

Courage Through the Holy Spirit

The life and Letters of Peter

Bible Texts:

2 Samuel 23:20ⁱ; 1 Peter 5:7-9ⁱⁱ; Acts 2; Acts 4:8-13ⁱⁱⁱ; Acts 12:6-7^{iv}

Benaiah's Courage and Peter's Transformation

Pastor Mike began with the story of Benaiah, a man who chased a lion into a snowy pit and killed it—a picture of extraordinary courage. This story sets the stage for understanding the transformation of Peter. Once fearful and quick to fail, Peter became bold after the Holy Spirit filled him at Pentecost. Like Benaiah, Peter learned to face his lion: fear, persecution, and doubt. The Spirit gave him strength to stand firm in faith.

Reflection Question: What “lions” in your life might God be calling you to face with His strength?

The Exchange of Independence for Dependence

Peter once relied on his own strength and willpower, which often led him to failure. But after being filled with the Spirit, he depended on God's power instead of his own. Acts 4:8 shows Peter boldly speaking before the same council that condemned Jesus. Real courage, Pastor Mike reminded us, comes not from our own grit but from the Spirit's work in us.

Reflection Question: Where might you need to let go of self-reliance and ask the Holy Spirit for strength?

The Exchange of Fear for Trust

In Acts 12, we find Peter in prison awaiting trial and likely execution—yet he was sleeping peacefully. This shows his deep trust in God’s sovereignty. Fear can chain us with anxiety and ‘what-ifs,’ but trust allows us to rest in God’s hands. Pastor Mike emphasized that peace doesn’t come from having no problems, but from knowing our lives are secure in Christ.

Reflection Question: How can you practice handing your worries over to God this week?

The Exchange of Self-Confidence for Reliance on Christ

When Peter and John stood before the authorities in Acts 4:13, their courage astonished the leaders, who realized these men had been with Jesus. True boldness comes not from human confidence but from time spent in the presence of Christ. Pastor Mike encouraged us to rely fully on Jesus and the Spirit’s power to be faithful witnesses in a world that often pressures us to stay silent.

Reflection Question: What steps can you take to spend more time with Jesus so that others can see Him in you?

Closing Encouragement

Peter’s life reminds us that God can take ordinary, fearful people and make them bold witnesses through the power of the Holy Spirit. Just as Peter exchanged independence for dependence, fear for trust, and self-confidence for reliance on Christ, we too are invited into this transformation. The promise of the Spirit is not just for Peter or the early church—it is for us today.

Reflection Question: Will you invite the Holy Spirit to fill you daily with courage and boldness to live for Christ?

ⁱ *And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was a valiant man of Kabzeel, a doer of great deeds. He struck down two ariels of Moab. He also went down and struck down a lion in a pit on a day when snow had fallen.* ⁱ

ⁱⁱ *For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.* ⁱⁱ

ⁱⁱⁱ *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus ⁱⁱⁱ

^{iv} *“Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “Get up quickly.” And the chains fell off his hands.” (Acts 12:6–7, ESV)*