

## GO FISH, PART 3: FISH GUTS

Sometimes our fears keep us from sharing the message of Christ with those who have never heard. We must remember that God is in control, and we have been invited to participate in what He is up to. If we are to be fishers of men, we must ask God to enable us to have the courage to say something when an opportunity to share His love is given to us.

**BIG IDEA:** God—who is sovereign—has invited us to be players in the most important activity in the universe.

Last week, we saw that Christianity began as an event in history, not as a new belief system. Likewise, sharing your faith is not so much about convincing someone to believe something as it is telling them about what you have seen and heard.

Telling others about Jesus can be intimidating, overwhelming, and even disturbing. There's something about trying to convince another person to adopt a whole new belief system that seems daunting and uncomfortable. "Who am I to say what another person should believe?" we wonder.

But if you think talking about Jesus is difficult for us today, consider how intimidating it must have been for the first believers! We stand to experience a little awkwardness, but they faced total rejection from society, persecution, or even death. And yet somehow they persisted. Because they did, we're still talking about Jesus' death and resurrection more than 2,000 years later. So why did they do it? What could possibly have given them the courage to speak when they did?

In this session, we'll examine the driving force behind the boldness of the first believers. And we'll see how the same factors that fostered courage in the first century are still in place today, giving our generation the guts to fish.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name a situation that a child is afraid to face alone, but is willing to face if her daddy is with her. Have you ever experienced such a situation?
2. Why does the presence of a parent change the child's perception of this situation?
3. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read [Acts 4:5-20](#).*

"All fear dissipates like vapor when God is deemed sovereign over that which is feared."

*The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" 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 cripple and are 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. He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone." Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*

*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. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name." Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."* [Acts 4:5-20 \(NIV\)](#)

4. Those are the verses we looked at last week. With your Bible or YouVersion, read [Acts 4:23-29](#).

*On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and 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 heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.'*

*Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.* [Acts 4:23-29 \(NIV\)](#)

5. In light of God's sovereignty over the events in their lives, the believers in Acts 4 prayed for what? Why do you think the disciples were filled with boldness?
6. How would your life be different if you truly believed God was in control?
7. Chris said, "**Boldness is simply speaking up when the opportunity pops up.**" What are the threats that deter you from speaking God's Word boldly?
8. How might God use those threats for His own glory?
9. How do your prayers differ from the one prayed in Acts 4?
10. Have you ever asked God to enable you to speak with boldness? Why or why not?
11. What would "bold" look like in your life?

## MOVING FORWARD

Think about the person you have been perfectly positioned by God to influence. What would be a bold move for you this week in his or her life? (We're not talking about a megaphone and a sandwich board!) Is there a book you could give, an invitation to attend church, or a question you could ask that might lead to a spiritual conversation? Remember, *God—who is sovereign—has invited us to be players in the most important activity in the universe.*

## WHAT WILL YOU DO?

***Boldness is simply speaking up when the opportunity pops up.*** This week, commit to pray daily for boldness to share the story of God's work in your life when the opportunities present themselves. Be prepared to discuss your experiences with the group.

## WEEKLY READING

This week, spend some time reading and reflecting on Acts 4, Acts 5:12-42, Acts 7, Acts 8:1-4, and Acts 8:5-40.

