

“Open Heart” Series, Mark Schaap, Part I Text for 5/12/2020

Text: Acts 4:1-31

Cross References: Persecution; 2 Timothy 3:12, John 15:18, Matthew 5:10, 2 Corinthians 12:10
Boldness: Matthew 4:21-22, John 7:15, Denial: Luke 22:54-60

Commentary: (Act 4:5-7) Peter and John are brought before the Sanhedrin.

And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, “By what power or by what name have you done this?”

a. Rulers, elders, and scribes... were gathered together: This was a scene of power and intimidation. This same group of leaders had recently condemned Jesus to death, and they wanted them to know that they had the power to do the same thing to Peter and John.

b. By what power or by what name have you done this? The ideas behind by what power and by what name are virtually the same. In their thinking, the power resided in the name, because the name represented the character of the person. (David Guzik)

(Act 4:13) What they saw in Peter and John’s character.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

a. They were uneducated and untrained men: In a sense, we should probably disagree with the opinion of the Jewish leaders judging Peter and John. Certainly they were uneducated in one sense – they, like Jesus, had no formal rabbinic education according to the customs and standards of that time. Yet they were educated in two more important ways: they knew the Scriptures, and they had been with Jesus. (David Guzik)

(Act 4:23-24) Introduction: They acknowledge their God. The early church prays for boldness.

And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: “Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them.”

a. Reported all that the chief priests and elders had said: Peter and John had good news to report. We can picture them saying, “We got to tell them about Jesus! They realized we were like Jesus! They told us not to tell others about Jesus!”

i. In response, the early Christian community – their own companions, probably the apostles and some others – had a prayer meeting. Important events moved them to prayer.

b. They raised their voice: They prayed vocally. It is certainly possible to pray silently in our minds, but we focus our thoughts more effectively when we speak out in prayer.

i. Voice is in the singular. This means that they did not all pray individually, speaking at the same time. One person prayed and all agreed with that one, so that they were really praying with one voice.

ii. “With one accord they lift up their voice to God. This does not mean that they all prayed at once. That would have been confusion. Disorder in meetings, a number of people talking at the same time in a boisterous way with outward demonstrations, is an evidence that the Holy Spirit is not leading, for God is not a God of disorder.” (Gaebelein)

c. With one accord: They prayed in unity. There was no strife or contention among them. There wasn't one group saying, “We should pray for this” and another saying, “we should pray for that.” They had the same mind when they prayed. (David Guzik)