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| ***Title:*** | Moving Forward in the Face of Fear |
| ***Text:*** | Acts 4:23-35 |
| ***Subject:*** | What did the apostles to do when faced with fierce opposition? |
| ***Compliment:*** | Acknowledging God’s sovereignty, they sought Him for boldness to continue the work He called them to do! |
| ***CIT:*** | When faced with fierce opposition the apostles, acknowledging God’s sovereignty, sought God’s face for boldness to continue the work He had called them to do! |
| ***Purpose:*** | To encourage church members to trust the sovereignty of God and seek Him for boldness even in the face of opposition. |
| ***Homiletic Idea:*** | God’s work is still met with opposition therefore we need to trust God’s sovereignty and seek Him for boldness to continue even though fear would have us quit! |
| ***Intro:*** |  |

“*Your level of confidence in the designer makes all the difference in the world regarding how you respond to his direction*.”

The Idea: The events following the miraculous healing of the lame man and the preaching of the gospel could have caused the apostles to second guess their openness with the gospel regardless of what God had commanded them to do. After all, they were threatened with violence. They were going to get into serious trouble if they continued to follow Jesus as they had. The religious leaders of the day made it clear that they would act with force to stop them and they had the law on their side. So what did the apostles do?

Well (very matter of fact) very simply…

(CIT Stated) When faced with fierce opposition the apostles, acknowledging God’s sovereignty, sought God’s face for boldness to continue the work He had called them to!

When the one you are following knows the beginning from the end what else is there to do but follow Him?

1. ***They understood God was in control (Sovereign)! V23-28***
   1. He is Lord! V24
      1. The Greek word is *despotes*
      2. We get our English word despot from this
      3. A despot is one who exercises absolute power either benevolently or abusively!
   2. He is the creator! V24
   3. He had declared already what sort of reception Christ would receive from this world! V25-27
   4. All things up to this point had happened according to God’s plan! V28
2. ***Therefore they resigned themselves to His will! V29-30***

Transition: God knows the beginning from the end. He knew the response we would get before He ever commanded us to preach, and so they couldn’t quit, but they were still afraid!

* 1. They were open with God as to the cause of their fear. V29a
     1. God didn’t upbraid them for their fear.
     2. They didn’t use their fear as an excuse to quit though!

Transition: They were afraid because they knew the response they had to look forward to from now on from the religious leaders and those in authority, but they knew God was aware of this as well. He knew it would be this way long before He commanded them to preach the gospel in Jesus name, and therefore being resigned to His will…

* 1. They asked for boldness rather than deliverance! (this demonstrates faith and trust that God does indeed know what’s going on and that He is in control)V29b-30
     1. They weren’t looking to just preach which would have drawn enough attention.
     2. They were asking God to continue the miraculous works that so strongly validated the message they were preaching in Jesus name!
     3. They would certainly draw attention this way, but God knows best!

Transition: So here they are. They lay themselves at God’s feet. They resign themselves to His will, and place their very lives at His disposal. What happens?

1. ***God honored their request! V31-35*** 
   1. Having fully yielded themselves to God, His Holy Spirit more fully occupied their hearts enabling them to more boldly preach The Word! V31
   2. Having fully yielded their entire lives to the work, they had unity (something they didn’t even ask for)! V32
   3. The apostles witnessed with great power and experienced great grace (another benefit of simply having faith and being obedient)! V33-35
      1. The idea behind the word “power” is ability. They had a great ability to preach beyond what would be natural. V33
      2. “grace” has to do with favor. Notice it doesn’t say God’s grace, but great grace. One commentator said this was a reference to the favorable opinion of the citizens of Jerusalem. There would be a sense of respect for this church because of its testimony of loving and caring for one another. V33-35

***Transition to Application:*** God is still in control, and there is still a work for His people to do! His power has not weakened, His will is the same, and this world’s regard for that work has not changed!

What are we to do?

(Homiletic Idea Stated) Just like the apostles, we need to trust God’s sovereignty and seek Him for boldness to continue even though fear would have us quit or be silent.

* God is still in control!
  + He is still Sovereign Lord, *despotes,* the ruler who exercises absolute power!
  + He is still the designer and creator!
  + He still knows all the beginning from the end!
    - He knows how the world will respond!
    - He knew before ever directing His people to be His witnesses!
    - We aren’t informing Him of anything new when we remind Him that times have changed and people just aren’t open to the gospel anymore!
    - ***They weren’t open to the gospel when the gospel was brand new!***

**God knows therefore just get on board and give yourself over to His direction!**

* Therefore we need to resign ourselves to His will!
  + Resign defined:
    - **1.** To submit (oneself) passively; accept as inevitable
    - **2.** To give up (a position, for example),
    - **3.** To relinquish (a privilege, right, or claim).
  + **God wants me to do this, it must be best, therefore I’ll do it.**
    - But there will be danger
    - But there will be opposition
    - My friends won’t like it if I am boldly proclaiming Christ
    - Nor will my family
    - Nor will my school
    - Nor will my work
    - I could get into trouble
  + These are all legitimate concerns. Therefore you can either:
    - Quit and opt out of God’s will or desire for you, or
    - Ask God for boldness because you want to follow Him, but obedience to Him in this regard presents some legitimate challenges accompanied by some legitimate fears.
* ***God will honor your request!***

***Conclusion:***

“*Your level of confidence in the designer makes all the difference in the world regarding how you respond to his direction*.”

The apostles when faced with fierce opposition, acknowledged God’s sovereignty, and sought God’s face for boldness to continue the work He had called them to do!

God is still in control, and there is still a work for His people to do! His power has not weakened, His will is the same, and this world’s regard for that work has not changed!

Therefore, just like the apostles, we need to trust God’s sovereignty and seek Him for boldness to continue the work even though fear would have us quit or be silent.

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