

The Transforming Power of the Holy Spirit

Pastor David Uth

Passage: Acts 4:1-13

1And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, 2greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand. 5On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, 6with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. 7And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” 8Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, 9if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, 10let 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. 11This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” 13Now 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.

Background

On this Father’s Day, we want to answer the question: “How can we be the fathers we need to be today in this crazy world?” One of the most encouraging aspects of reading the Bible is to see how dramatically the Holy Spirit changed the lives of Jesus’ first followers. We find this most clearly in the life of Peter, one of Jesus’ closest friends. Despite talking a “big game” about following Jesus even when times got tough, he failed miserably – acting impulsively at Jesus’ arrest, denying Jesus during his trial, and living fearfully following Jesus’ crucifixion. But when the Spirit came at Pentecost, Peter moved past his fears and failures to be a bold and faithful proclaimer of Jesus. The same one who denied Jesus to a servant girl became the one who confidently declared Jesus in front of religious leaders. How so? The power of the Holy Spirit. And for those of us who follow Jesus, the wonderful news is the same Holy Spirit can do the same transforming work in our lives so that we can live faithfully for Christ.

Service Notes

Instructions

This discussion guide is to help you facilitate a conversation with your small group. The “Getting Started” section serves as a quick opener and introduction to the group conversation. In the “Talk it Over” section, feel free to use all or only some of the questions. Our hope is to have meaningful conversations around God’s Word, not simply answer all the questions. Finally, the “Live it Out” section is to help identify a specific next step. Use these questions as a guide to find practical ways to apply the passage to our everyday life.

Getting Started

- What is your favorite memory with your father or a father-like figure in your life? What is the most important life lesson you have learned from your father or father-like figure?

Talk it Over

- **Read Acts 4:1-13.** What happened in Acts 3 that created the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus in Acts 4? Why were Peter and John arrested? What was the result of their preaching among the people? What encourages you the most about Peter’s transformation through the Holy Spirit (vs. 8)? What was the main point of Peter’s message to the religious leaders? What do you think of the religious leaders’ response (vs. 13)? Is it obvious in our daily life that we “have been with Jesus?” If not, why not? What needs to change? What specific area does the Holy Spirit still need to transform in you?
- **Read 4:14-31.** Even when Peter and John were threatened to stop speaking about Jesus, what was their response (vs. 19-20). What can their boldness teach us? What would it look like in your workplace and home to do “what is right” in God’s eyes rather than man’s? In what ways can you be bolder in speaking about “all you have seen and hear” when it comes to God’s grace in your own life? How did the other believers react to Peter and John’s persecution and release? What was their prayer (vs. 29-30)? What can this teach us about our own prayers for daily strength? What happened as they prayed? Why has the Spirit “filled” them (vs. 31)? What does this teach us about the role of the Spirit in our own life? When was the last time you prayed specifically for the Holy Spirit to fill you with the confidence and boldness to speak of Jesus when you get the opportunity?
- In Pastor David’s interview with Pat Williams, what stood out to you the most? What lessons did you draw from their conversation? What advice could you apply to your life right now?

Live it Out

- In what areas of your life do you need Holy Spirit “boldness” to obey Christ right now? What is one way we can pray for you to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit this week?