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| ***Title:*** | Fishers of Men |
| ***Text:*** | Acts 4:1-22 |
| ***Subject:*** | How did Peter and John have the boldness to preach the gospel even in the face of opposition? |
| ***Compliment:*** | The boldness came by virtue of what they were, fishers of men, made so by Jesus. |
| ***CIT:*** | Peter and John had the boldness to preach the gospel even in the face of opposition by virtue of what they were, fishers of men, made so by Jesus! |
| ***Purpose:*** | To show the transforming power of a real walk with Jesus Christ! |
| ***Homiletic Idea:*** | In order for you and I to have the boldness of Peter and John we are going to have to become what they were, and that change can only be brought about by Jesus through spending time with Him! |
| ***Intro:*** |  |

I think you will begin to notice a trend here. Acts 1 the disciples find out that the Gospels were only the beginning. There is more that Jesus intends to do through the church He established of which they are a part, and so they are told, by Jesus, to do what? Preach the gospel! Acts chapter 2 the Holy Spirit is poured out upon man, the comforter has come, the green light is given and what is the first thing Peter does? He stands and preaches the gospel. In Chapter 3 a lame man of over 40 years is healed, the people wonder, they flock to Peter and John, and what does Peter do? Peter preaches the gospel.

Both gospel presentations were very direct and very incriminating, and very bold, by the way. Both times he charges his audience, and rightly so, with the death of their Messiah! So we have 3 chapters down, and 1 command to preach the gospel and two gospel presentations given and thousands of people are saved at both.

In Acts chapter 4 we find Peter and John staring into the face of opposition. The first two groups Peter preached to weren’t necessarily anxious to hear the gospel, but this one is absolutely opposed to this Jesus of Nazareth. That is the very reason they had the disciples arrested was preaching in that name. After all, this Jesus challenged the level of influence the Pharisees and Sadducees had with the people. They were the main advocates for Jesus death! Peter and John stand before their inquisitors and what does Peter do? Peter stands up and preaches the gospel, and points directly at them and charges them with the blood of their Messiah as well! What boldness! He wasn’t rude! He just shot straight. I think that is important to notice.

Where did such boldness come from? Where did they get the boldness to bust out the gospel regardless of what was standing before them?

(CIT Stated) Peter and John had the boldness to preach the gospel even in the face of opposition by virtue of what they were, fishers of men, made so by Jesus!

They preached the gospel not because they were able to muster up the courage to do so. They had become something, and an almost instinctive aspect of this new creature they had been changed into was its inclination to preach the gospel in a manner that would seem to some as almost reckless.

What had they become you ask. How did this change take place? They had become fishers of men! In order find out how they became Fishers of Men we would have to look at Matt. 4:18-23.

1. ***Jesus said he would make them to BE fishers of men, but they would have to follow Jesus!*** (stay close, spend time with Him, walk with Him) Matt. 4:19

Trans: We know looking at chapters 2 & 3 of the Book of Acts, and especially here in chapter 4 that they must have obeyed Jesus and that Jesus wasn’t lying! It worked just as Jesus said! They followed Him and He changed them! So they preach and…

1. ***The Sadducees have the apostles arrested and questioned.*** V1-7
   1. Sadducees didn’t like Jesus.
   2. Sadducees didn’t believe in a resurrection from the dead.
   3. So as a test they asked by what power or by what name. (almost giving the disciples an out for they knew in whose name they preached V2)
2. ***Peter, in response, preaches the gospel to them in a very direct way.*** (pulling no punches) V8-12
   1. Peter and John Preach in Jesus name.
   2. The Sadducees respond by having them arrested
   3. Peter responds by preaching in Jesus name some more…
      1. Bold? Yes.
      2. Smart? Not so much…
      3. At least not seemingly but what could be smarter than following Jesus?
      4. Besides He couldn’t help it!
3. ***The Sadducees “marvel” at the boldness of Peter and John and take note of the company they kept.*** V13
   1. Three observations made by the Sadducees: They were bold, they were unlearned, and they had been with Jesus!
      1. Peter and John’s expertise as fishermen was fishing and fish.
      2. Sadducees’ expertise as Masters of the Law was religious matters.
   2. It was odd for such men to speak up in the presence of the Sadducees, the known and accepted authority on religious matters, much less challenge them…
      1. The Sadducees were learned.
      2. The Apostles were not, yet…
      3. They spoke boldly and powerfully.

Transition: The Sadducees are standing there jaw dropped scratching their heads…”What’s going on here?” What would make a fisherman so bold as to think he could tell a religious master his business? Lots of time with Jesus!

The only thing that they could think of to make sense out of this phenomenon (the ignorant boldly standing against the learned) was that these guys had been with Jesus…

Illustrate: You ever seen a big dog look at a small dog that is acting as though it is going to take out the big dog (tilts head)? That’s the idea I get here. The only difference the Sadducees could identify as a possible answer was that these guys had been with Jesus, and they were right!

* 1. Jesus was indeed the answer for what the Apostles had become!
     1. They followed Jesus…
     2. And He transformed them! (more on this later)

Transition: So what are the Sadducees going to do about it?

1. ***The Sadducees devise a plan.*** V14-18, 21-22
   1. Can’t deny what took place. V14, 16
   2. People are glorifying God. V21-22
   3. We’ll just make them stop speaking in THIS NAME. V17-18

Transition: Sounds like a good plan, but…this wasn’t something Peter and John just mustered up the courage to do, nor was it something they could turn off like a switch.

1. ***There preaching was a manifestation of what they were in action!*** V19-20 (read then go to points)
   1. You determine who it is we ought to obey here, You or God,
      1. This seems kind of like a jab at the Sadducees.
      2. “We know you are the ‘authority’ on such issues as this so we’ll let you figure this part out”
   2. But it isn’t within our power to stop.
      1. The Greek word for cannot is ‘*ou’*
      2. It means an absolute negation!

Transition: “Stopping? It’s not even possible to conceive! It just is what it is!” After all they had been transformed! Jesus transformed them as they followed Him! They preached the gospel because that is what they were, not just something they did!

Illustration: Ducks act like ducks by virtue of what they are. It is instinct for a duck to act like a duck. Humans act like humans. There was an article the other day I read about the monkey boy of Uganda.

He had survived in the wild for years. When he was found they said he moved and looked and sounded just like a monkey. Though he was a human physically, mentally he was a monkey.

His physiology did not determine what he was. His, psychology, his mind did. The reason he, mentally, was a wild animal is because that is what he was raised by. He spent all his time with monkeys and a monkey is what he became. He wasn’t trying to act like a monkey…he was a monkey as far as he was concerned.

***They weren’t exaggerating… it wasn’t possible for them to stop…it’s what they were!***

**Transition to Application:** Peter and John had the boldness to preach the gospel even in the face of opposition by virtue of what they were, fishers of men, made so by Jesus!

What about you? Do you find it hard not to preach the gospel? Do you find it welling up within you to the point that you just can’t contain it any longer? Are you ever on the lookout for opportunities to tell others about Jesus? No? Have you been with Jesus?

* What about this morning?
* What about yesterday?
* What about last week?
* Do you have a date with Jesus tomorrow?

You say, “I wish I had the boldness of Peter and John to preach the gospel like that, I just don’t!”

How about this?

* Let’s start by spending time with Jesus!
* Let’s start by making up our minds to follow Him!

What the Apostles became enabled them to be used of the Lord greatly, this is true!

But the Apostles had become what they were by virtue of Jesus transforming and renewing work in their lives!

And that transforming work was possible because they obeyed Jesus and followed Him! ***“they had been with Jesus”***

* To follow means to come here after or behind.
  + You go where Jesus goes or where Jesus leads.
    - You have to see where He is.
    - And in order to follow once you see where He is then you have to go there too!
  + Illustrate by having someone come up and Jesus going one way and then you going another.
    - That’s not following.
    - I got to be with Him if I’m going to follow Him.
    - I can watch Him all day move around… but it isn’t following unless I am going too!
* You say, “Jesus is not before us!” - but His Word is!
* You want to know Jesus? Yes!
  + Get in His Word!
  + John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word”
  + I Jn. 5:7 “For there are three that bear record in Heaven”
* You want to spend time with Jesus? Yes.
  + Get into His Word!
* You want to follow Jesus? Yes!
  + When you get into His Word, go where He has gone with regard to truth in your life!
  + Where the Word leads you follow!
  + What you believe about anything:
    - Marriage
    - Parenting
    - Church life
    - That all needs to be determined by the Book!
    - That’s following Jesus!
* Spend time with Jesus and He will change you so that you become something new!
* You want boldness to do what we are obligated to do, as Paul said He was a debtor so are we!?
  + Spend time with Jesus!
* “Don’t speak in that name!” said the Pharisees. “We can’t help it!” said the apostles!
  + That’s a far cry from Peter’s unwillingness to say before even a little girl that he had been with Jesus after Jesus’ capture!

Transition: He couldn’t claim Jesus before. He can’t deny Jesus now. You tell me if following Jesus made a difference!

Conclusion: (Homiletic Idea) In order for you and I to have the boldness of Peter and John we are going to have to become what they were, and that change can only be brought about by Jesus through spending time with Him; following Him.

* Do you get in the Book daily to see where Jesus is on the issues of life?
* Once you see where He is do you work to be there too in an effort to follow Him?
* How much time do you spend in His Word throughout a normal day?
* Is His Word essential to your life or just a part, or even a part?
* Our careers are just a part of our lives… Do you know how to conduct your life as a believer, or as a disciple of Jesus Christ, as well as you know how to conduct your life as an employee?
* What if you handled the relationship with your spouse in the same way that you handled your relationship with Jesus?
  + How well would you know your spouse?
  + Would you even be married still?
* Jesus is supposed to be the most important person to us.
  + How well do you know Him?

Peter and John had boldness as a result of what they were, and that came by spending time with Jesus!

***In order for us to have the boldness they had, we have to be what they were, and in order for us to be what they were we have to do what they did…***

***Could it be said about you?***

***(Your Name Here) has been with Jesus!***

***In order for us to have the boldness they had, we have to be what they were, and in order for us to be what they were we have to do what they did… “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”***

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| ***Dates and Locations Delivered*** | |  |
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