

Grace and Boldness

Welcome

Text: Acts 3-4

Intro: Grace and Boldness

1. Grace and boldness to heal. Acts 3:1-8

Explain: I love Peter. He is one of my heroes. Peter had a powerful experience with Jesus that filled him with grace and boldness. One day, he is on his way to church, and there is a crippled man, sitting by the gate, begging as people are coming into the temple to worship. This man was cripple from birth, cripple for years, and every day he was placed here by family or friends to beg. Peter has been going to the temple his entire life. He probably knows this man by name. In fact, he has probably given him money many times but today something is different. Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter is filled with grace and boldness. Today, Peter cannot just walk by or even throw a coin in his cup to appease his conscious. Today, Peter sees this man through a new set of eyes. Today, he has grace for his suffering. Today, he is going to do something. He looks intently at him. Waiting on the Holy Spirit to direct and then he makes a bold declaration, “silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have, I will give you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk! The man stands to his feet, begins to walk, and the next thing you know he is leaping, shouting and praising God! Everyone is amazed!

We have to be careful not to turn a blind eye to the pain and suffering in our world.

Why are more people not healed when we pray?

- **Healing is in the atonement.** 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 53-57. Eventually, we will all be healed!
- **God still does miracles.** We have experienced several miracles this year. Most recent Freedom conference. James 5:16, “Pray for each other, that you might be healed” Keep praying and asking.
- **There was a special anointing on the apostles.** Matthew 9:35-10:1
- **We have idolized health and wealth which has often become a barrier to faith.** Some people are sitting in judgement on God for not doing what they want. When we read the Bible, from cover to cover we see suffering, we see the sovereignty and wisdom of God and we see God present in our suffering. This man has suffered his entire life but his suffering led to this miracle and an explosion of faith!
- **Over all we are far healthier than we have ever been.** In the First Century, the average life expectancy at birth was around **30 years**, primarily due to extremely high infant and child mortality rate. Even if a person survived childhood life expectancy was in the mid 50s. In America today that number is 78 years and if you remove contributing factors like

accidents, smoking, alcoholism, and obesity the number is closer to 90. Christians brought healing into our world. Not only by the healing power of the spirit but also the healing power of medicine. Historically speaking it was the hunger of Christians for truth, their desire to know God that dramatically advanced science and healthcare. It was the generosity of Christians that built most of the world's hospitals. It was Christians who believed they were called by God to bring healing into our world and we have all benefited. This is not heaven. We must be careful about clinging to this world. Death is a significant upgrade.

Books: *Person of Interest*, *Unimaginable*

Apply: We can be a source of healing.

2. Grace and Boldness to tell our friends the truth. Acts 3:15-20a

Explain: Remember, it was the Jews who condemned Jesus, who was also a Jew, to die. Peter is a Jew but obviously, He is a Messianic Jew, meaning Peter believes Jesus is the long-awaited Jewish messiah. He stands up in the Jewish Temple and tells his Jewish friends and family the truth.

Read: Acts 3:15-20a

This is hard to do, right? Often our family and friends are more difficult to witness to. Well, don't feel bad, you are in good company.

Argue: Matthew 13:54-58, Often, family rejects your testimony and the lack of faith limits God's work. This has also been true for me. I have had much more impact in the community and with you than my own family.

Illustrate: Noah/community, Joseph/brothers, Jacob/Laban, David/brothers

Apply: What can we do?

- **Live by example.** Preach the gospel and if necessary, use words. Francis of Assisi
- **Be gracious.** Often, the reason people are not open to our witness is it feels judgmental. What is the difference between judgement and truth telling? Judgement is condemning, attacking, offensive. Truth telling is explaining the truth in such a way that it feels like a gracious invitation to trust God and live!
- **Remind those we love, the rules are for us!**
- **Peter sprinkles grace in with the truth:**
 - o You killed him, but God raised him
 - o Calls them friends
 - o What you did, you did in ignorance, you thought you were doing the right thing
 - o God knew this was going to happen, Jesus had to die
 - o Turn back to God for forgiveness and refreshment from the presence of God!

3. Grace and Boldness to defy your enemies. Acts 4:10-12

Explain: While Peter and John are preaching the priest, the religious leaders arrested them, put them in jail, and the next day brought them before the religious council and leaders to question them. They want to know; in what name, by whose authority and power did you perform this miracle? These are the same religious authorities who crucified Jesus.

Read: Acts 4:10-12

- **Vs. 13**, Amazed by their boldness, which was based on experience.
- Ordinary men, extraordinary encounter with extraordinary God.
- **Vs. 16**, What should we do, their testimony is undeniable.
- **Vs. 17**, Let's tell them to stop.

Acts 4:19-22, We must obey God, not man.

Illustrate: Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego- bow down and worship the golden image, furnace

- Daniel- Do not pray, lion's den.

Argue: Joshua 24:15, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Apply: Family, work, government. We will obey the Lord!

4. Prayer for more Grace and Boldness! Acts 4:29-31

Explain: If you were in this situation, what would you be praying for? God change the government. God keep us safe, protect us. God, move us. Maybe Jerusalem is too dangerous. God hide us, so they do not attack us. Give us boldness and power to glorify your name!

Illustrate: India, 1996, We thank you...give us boldness. Finny's mom, "cut my throat."

Argue: Acts 1:8

Apply: God has promised power! Courage comes from presence. When we live with the conviction, God is with me, we are full of courage in the face of life's challenges. We know we are not alone, God is with us!

Invitation: God give us grace and boldness!