



## Sermon Series Notes

### “Bold Witnesses for Christ” Part 2 (Acts 3-4)

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Intro: On their way to pray at the temple Peter & John encounter a beggar who was brought to the gate called Beautiful every day. He was lame from birth, but on this day the Lord heals him through the faith he gives to Peter & John. The miracle opens a door for Peter to share the gospel to the crowd that has gathered, astonished at the healing of this man who everybody recognized. While Peter is speaking to the crowd the Jewish leaders show up, seize Peter & John and throw them in jail. The next day they begin to question them about this man’s healing. They asked, “By what power or what name did you do this?” Read 4:8-13.

v.13 Unschooled = illiterate; Ordinary = Idiotes

The leaders command Peter & John to no longer speak or teach in the name of Jesus, to which they reply, read 4:19-22. Peter & John then go back to the church, pray, asking for God to do miracles, and to enable them to speak the Word of God boldly. Read 4:31.

The early church grew from 120 to 3,000 to 5,000! (See Acts 4:4). It grew because the disciples were sharing both the Word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ (See Acts 8:4). The greatest potential for any local church to grow is by each member of the church proclaiming the Word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Each one of us have been called and commissioned by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to “all creation.”

Mark 16:15 he said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”

Acts 1:8...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Some of us may feel inadequate for the task. If that’s you, you’re just the kind of person God is looking for! See I Cor.1:26-29.

God is not looking for ability, he’s looking for availability.

There is one thing we all have to overcome for the Lord to use us, and that is fear.

Proverbs 29:25a Fear of man will prove to be a snare...

We overcome fear by faith. With that said, we need to do what these early believers did and pray for God to do miracles, and to enable us to speak the Word boldly.

Our goal is to share the gospel: the death, burial, & resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Sometimes the open door for the gospel comes through a miracle. But sometimes it is quite the opposite of a miracle; Sometimes it is through a physical infirmity (Gal.4:13); Sometimes it is through persecution/painful circumstances (Acts 16:16ff; Phil.1:12-13).

## Biblical Witnessing Advice:

1. Never disobey an authority unless to obey means you would be disobeying God (See Romans 13:1-2; Acts 4:18-20; Daniel 3:1-30).
2. Don't misrepresent Jesus Christ

### Jesus was loving

Found this online, written by a Christian young lady: I was talking on the phone with a friend who I had recently added on Facebook. She had looked at my bio and something about my Facebook account struck her as odd. She said, "I was surprised to see that you are a Christian." I nervously smiled on the other end of the line and asked her why. She said, "I don't normally like Christians, but I like you."

We talked a little more in depth about the issue and she let me know that most of the Christians she had met in her life had made her feel badly about herself, they had made her feel judged, and 'not good enough.'

I thought about what she said and I couldn't help but feel like Jesus has been so poorly represented by many of his followers. I am not saying that I am the perfect 'Jesus Follower'—I am not—but if we (those who follow the teachings of Jesus) represented him authentically, the word 'Christian or Christ-followers' would be more likely to illicit a positive response than a negative one.

There was a song I used to sing in Sunday School when I was little called "They will know we are Christians by our love." My hope is that this will be a true statement in the lives of all of us who follow the teachings of Jesus.

See Luke 6:27-28, 35a; It was the Pharisees, Sadducees, & Teachers of the Law that made people feel judged. Jesus was accused of being a friend of tax collectors and sinners. May we be accused of the same.

### Jesus was not legalistic

Legalism is an overemphasis of the letter of the Law verses the spirit of the Law. The Law = Love God, love your neighbor; Legalism does not exhibit grace and mercy, and does not bend on disputable matters. And legalism often has no biblical basis for truth. For example, I grew up believing it was a sin to fish on Sunday. Years ago when Calvary Chapel met at the Sons of Italy Lodge, across the street was a place called Camp Freedom (I think it's still there). We used to use a room for our children's ministry there, so I go to know the people who managed it. They were nice, but very legalistic. They actually believed if you wore blue jeans you would go to hell. They did not believe in jewelry on women, and if I remember right make-up as well. Lots of issues can be involved in legalism, such as hair length, tattoos, alcohol, etc. Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine; He didn't follow the religious standards set by the Pharisees that had no basis of truth in them; Jesus's disciples did not wash their hands before they ate. This was not a washing for cleansing of dirt as much as it was a religious ceremonial washing; Jesus said that the Pharisees also washed cooking items for religious reasons, and that they did many things like that; Jesus did good on the Sabbath, something he repeatedly got in trouble for; His disciples ate grain in the fields as they travelled on the Sabbath, and the Jewish leaders condemned them.

### Jesus was not an overbearing "loud mouth"

Matthew 12:19 he will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. (from Isa.42)

II Tim.2:24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome...

Not only was Jesus not quarrelsome. It means he was not argumentative and overbearing. This does not mean he never raised his voice. I think his message recorded in Matthew 23 got pretty emotional. But think about who that message was directed at. It was directed at the Pharisees & Teachers of the Law. He called them hypocrites! You never see Jesus talking to the "tax collectors & sinners" like that.

I'm not real comfortable about Christians taking a bull horn and screaming at people from a street corner. I recently saw a video of some people from a Calvary Chapel standing and reading Scripture as people were waiting for the DMV to open. They were asked to leave, they did not, and the one reading the Scripture was arrested a few minutes later. I just can't see Jesus doing that. Jesus never forced himself upon anyone.

3. Pray for God to open a door for the gospel (Col.4:2-3).
4. Learn some key verses in order to be able to prove that Jesus is the Christ
  - Acts 17:2-3; 18:28
  - Romans Road: Rom.3:23, 6:23, 5:8; 10:9
  - Prophecies about Christ: A Firm Foundation for Faith (II Peter 1:16-21)
5. Continue to add to you arsenal of Scripture
  - I Peter 3:15b-16a...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...
6. Live the kind of life that will gain respect from the world
  - I Thess.4:9-12; Titus 2:9-10
  - I Peter 2:12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.
  - Daniel 6:3-5, 25-27.

## CONCLUSION