

Life Group Guide

"When Opposition Rises" | Acts 4:1-12

Overview

This week's sermon explored what happens when speaking about Jesus becomes costly. Drawing from Acts 4:1-12, we examined how the early church faced real opposition, how the gospel was put on trial, and how the Holy Spirit empowered Peter and John to boldly proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ even under intense pressure. The central truth from this passage is this: when opposition rises, the Holy Spirit empowers the church to boldly proclaim the gospel.

Key Takeaways

- Opposition to the gospel is not a surprise. Jesus warned his disciples that the world would hate them just as it hated him first.
- Pressure has a way of revealing what we actually believe. It can tempt believers toward silence, compromise, or retreat.
- The gospel cannot ultimately be stopped. Even as Peter and John were imprisoned, thousands believed.
- Peter's boldness was not rooted in personality or self-effort. It came from being filled with the Holy Spirit and from knowing the truth of who Jesus is.
- Salvation is found in no one else and in no other name than Jesus Christ. This is not a negotiable part of the message.
- Boldness in proclaiming the gospel is not about being extroverted or dramatic. It is about being faithful.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

1. Think of a time when you felt pressure in a situation that had nothing to do with faith. How did that pressure reveal something about you that you did not expect?

The Gospel Faces Opposition

2. The sermon identified three common responses Christians have when speaking about Jesus becomes costly: silence, compromise, and retreat. Which of these do you find yourself most tempted toward, and why?
3. The Sadducees were greatly annoyed because the message of Jesus and the resurrection directly challenged their authority and their teachings. Where do you see a similar dynamic playing out in culture today, where the truth of God's word is met with strong opposition? How

does it affect you personally when that happens?

4. Even while Peter and John were in custody, the church grew to about five thousand believers. What does that tell you about the relationship between opposition and the advancement of the gospel? How does that encourage or challenge you?

The Gospel Is Put on Trial

5. The religious leaders who interrogated Peter and John were standing in open rebellion against God while believing they were acting in His name. The sermon pointed out that believers can fall into a similar trap when we quietly justify disobedience or make excuses for sin. Where might you be tempted to do this in your own life?
6. The question the Sanhedrin asked Peter and John was essentially this: By whose authority are you doing this? The sermon turned that question toward us. Whose

opinion of authority weighs heavier on your heart, God's or the world's? How does your honest answer to that question show up in your daily decisions?

The Gospel Is Boldly Proclaimed

7. Peter's boldness came from being filled with the Holy Spirit, not from his own strength or personality. Can you think of a moment in your life when you were able to speak about your faith and later realized that what came out of you was more than you could have produced on your own? What did that experience teach you about depending on the Holy Spirit?
8. Peter told the most powerful religious leaders in Jerusalem that the very Jesus they crucified was raised from the dead and that salvation is found in no one else. That took extraordinary courage. What would it look like for you to be that clear and direct about the gospel in a

relationship or context where you have been holding back?

9. The sermon made an important distinction: boldness is not about being obnoxious or extroverted. It is about being faithful to declare the gospel. How does that reframe what boldness looks like for you specifically, given your personality, your relationships, and your daily environment?

Practical Applications

This Week, Choose One of the Following

- Identify one specific situation or relationship where you have been tempted toward silence, compromise, or retreat when it comes to your faith. Bring it before God in prayer this week and ask him to give you both clarity and courage.
- Pray specifically for an opportunity to share the gospel or speak openly about your faith with someone in your life. When that

opportunity comes, step into it and trust the Holy Spirit to give you the words.

- Reflect on the question of authority. Write down areas of your life where the opinion of others or the pressure of culture has been quietly shaping your decisions more than God's word. Confess those areas and ask God to reorient your heart.
- If you are in a season of opposition because of your faith, share that with your small group this week. Let your group pray over you and remind you that opposition does not mean God has abandoned the mission. It often means He is advancing it.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your time together by praying as a group for the following:

- That each member would be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's presence and empowerment in their daily lives

- That God would open specific doors for each person to faithfully declare the gospel this week
- That your group and your church would be marked by clarity, compassion, and boldness in proclaiming Jesus to a world that needs him
- For anyone in the group who does not yet know Jesus as Savior, that today would be the day they turn from sin and place their faith in him