

HOPE AND HELP

Sermon Notes | Acts 4:1-37 (NIV)

Sunday, October 18, 2026 | Tim

THE BIG IDEA

God gives us power to share hope and give help.

1 PRESSURE

Acts 4:1-22

2 PRAYER

Acts 4:23-30

3 POWER

Acts 4:31

4 PROOF

Acts 4:32-37

THE OPENING

Good morning, Brook family. If you're new, we're in a short series called *Sent*. It's part of a bigger theme: letting God have more of us so we can experience more of him. We just finished a stretch on developing a healthier mindset and margin with our treasures. Now we're asking what a healthier mindset and margin look like for our lives on mission.

We're using the word *sent* on purpose. In the same way God sent Jesus, Jesus has sent us.

Last week, Nick showed us that he sends us to people, and he asked: who is your one? Next week, Ryan will talk about the places he sends us. This morning is the middle question. Sent with what? The answer is power. He sends us in power. Turn with me to Acts 4.

So here is the whole message in one sentence. I'll say it again at the end.

God gives sent people the power to share hope and give help.

By hope I mean the good news of Jesus that we share. By help I mean the real, practical, hands-on care we give. Hope to share. Help to give. And we do both in the strength God supplies, not in our own.

We are going to watch it happen in one chapter. Turn to Acts, chapter 4. Four words will carry us. I want you to say them with me: Pressure. Prayer. Power. Proof.

1 PRESSURE

Acts 4:1-22 | Anchor 4:18

IN ONE LINE: Sent people feel the pull to go quiet or go safe.

The story starts right after something wonderful. In chapter 3, Peter and John healed a man who had been lame, at the temple gate, and the whole city saw it. Then Peter started talking about Jesus. And that is when the trouble began.

They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. (Acts 4:2)

They are arrested. They spend the night in jail. And the next morning they stand in front of the most powerful men in Jerusalem, who ask them one question. Listen to the question. It's the word we've been talking about all morning.

"By what power or what name did you do this?" (Acts 4:7)

By what power? And watch how Peter answers.

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus

Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed." (Acts 4:8-10)

Do you see it? They were asked about an act of kindness. That's the help. And Peter walks right through that open door and says the name of Jesus. That's the hope.

The help opened the door. The name walked through it.

Now look at who these men are.

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13)

Unschooled. Ordinary. Not credentials. They had been with Jesus.

Don't sleep on this. Being with Jesus is transformative. The more we're with Jesus the more we speak like Jesus. The more we're with Jesus, the more we act like Jesus. The more we're with Jesus the less of our own wisdom, boldness, and status is evident and the more of HIS wisdom, boldness, and status shines through us. THAT's what's going on here – and it's obvious to everyone around us.

Spurgeon from his sermon - Christ's People – Imitators of Him

: Behold! what a change divine grace will work in a man, and in how short a time. That same Peter, who so lately followed his master afar off, and with oaths and curses denied that he knew his name, is now to be found side by side with the loving John, boldly declaring that there is salvation in none other name save that of Jesus Christ, and preaching the resurrection of the dead, through the sacrifice of his dying Lord.

Now watch what the rulers do. They have a problem, and they say it out loud.

"Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name." (Acts 4:16-17)

They can't argue with the help. Nobody can. A man who couldn't walk is walking. What they cannot stand is the name. And so the pressure comes down to one command.

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. (Acts 4:18)

In other words: do all the good you want. Just keep Jesus out of it.

Most people appreciate compassion.

Serve people.

Help people.

Care for people.

Few people object to that.

But the moment you explain that Jesus is the source of your hope, the pressure often begins. That is exactly what happened in Acts 4.

The help opened the door.

The name walked through it.

Why do you think this is? I believe that this is because people want all of the help that Jesus has to offer without the responsibility of having a relationship with Him. They want what Bonhoeffer called “cheap grace” -

“Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate” Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book Discipleship.

Said in a much shorter way “If you want the benefits of Christ without Christ himself, you will get neither” Tim Keller from his book The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith.

That pressure didn't die in the first century. It's alive in our world and in our hearts. It comes in two forms. One is the pressure to go quiet: to serve, to be nice, to be helpful, and never say why. The other is the pressure to go safe: to say the right things from a distance, to post it, to think it, to agree with it, but never get close enough for it to cost us anything.

How did Peter and John respond? They refused to pick one.

But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:19-20)

Every sent person feels this tension.

Will I stay quiet?

Or will I trust God and speak?

Will I stay safe?

Or will I move toward people who need Jesus?

But here's the question: how do you stand like that when the pressure is real? They didn't have a strategy. They had a prayer. Pressure. Now Prayer.

2 PRAYER

Acts 4:23-30 | Anchor 4:29-30

IN ONE LINE: They asked for boldness to speak and for God to act.

Peter and John are released. Where do they go? Not to a strategy meeting. Not to the press.

On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them." (Acts 4:23-24)

Three things I want you to notice before we get to the request.

First, they go to their own people. Sent people are not solo. If you are trying to live on mission alone, hear this: God never designed you to do it by yourself.

The language of the Great Commission points to this. We are commanded to baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The words here are amazing.

What are we supposed to do?

Baptize (baptizo = to immerse). (I know you like that part :))

What are we supposed to immerse them in?

The name (onoma = it means both the character of someone AND it means the surname) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The hearer of this would have known that Jesus was saying that He wants us to go out and immerse nonbelievers in the family of God – i.e. The Church - i.e. THAT'S US!!

Pastor [Mark Dever](#) -“teaches that the **Great Commission** (Matthew 28:18–20) is fundamentally tied to the life and ministry of the local church rather than just individual or freelance Christian activity”.

Second, they pray together. They raised their voices together.

Third, they start with who God is. Sovereign Lord. You made the heavens and the earth and the sea. Whatever the rulers have threatened, the one they are talking to made the ground the rulers are standing on.

And then they do something that's easy to miss. They pray the Bible. They quote Psalm 2, a psalm of David.

"Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one." (Acts 4:25-26)

If you want to know what it looks like to use God's words well, here it is. They don't just read the Word. They pray the Word. Scripture shapes the prayer.

And now, the request. Be ready, because this is the surprising part.

"Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." (Acts 4:29-30)

Read that again. They have just been threatened. They have just been told to shut up. And they do not ask God to take away the threats. They say, consider them, Lord. You see them. And then two requests.

The first request is for hope: enable us to speak your word with great boldness. The second is for help: stretch out your hand to heal. Hope and help, in the same breath, in the same prayer.

They didn't ask for easier. They asked for bolder.

Honestly, that's not usually my first prayer. My first prayer is often:

"Lord, make this easier."

Their prayer was:

"Lord, use us in the middle of it."

They asked for two things.

Boldness to speak.

Power to serve.

Hope and help.

In the same prayer.

Let me say something carefully. This prayer is not a promise that every hurt will be healed on our schedule. Some of you are carrying real pain right now, and I won't pretend otherwise. What this prayer does show us is what sent people ask for: Lord, you act, and you use us. Pressure. Prayer. And then, Power.

3 POWER

Acts 4:31 | Rom. 8:9; Eph. 1:13, 5:18

IN ONE LINE: God fills, and the power is supplied, not stored.

What happens next is one verse. Read it with me.

*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.
(Acts 4:31)*

Notice the order. They prayed. The place shook. They were filled. And then they spoke. Not a plan, not a personality, not a platform. Prayer, then power, then words.

“That’s because they were speaking God’s words and not their own. There’s some solid advice right there”. - Thom Mozloom

Now some of you are wondering, wait, don't I already have the Holy Spirit? And the answer is yes, if you belong to Christ. Listen to Paul.

And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. (Romans 8:9)

When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 1:13)

So if you have trusted Christ, you received the Spirit the moment you believed. He lives in you.

The issue isn't whether I have the Spirit.

The issue is whether the Spirit has all of me.

You never have to wonder whether you have enough of him to start.

That's what Paul is talking about in another letter.

Instead, be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)

Two things about that sentence. It's a command, not a suggestion. And the way it's written means keep on being filled, again and again. Indwelling happens once, at the moment you're saved. Filling is something we keep yielding to, day after day.

Adrian Rogers used to tell the story of a man who owned a brand-new car but never discovered it had an engine.

Imagine watching him push it everywhere he went.

Up hills.

Around corners.

Through town.

Exhausted.

Frustrated.

Struggling.

All the while, the power he needed was already there.

Rogers said that's how many Christians live.

We push when God intends us to depend.

We strive when God intends us to surrender.

The Christian life was never meant to be pushed.

It was meant to be powered by the Spirit of God.

[Credit: Adrian Rogers, "How to Have a Spirit-Filled Life," Love Worth Finding.]

And look at the people in Acts 4. They had already received the Spirit. Back at Pentecost in Acts 2. Peter was filled just a few verses ago, when he stood in front of the rulers (Acts 4:8). And here they are, filled again. This isn't a one-time event you get at the beginning and then try to live off for the rest of your life. It's a supply you keep yielding to.

Peter says the same thing later in his own letter (1 Peter 4:11). If you serve, he says, do it with the strength God provides. Provides. Not the strength you muster. The strength he supplies.

Supplied, not stored.

The Christian life is not powered by stored power.

It is lived from a daily supply.

That's why Jesus taught us to pray for daily bread (Matthew 6:11).

That's why believers are repeatedly filled throughout Acts.

That's why yesterday's walk with God won't sustain today's assignment.

We need fresh dependence.

We need fresh surrender.

We need fresh filling.

You belong to Christ.

The Spirit lives in you.
Now yield yourself to His leadership and power today.
Some of us don't need more information.
We need more surrender.
We don't need another conference.
We don't need another podcast.
We need to wake up tomorrow morning and say:

"Holy Spirit, I belong to Jesus. Have all of me today."

some of you are thinking, I'm not a speaker. I'm not gifted. I don't have the training. Go back to verse 13. Unschooled, ordinary men. The power was never in the credentials. It was in the one who fills.

Also the reason for the crowd approach that's inherent in the Great Commission. You might not be a gifted speaker but the family's got a ton of them. You might not be the a good personality match to disciple that person – but we've got a lot of people and all different types of personalities. Look around the congregation. I don't know anything about construction – but that's why we have Chris and Nick. I don't know anything about real estate but that's why we have Steve and Marley. I don't

So the power comes in answer to prayer, and it flows out of the room. Where does it go? That's the last question. Pressure. Prayer. Power. And Proof.

4 PROOF

Acts 4:32-37 | Anchor 4:33-34

IN ONE LINE: People heard the hope and saw the help.

What does the power actually look like when it lands in a church? Luke tells us.

*All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.
With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that*

there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. (Acts 4:32-35)

Do you see the two halves in one breath?

With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

That's the hope.

God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them.

That's the help.

People heard the hope.

People saw the help.

They heard the gospel proclaimed.

They saw the gospel demonstrated.

They heard about the love of Jesus.

They experienced the love of Jesus through His people.

The proof of the power was not a spectacular moment. It was a church where people heard the good news and saw it lived out.

Because – let's be honest – what else do you need if you know that God is always at work in you, on you, and through you AND you know that He's always taking care of you. I mean – it would be real easy to give everything you have away if you knew for sure that God had better stuff for you, right.

I think this distinction is actually important because these verses are often used to support a weird form of Christian/Communism. In other words, these verses are not about the quest for economic equality they are about the type of radical generosity that happens when one truly trusts God with everything.

People heard the hope and saw the help.

Now a word about verses 34 and 35. This isn't a command to sell your house. Notice the phrase, from time to time. It was voluntary, it was responsive, and it was meeting real needs. Remember the first part of this series, when we talked about a healthier mindset and margin with our treasures? This is where it leads. Open hands, free to move toward need, because God is the one supplying.

And Luke gives us one name so we can see what it looks like.

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet. (Acts 4:36-37)

Barnabas wasn't Peter.

He wasn't John.

He wasn't standing before the crowd preaching.

But he was fully engaged in what God was doing.

God had put something in his hands.

And he used it for the kingdom.

That's faithfulness.

Not everybody preaches.

Not everybody stands on a platform.

But everybody can bring hope and help.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Let's put it together.

PRESSURE	Sent people feel the pull to stay quiet or stay safe.
PRAYER	God's people ask for boldness and for God to act.
POWER	God fills His people.
PROOF	People hear the hope and see the help.

Sent people pray. God supplies the power. People experience hope and help.
Hope to share. Help to give. In the strength God supplies.

So where does that leave you? You have a one.

Stop waiting until you feel ready.

Peter wasn't ready. He was with Jesus.

John wasn't ready. He was with Jesus.

Barnabas wasn't ready. He was with Jesus.

Nobody in Acts felt sufficient. They were with Jesus.

They were available. BECAUSE they were with Jesus.

And when you're with Jesus, you become like Jesus, and you change the world.

And God used available people filled with the Holy Spirit to change the world.

You need to do what they did. Three simple steps for this week, and I want you to be able to repeat them tomorrow morning without notes.

RESPONSE

1 PRAY

Lord, give me boldness to speak and show me where to help. Fill me again.

2 SPEAK

One word of hope this week to your one.

3 SERVE

One act of help for the same person, meeting a real need.

Pray. Be With Jesus

Speak. Be Like Jesus

Serve. Change the world.

In a moment I'm going to ask you to do something. Not to feel something. To do something. Let's take the next few minutes together.

COMMITMENT

Acts 4:29-30 | John 20:21

NAME IT

Let's be still for a moment. Ask yourself two honest questions. First: which one do I default to? Hope without help, talking about Jesus but rarely serving? Or help without hope, serving but rarely saying why?

Second: what is the fear or the excuse behind it? Just name it to God. He already knows.

PRAY

Now we are going to do what the church in Acts 4 did. We're going to pray together. I'll pray a line, and you pray it from your heart, if you mean it, out loud.

Sovereign Lord, you made the heavens and the earth and the sea. You are bigger than my fear.

Consider my fears and my excuses. You see them.

Enable me to speak your word with boldness to the person you've put in front of me.

Show me where to help, and give me open hands for the need in front of me.

Stretch out your hand, and do what only you can do, through the name of Jesus.

I yield. Take control of my words and my hands. Fill me again. I can't do this on my own strength. I need the strength you supply. Amen.

TAKE ONE STEP

Open the notes app on your phone. Write three things. Or in your notes.

- **My one:** the name of the person God has put in front of you.
- **A word of hope I will speak:** an invitation, how can I pray for you, or share the gospel.
- **An act of help I will give:** something real, something specific, something this week.

COMMISSION

Jesus said something to his friends after the resurrection. I want you to hear it as if he's saying it to you right now.

"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (John 20:21)

You have already been sent.

Your neighborhood is a mission field.

Your workplace is a mission field.

Your school is a mission field.

Your gym is a mission field.

God has already placed people around you.

The question isn't whether you've been sent.

The question is whether you'll go.

NOT ALONE – but in fulfilment of the Great Commission. You don't baptize them into you. You can't surround anyone by yourself – you need a crowd. This is why we're called to baptize people into the family of God - you surround them and immerse them in God's family (i.e. the Church).

Go with hope to share.

Go with help to give.

Go in the strength God supplies.

Father, thank You for sending Your Son and for sending us. Give us the courage of Peter and John, the generosity of Barnabas, and the unity of Your church. Fill us again through Your Holy Spirit. Let the people around us hear the hope and see the help for the glory of Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen.

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