get tangled up in that junk I'm going to stay focused on the mission of Christ because that stuff doesn't matter here's what does matter telling people about the good news of

Christ so they didn't let this stuff deter them they remained courageous and bold with their faith it's the same thing for you as a Christian listen if it hasn't happened yet eventually it will life is going to knock you down and you need a courage and a boldness that gets back up and says I'm not going to let this circumstance I'm going through I'm not going to let this relational difficulty I'm not going to let this financial struggle keep me from being what God has called me to be are you with me that's a courage and a boldness to stay focused on the mission of Christ and you say well how do I get that boldness well I want to encourage your courage I want to encourage your courage with whatever you're facing in life and tell you where boldness comes from and it's not like the lion and you need to get in touch with that inner snowflake and once you do you just be a courageous lion out there in the world that's garbage let me show you where these

Christians found their boldness and then we'll be done number one there are five but I will do them quick number one they believed in the power of God they believed in the power of God let me show you this they inquired by what power or by what name did you do this so there's the question here's the answer verse 10 let it be known to all of you 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 is standing before you now they were courageous because they believed in the power of Jesus they knew that this name is not only powerful enough to save this name is powerful to destroy any situation we find ourselves in they believed in the power of God John MacArthur told a story once when he was in junior high about a kid that he used to pick on and a lot of his other football teammates used to pick on him you know kind of stuff him in the locker kind of picking on him and then the next day after doing this one time the kid asked them if they would join him outside the school and when they did they got introduced to that kid's older brother who played linebacker for

San Diego State he picked up one of the boys and threw him in the bushes MacArthur said we never bothered him again he went on to say this was the valuable lesson that I learned it doesn't matter how weak you are if you've got power backing you up it doesn't matter how weak you are when you have power backing you up which made me think about that scene in the Lion King where Simba is overmatched and tries to let out that roar but it's not all that intimidating until another voice comes along amen that is a spiritual metaphor right I mean I watched that clip and I'm like that's me standing up to preach right it's just like so weak it's like that's the best you could do and yet there's another voice behind me and it isn't my power it's the power of God it's the same thing with you when you're at work like you just kind of give this answer that you feel is so inadequate about the gospel but you don't realize it's not the power of your voice there's another voice behind you the apostles had boldness and courage because they knew it wasn't about their power it was about the power of

God through them and so what were they going to be afraid of what were they going to chicken! out about they would stand there knowing that there was another power at work listen faith family if the God who said let there be light and there was light if the God who said roll that stone away and it was rolled away is in us with us and for us it doesn't matter how weak you are because you got power backing you up and when we really believe that we will live!

[43 : 21] courageously and boldly number time with God and in God's presence God gives us and fills us with the boldness and courage we need let me show you it from the text we'll keep moving quickly verse 13 when they saw the boldness of Peter and John they perceived they were uneducated common men and they were astonished but watch this oh that this would be said of us but they recognized they been with Jesus and now look at verse 31 when they had prayed and the place in which they were gathered together was shaken they were filled with the Holy Spirit and they continued to speak the word of God with boldness listen these were uneducated common men so don't give me this but I've never been to seminary well I can tell you I've spent many years of my life in seminary a lot have you taken a certain course or do you have degrees by your name these were uneducated common men but this is what was true of them are you listening they'd been with

Jesus they'd been with Jesus and I'd trade 15 seminary degrees for that course being with Jesus gave them a power a boldness a courage to stand it reminds me of Joshua let me just read this quickly and we'll move on look at Exodus 33 verse 7 it says Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp far from the camp and he called it the tent of meeting and everyone who sought the Lord would go out of the tent of meeting which was outside the camp so this!

is the! where you would meet with God whenever Moses went out of the tent all the people would rise and would stand at the tent door and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent now when Moses entered the tent the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent and the Lord would speak to Moses and when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the speak to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend when Moses turned again into the camp watch his assistant Joshua the son of none a young man would not depart from the tent Joshua is the one who's called what in Joshua 1 courageous he was the strong and courageous one do you know why because he's the one that wouldn't leave the tent the one who spent time in the presence of

God notice this on the screen boldness comes from being with God boldness comes not from realizing how unique you are it comes by spending it in the presence of almighty God third they leaned on the people of God they leaned on the people of God I'll show you this in verse 23 verse 23 and when they were released what's the first thing they did they went to Starbucks no they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and elders had said to them in other words the first thing they did when they were released there is something that gives us courage when we know we're not fighting alone can I get an amen there's something that gives us boldness when we know we're not fighting alone that we have others with us and

I will tell you this I love our army at Faith Family we ain't perfect we are far from that we can't even pull off church the way many professional churches do but we have an army here that will stand with each other no matter what and there is there's a sense that gives us courage and boldness when we know we're not alone number four they trusted in the providence of God they trusted in the providence of God look at verse 24 and when they heard it they lifted their voices together to God and said sovereign Lord who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them in other words there is a direct connection between your boldness and your view of God these Christians!

[48 : 21] were absolutely convinced are you still we're almost done hang with me they were absolutely convinced that God was in control of their life so we're in prison we didn't want to end up in prison but we're here but we don't doubt that God's in control of this whether we get out or don't get out we trust God in this God has a plan for our life in fact what's interesting is what they sing if you keep reading in Acts like verse 25 through 26 is they actually sing Psalm 2 do you know what Psalm 2 is about it's about God's authority over human authorities why do the nations rage why do they plot in vain right all these human authorities are trying to rise up against God's authority and God laughs there is no human authority above the authority of God and so that enabled them to be courageous and bold because they knew it doesn't really matter what the human authorities say our God is more powerful and more sovereign and more in control than they could ever imagine they are and so we will not be silent lastly is they had the approval of

God they had the approval of God I point out as I close what you're like you've said that too many times disciples in verse 19 but Peter and John answered them whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God you must judge for we cannot speak of what we have we cannot but speak of what we have seen or heard and when they had further threatened them they let them go finding no way to punish them because of the people for all were praising note there's a whole sermon here but listen one is confident and doesn't care what other people think the other is cowardly and when they see how much people are praising God they begin to back down because they're afraid of the crowd what's the difference the disciples knew they had

God's approval the religious leaders were living for man's approval and that's why they were able to be bold because listen nothing will make you more irrelevant to the mission than a disease to please only the gospel can overcome your idolatry for approval because the gospel eliminates our desire to be accepted by everyone because we've already been accepted by the one the ultimate one notice this on the screen the boldness you need to share the gospel comes from the gospel listen I might be persecuted in a way where people don't like me but I am loved by God what does what they think of me really matter and so knowing who you are in Christ gives you the boldness and the courage to be a witness for Christ these are the things that produce the boldness in the disciples to carry out the mission in the face of persecution the apostles essentially looked at the counsel that killed

Jesus and said this go ahead and beat us we've been beaten before go ahead and imprison us we've been placed on trial before go ahead and kill us we've been killed before and by the way how'd that turn out don't you see gospel boldness comes from knowing there's nothing others can do to you that Jesus hasn't already done for you but what if they kill me he died for you but what if they mock me he was mocked for you there's nothing anybody can do to you that Jesus hasn't already done for you faith family there is no mission without persecution there is no mission without persecution when it comes to following

Jesus there are no hidden fees because what were the very words that Jesus said to all those that would come and follow him here they are whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me and Jesus knows more than any of us the cost of carrying a cross and all God's people said amen Lord thank you for this message it's a lot but I do pray that there's been some things said that have encouraged your people encourage them to have conversations they know that might be difficult about the gospel maybe there's family members that don't know the Lord maybe there's people they've worked with that they've never shared with maybe there's other ways of being a witness!

[53 : 47] that you've laid on people's heart tonight but give us boldness give us that same kind of gospel courage that is not afraid of American culture it's not afraid of what man might do to us because Jesus you have already done for us all we'll ever need and so help us even in the face of persecution which we will face remain focused on the mission of proclaiming Christ and sharing the good news wherever we go in Jesus name we pray amen to to to be to be to be!

to be to!