



## Summary

This powerful exploration of Acts chapter 4 takes us into the courtroom of the Sanhedrin, where Peter and John stand trial not for healing a man, but for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. What unfolds is a masterclass in Holy Spirit-empowered boldness. We discover that Peter, a humble fisherman, receives a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit right in the moment of need, demonstrating that we are not one-and-done vessels but rather clay pots that leak and require continual refilling. The passage challenges our understanding of spiritual baptism, revealing eight instances of fresh fillings throughout Acts. We learn that the Holy Spirit flows through us like torrents of living water, not stagnant pools, and that we need fresh fillings precisely because we are being poured out as witnesses to Christ. The central message rings clear through verse 12: there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. This isn't just theological truth; it's the great equalizer that strips away religious pride and human achievement. The Sanhedrin's response reveals how religious traditionalism can harden hearts to the point where even undeniable miracles cannot penetrate. We're reminded that our advantage in sharing the gospel is that the Holy Spirit knows unbelievers better than they know themselves, and when we allow Him to speak through us, we stand on holy ground in every divine appointment.





## Points

Title: The Holy Spirit's Power in Witnessing: Peter's Bold Defense Before the Sanhedrin

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores Acts 4:5-22, examining Peter and John's arrest and trial before the Sanhedrin after healing a lame man. The central theme emphasizes the necessity of being filled with the Holy Spirit for bold witness to Christ. Pastor teaches that believers need fresh fillings of the Holy Spirit because we "leak" spiritually and are constantly being "poured out" in ministry. The sermon contrasts religious traditionalism with genuine relationship with Jesus, showing how Peter, an uneducated fisherman, spoke with authority because he had been with Jesus. The message culminates in the exclusive claim of salvation through Jesus Christ alone (Acts 4:12), challenging both first-century religious leaders and modern audiences to recognize that no amount of good works, religious activity, or keeping of sacraments can save—only faith in Jesus Christ.

Key Points:

- - Peter received a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit (pleto - filled to the full) specifically for this divine appointment before the Sanhedrin
- - Believers need repeated fillings of the Holy Spirit because we are permeable "clay pots" that leak, and the Holy Spirit flows through us as torrents of living water
- - The baptism into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit at salvation is distinct from subsequent baptisms by Jesus with the Holy Spirit for witness and ministry
- - The Sanhedrin was the same satanic force that crucified Jesus, and Jesus himself called them children of the devil (John 8:44)
- - Peter boldly accused the religious leaders of crucifying their own Messiah whom God raised from the dead
- - True theological expertise comes from time spent with Jesus, not formal education or seminary training
- - The gospel is inherently offensive because it strips away human pride, religious works, and self-righteousness
- - Freedom of speech, particularly religious freedom, is essential for gospel proclamation and was protected by the Founding Fathers in the First Amendment
- - Religious traditionalism and pride are among the greatest barriers to accepting the gospel
- - There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved except Jesus Christ

Scripture Reference:

- - Acts 4:5-22 (primary passage)
- - John 8:43-47 (Jesus calling the Sanhedrin children of the devil)
- - John 11:47-53 (Sanhedrin plotting to kill Jesus and Lazarus)
- - Matthew 16:16-18 (Peter's confession and gates of hell not prevailing)
- - Matthew 10:16-20 (Jesus promising the Spirit would speak through disciples)
- - John 7:38 (rivers of living water flowing from believers)
- - Matthew 21:42-46 (parable of the wicked vinedressers and rejected cornerstone)
- - Psalm 118 (the stone the builders rejected)
- - John 14:6 (Jesus as the only way to the Father)
- - Galatians 3:26-28 (equality in Christ)
- - 2 Corinthians 4:7 (treasure in clay vessels)



Stories:

- - The healing of the 40-year-old man lame from birth at the Beautiful Gate, which precipitated Peter and John's arrest
- - Peter and John spending the night in jail before their trial
- - The Sanhedrin's previous actions in condemning Jesus to death and plotting to kill Lazarus after his resurrection
- - The account of Peter's three gospel presentations: 3,000 saved at Pentecost, 5,000 saved at Solomon's porch, and none saved before the Sanhedrin
- - Historical reference to the founding of America, noting that 29 of 56 Founding Fathers were seminary graduates who protected religious freedom
- - Contemporary references to COVID restrictions on churches and free speech limitations in Canada regarding biblical teaching on sexuality
- - Personal testimony of the pastor's offense at being called a sinner before his conversion while attending a Methodist church in Wheaton, Maryland





## Scripture

### **Explicitly Mentioned References**

1. Acts 4:1-22 - Primary text of the sermon
2. Deuteronomy 30 - Mentioned as Wednesday night study
3. John 8:43-47 - Jesus speaking to the Sanhedrin about their father the devil
4. John 11:47-52 - Sanhedrin's response to Lazarus being raised
5. John 12:10-11 - Plot to kill Lazarus
6. Matthew 16:16-18 - Peter's confession and Jesus' response about the church
7. Matthew 10:16-20 - Jesus sending out disciples, promise of the Holy Spirit speaking through them
8. 2 Corinthians 4:7 - Treasure in clay pots/vessels
9. John 7:38 - Rivers of living water flowing from believers
10. Ephesians 4:1-6 - Baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit
11. Matthew 21:42-46 - Parable of the wicked vinedressers and the rejected stone
12. Psalm 118 - The stone the builders rejected (referenced in Acts 4:11)
13. Acts 4:12 - No other name under heaven by which we must be saved
14. John 14:6 - Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life
15. Romans 2:4 - Goodness of God leads to repentance
16. Proverbs 18:16 - A man's gift makes room for him
17. John 3:3 - Must be born again
18. Galatians 3:26-28 - All one in Christ Jesus, neither Jew nor Greek

### **Alluded to or Thematically Referenced**

19. Acts 2 - Day of Pentecost, 3,000 saved
20. Acts 3 - Healing of the lame man, 5,000 saved
21. Hebrews 10:25 - Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together
22. Matthew 28:19-20 - The Great Commission ("Lo, I am with you always")
23. Genesis 2:7 - Man formed from the dust of the ground
24. John 16:7-11 - Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment

### **Related Verses Supporting Main Themes**

## **On the Holy Spirit's Power and Fresh Filling:**

- Ephesians 5:18 - Be filled with the Spirit (continuous action)
- Luke 24:49 - Promise of power from on high
- Acts 1:8 - Receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you



## **On Boldness in Witnessing:**

- Philippians 1:14 - Speaking the word without fear
- 2 Timothy 1:7 - God has not given us a spirit of fear

## **On Salvation Only Through Jesus:**

- 1 Timothy 2:5 - One mediator between God and men
- Acts 10:43 - Through His name, whoever believes receives forgiveness

## **On Religious Pride as a Barrier:**

- Luke 18:9-14 - Parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector
- Isaiah 64:6 - Our righteousness is as filthy rags





## Quotes

Then Peter filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter baptized by Jesus with the Holy Spirit at the day of Pentecost is freshly baptized with the Holy Spirit again. And I emphasize the word again.

Why do some people say we get all the Holy Spirit we will ever get at salvation? Well, there's a distinction that the Bible draws at salvation. We are baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. In a subsequent moment of need, we are baptized by Jesus with the Holy Spirit.

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. That's it. Jesus said, I'm the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father but by me.

Theological expertise comes from time spent with Jesus. That's where theological expertise comes from. I would rather have someone who was born again and has spent two weeks with the Lord teach my children than some seminarian who has no relationship with Jesus.

The United States is the only nation in the history of the world to have legally protected freedom of speech. And if they can limit free speech in any way, shape, or form to that which causes offense to anyone, then you won't be able to preach the gospel anymore.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

At some point, the evidence of the necessity to repent and be born again becomes so overwhelming, the only remaining defense is to tell the Holy Spirit to shut up.





## Discussion Questions

The pastor describes believers as 'clay pots' that leak and need constant refilling with the Holy Spirit. What experiences in your own life have made you aware of your need for a fresh filling of God's Spirit?

Peter was freshly filled with the Holy Spirit specifically for the moment he stood before the Sanhedrin. How does this challenge the view that we receive all the Holy Spirit we need at salvation, and what implications does this have for ministry?

The Sanhedrin knew the evidence of Jesus's resurrection but chose to suppress it. What modern parallels do you see where people reject truth despite overwhelming evidence, and what does this reveal about the human heart?

The pastor states that theological expertise comes from time spent with Jesus rather than formal education. How should this truth shape our priorities in spiritual growth and in choosing who teaches us?

Peter boldly accused the Sanhedrin of crucifying their own Messiah while still addressing them respectfully. How can we balance speaking hard truths with maintaining respect when sharing the gospel with those who oppose it?

The sermon emphasizes that the Holy Spirit knows unbelievers better than they know themselves, giving believers an advantage in witnessing. How might recognizing this truth change your confidence and approach in evangelistic conversations?

The Sanhedrin tried to find a way out rather than a way in when confronted with undeniable evidence of God's power. What are the 'ways out' people use today to avoid responding to the gospel, and how can we address them?

The pastor connects freedom of speech with the ability to preach the gospel, noting that the gospel is an 'equal opportunity offender.' Why is offense an inevitable part of genuine gospel proclamation, and how should we respond when people are offended?

Religious tradition and pride prevented the Sanhedrin from accepting Christ despite witnessing miracles. In what ways might religious activity or moral achievement actually become barriers to genuine faith in our own lives?

Peter preached the gospel three times with drastically different results: 3,000 saved, 5,000 saved, and then none saved. What does this teach us about faithfulness in evangelism regardless of visible results?



## Small Group Guide: Acts 4:5-18 Filled with the Holy Spirit: Bold Witness Before Opposition

### **Opening Prayer & Ice Breaker**

Opening Question: *Have you ever had to speak up for your faith in an intimidating situation? How did you feel, and what happened?*

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### **Key Scripture**

Acts 4:8 - *"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them..."*

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### **Main Themes**

#### **1. The Reality of Spiritual Opposition**

- *The same forces that crucified Jesus now oppose the early church*
- *Satan works through religious systems and institutions*
- *Divine appointments often come through unexpected circumstances (even arrest!)*

#### **2. The Necessity of Fresh Fillings with the Holy Spirit**

- *Being filled isn't a one-time event*
- *We "leak" - our flesh is permeable*
- *The Holy Spirit pours out through us as we minister*
- *Fresh filling equips us for specific moments of need*

#### **3. The Exclusivity of the Gospel**

- *Acts 4:12 - "Nor is there salvation in any other"*
- *This message is offensive to the world*
- *The gospel is an "equal opportunity offender"*



## **Discussion Questions**

### **Understanding the Text**

1. *Why do you think Peter needed a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit in this moment, even though he had already been baptized with the Spirit at Pentecost? (See Acts 4:8, John 7:38)*
2. *How does Peter's response to the Sanhedrin demonstrate both respect and boldness? What can we learn from this balance?*
3. *The sermon mentioned that Peter had an "advantage" over the Sanhedrin because he knew what they needed. What was that advantage, and how does this apply to us when sharing the gospel?*

### **Personal Reflection**

4. *The pastor described four reasons we need fresh fillings with the Holy Spirit:*
  - *We leak (we're permeable clay pots)*
  - *The Holy Spirit pours out through us*
  - *We're constantly being emptied in ministry*
  - *The Holy Spirit flows as a torrent, not a reservoir*
5. *Which of these resonates most with you? When have you experienced being "poured out" and needing a fresh filling?*
6. *Peter didn't hesitate to inform the Sanhedrin of their sin (Acts 4:10 - "whom you crucified"). Why is it important to address sin when sharing the gospel? How can we do this lovingly and respectfully?*
7. *The sermon states: "At some point, the evidence of the necessity to repent and be born again becomes so overwhelming, the only remaining defense is to tell the Holy Spirit to shut up." Have you ever witnessed someone hardening their heart against clear evidence? How should we respond when people reject the gospel despite overwhelming evidence?*

### **Practical Application**

7. *The pastor emphasized recognizing "divine appointments" - moments God arranges for us to share the gospel. Have you had any divine appointments recently? Did you recognize them as such?*
  8. *Acts 4:13 says the Sanhedrin "realized that they had been with Jesus." What does it look like in practical terms to "be with Jesus" today? How can others tell we've been with Him?*
  9. *The sermon discussed how freedom of speech protects gospel proclamation. How does this reality affect how we should:*
    - *Use our freedom while we have it?*
    - *Pray for our nation?*
    - *Prepare for possible restrictions in the future?*
  10. *Peter presented the gospel three times in Acts (chapters 2, 3, and 4) with different results: 3,000 saved, 5,000 saved, and zero saved. What does this teach us about faithfulness versus results in evangelism?*
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## **Key Takeaways**

- ✓ *Fresh fillings with the Holy Spirit are necessary and available for specific moments of need*
  - ✓ *Theological expertise comes from time spent with Jesus, not formal education alone*
  - ✓ *The gospel message is inherently offensive to human pride and religious tradition*
  - ✓ *We have an advantage in evangelism when we recognize divine appointments and allow the Holy Spirit to speak through us*
  - ✓ *Respectful boldness is possible when we're filled with the Holy Spirit*
  - ✓ *There is no other name by which we must be saved - this truth is non-negotiable*
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## **Practical Applications**

### **This Week's Challenge:**

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. *Pray for Fresh Filling: Set aside time each morning to specifically ask the Holy Spirit to fill you afresh for the day ahead. Journal about any differences you notice in your witness or spiritual sensitivity.*
  2. *Recognize Divine Appointments: Ask God to give you eyes to see the divine appointments He arranges. When you sense one, step out in faith to share the gospel or minister to that person.*
  3. *Study the Gospel Presentations: Read Acts 2:14-41, Acts 3:12-26, and Acts 4:8-12. Notice the common elements in Peter's gospel presentations and how the Holy Spirit adapted the message to different audiences.*
  4. *Practice Respectful Boldness: Identify one person in your life who needs to hear the gospel. Pray for them daily and ask God for an opportunity to share with both respect and clarity.*
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## **Prayer Focus**

Pray together as a group for:

- *Fresh fillings of the Holy Spirit for boldness in witness*
- *Wisdom to recognize and respond to divine appointments*
- *Those in your sphere of influence who need to hear the gospel*
- *Freedom to proclaim the gospel in our nation*
- *Courage to speak truth even when it's offensive*
- *Hearts softened toward the gospel (specific people group members know)*
- *Protection for believers facing persecution for their witness*



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## **Scripture Memory**

*Acts 4:12 - "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

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## **Additional Study**

*For those wanting to dig deeper this week:*

- *Read John 7:37-39 about rivers of living water*
  - *Study 2 Corinthians 4:7 about being clay pots/vessels*
  - *Examine Matthew 10:16-20 about what to say when delivered up*
  - *Reflect on Galatians 3:26-28 about equality in Christ*
  - *Consider Ephesians 5:18 - the command to "be filled with the Spirit"*
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## **Closing Reflection**

*Final Question: How has this study changed your understanding of being filled with the Holy Spirit? What is one specific way you will seek to be freshly filled this week?*

*Closing Prayer: Have each person pray briefly for the person on their right, asking God to fill them afresh with the Holy Spirit for bold witness.*



## Daily Devotional

# 5-Day Devotional: Bold Witnesses for Christ

## Day 1: Filled for the Moment

**Reading:** Acts 4:5-12; Ephesians 5:18

**Devotional:** Peter stood before the very council that crucified Jesus, yet he spoke with supernatural boldness. Why? He was "filled with the Holy Spirit" in that moment. This wasn't a one-time experience at Pentecost—it was a fresh filling for a specific need. Like clay pots, we are permeable vessels that leak. We need continual refilling as we pour ourselves out in service and witness. The Holy Spirit flows through us like torrents of living water, not as a stagnant reservoir. When you face intimidating circumstances today, recognize your need for fresh filling. Don't rely on yesterday's anointing. Ask God to fill you afresh with His Spirit for whatever divine appointment awaits you.

**Reflection:** When was the last time you asked God for a fresh filling of His Spirit before a challenging conversation or situation?

## Day 2: Theological Expertise Through Relationship

**Reading:** Acts 4:13; John 15:1-8

**Devotional:** The Sanhedrin marveled at Peter and John's boldness, recognizing "they had been with Jesus." These uneducated fishermen possessed something the seminary-trained religious leaders lacked—intimate knowledge of Christ Himself. True spiritual authority doesn't come from degrees or training alone, but from time spent with Jesus. The Pharisees knew Scripture intellectually but missed the Author. Peter and John knew the Author personally. This is the difference between dead religion and living faith. Your theological expertise isn't measured by how many books you've read, but by how much time you've spent with the Living Word. Two weeks with Jesus trumps years of academic study without Him.

**Reflection:** Are you spending more time studying about God or actually being with God?



## Day 3: No Other Name

**Reading:** Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Galatians 3:26-28

**Devotional:** "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." This exclusive claim offends our pluralistic culture, yet it's the most equalizing truth ever spoken. Religion creates hierarchies—comparing who keeps rules better, who's more devout, who's more spiritual. The gospel demolishes all that. Rich or poor, educated or unlettered, religious or irreligious—all stand on level ground at the cross. No one is better; everyone needs the same Savior. This offends the prideful heart that wants to earn salvation or claim superiority. But it liberates the humble heart that recognizes we're all made of dirt, all broken vessels needing God's grace. The simplicity of salvation by faith alone strips away every boast.

**Reflection:** Does the exclusivity of Christ offend you or liberate you? Why?

## Day 4: Divine Appointments by Arrest

**Reading:** Acts 4:1-4; Proverbs 16:9; 18:16

**Devotional:** Peter and John didn't plan to address the Sanhedrin—they were arrested and hauled before them. Yet Peter recognized this as a divine appointment. God arranges opportunities we could never orchestrate ourselves. Sometimes these appointments come through difficulties, opposition, or circumstances we'd never choose. The arrest that seemed like persecution became a platform for the gospel. When facing unexpected trials today, ask: "Has God arranged this as a divine appointment?" The Holy Spirit knows the person before you better than you do. He knows their deepest need. Your advantage isn't in your eloquence but in His presence. God's gift makes room for you and brings you before great people—sometimes through the most unlikely circumstances.

**Reflection:** What difficult circumstance might actually be a divine appointment in disguise?



## Day 5: The Conviction That Saves

**Reading:** Acts 4:8-12; John 16:7-11; Romans 2:4

**Devotional:** Peter didn't hesitate to tell the Sanhedrin their sin: "You crucified Him." This seems harsh, but conviction precedes conversion. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment—not to shame, but to save. Without recognizing we're sinners, we see no need for a Savior. Without understanding Christ's righteousness, we trust our own works. Without awareness of coming judgment, we feel no urgency. Conviction isn't a dirty word—it's God's goodness leading to repentance. Being broken by Christ is one of the best things that can happen. The Sanhedrin tried to escape this conviction by silencing the messengers, but you don't have to. When the Holy Spirit convicts your heart, don't tell Him to shut up. Fall on the Rock and be broken rather than have Him fall on you.

**Reflection:** Is there an area where the Holy Spirit is convicting you that you've been resisting?

