

“With Boldness”

Psalm 100; Acts 4:13-22

June 30, 2024

An Unexpected Relief (part 2)

- This week’s sermon is a continuation, in a way from last weeks.
- And I didn’t end last week’s as well and I need to do that for this to make sense.
- Last week, if you’ll remember we talked about immediate relief.
 - o I mentioned a woman getting an analgesic and how immediate the relief looked when it went into her body.
- Well, I forgot to tell you about the experience I had at Kairos with a man named Patrick
 - o Patrick was a young, African American man who’d really had troubles
 - o It was apparent that Patrick had ADHD pretty severely as attention was definitely a problem.
 - o Anyway, Patrick was kind of loud and boisterous when he got to the group, a young man acting like a young man, really.
- Patrick got settled into the group and started participating well by the second day.
 - o By the third day, he was ready.
- Immediate relief
 - o He got his face changed by Christ.
 - o There was a newfound life in his eyes, no kidding.
 - And it worked out
 - Got to an honors dorm and did really well.
 - HE’s out now and I think doing really well.
- I mention that story because it’s one that reverberates
 - o I tell it and, hopefully, people get encouraged by the Gospel,
 - That it really is something special, something real that can really change people’s lives.
- Well, the part of acts that I read last week, keeps reverberating, too.

The Original Healing

- If we’ll remember from last week, we met a man who’d been begging daily at the Beautiful Gate for over 20 years.
 - o He was broken and needed help.
- Peter and John come up to the man and change his life, transforming him from lameness to full health.
 - o The man leaps for joy with his newfound change.
- But you see the healing brought attention and why wouldn’t it?
 - o The healing was the thing that set in motion the awareness by the higher ups that something had changed.
 - That’s right. With the healing, the society had to react to the fact that something was different.
 - There was a new power operative in the world.
- As you read forward from the healing, you’re made aware that the leaders aren’t exactly excited with the change.
 - o They’re “ANNOYED” is the language the Bible gives us.
 - o You see, they’ve had Peter and John arrested for proclaiming the resurrection
 - You see, as much as we embrace the idea of resurrection, the temple guardians did not and they found that what the apostles and disciples were doing was illegal.
 - IT wasn’t but that’s beside the point. When government wants something, it generally doesn’t matter the rules up to that point as they’re changed quite malleably.
 - o Just prior to our reading, Peter has again made a speech
 - They ask him, how are you doing this. His answer?
 - *“...let 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. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.*

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

- Wow, powerful declaration.
 - Remember, the speeches and sermons in acts all revolve around some pretty particular points – the gospel.
 - We were mired in sin, deserving of eternal death.
 - God intervenes in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - Jesus Christ lives out fully the life we were born to live being sinless and faithful to God at all points.
 - In so doing, our lives are saved. His death and resurrection foretell our story in the future.
 - This Jesus though, we crucified and now it is His power that shows that we were wrong to do so.
- Story of Hans Von Zieten
 - Commander in Frederick the Great's Army
 - Tasked with overseeing the preparation of Communion for all of the army and commanders.
 - Doesn't come to a request for all generals to appear before Frederick, he cites his duties.
 - When called out for it, he essentially says, there is a greater King than Frederick
 - Words to get yourself killed by
 - But Frederick recognizes the truth of the words and relents.
 - That's boldness!
- The Sanhedrin
 - The leading committee of the Jews, this was their government.
 - Subordinate to the Romans but still powerful enough to bind and loose.
 - While the Pharisees had religious qualms with Christians, the Sadducees, which formed the Sanhedrin were largely filled with people who were affluent and educated.
 - They were the cultural elites of the time.
 - Money and power were their millet.
 - They rejected Jesus not religiously but politically, they worried about an upset to their power.
 - They recognize that Peter and John are filled with some kind of power
 - *"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished."*
- And that brings us to point number one – Being transformed by Jesus at the same time fills us with boldness in declaring His name.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17 – *"If anyone is in Christ, they are NEW CREATION."*
 - This is the new life that Christ talks about in John 3, being born again.
 - This is the change that occurs once we accept for ourselves Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.
- So, I wonder, where is our BOLDNESS FOR JESUS?
 - The numbers are in and they aren't very good.
 - We're declining in numbers at a rate that is neither good for us nor for the society we live in.
 - IT's Christians that have built great structures, founded hospitals, done remarkable work.
 - Yet we're disappearing.
 - The empty pews here aren't somehow unique, they are in fact part of a larger degradation of Christianity in America.
 - And how is it happening?
 - Christians have lost their boldness in declaring Jesus.
 - When was the last time you shared Jesus with anybody?

- Look, you think I'm being mean, it's been a while since I've done it, honestly. Since the last Kairos really. So, if you think I'm just hammering you, I'm on my case as well.

What is Christianity?

- Sometimes we get it wrong.
 - Think it's just a self-improvement plan.
- It's far greater. It is the means by which the world is brought into a new era of life and living.
 - The idea that we Christians should be out proclaiming the Good News is amply attested by our own Scriptures.
 - Yet we're not doing it. WHY?

WHY DON'T WE SHARE THE GOSPEL

- **Fear of Rejection:** Concern about how others will respond or fear of being judged.
- **Lack of Knowledge:** Feeling unprepared or not knowledgeable enough to share effectively.
 - Learn more about the Bible and about Jesus.
 - Come to Sunday School, participate in the class on Sunday night, get involved with learning on any level you can.
 - There are TONS of good online resources, you can work with me to find one that's perfect for you.
- **Cultural Pressure:** Societal norms that discourage religious discussions or view them as inappropriate.
 - I think this is one that gets me a lot.
- **Personal Doubts:** Uncertainty about one's own faith or struggles with doubt.
- **Lack of Opportunity:** Perceived absence of natural opportunities to share the message.
- **Fear of Conflict:** Worry about causing disagreements or tension in relationships.
- There are tons of reasons why we're not sharing the Gospel and it shows.
- There is a solution.
 - If we want the best for ourselves, the best for others there is a path we can take

The Path Forward

1. **Pray for Boldness and Opportunities:** Begin by asking God for courage and open doors to share the Gospel with others.
 - a. This is so key; you've simply got to include Jesus in your quest to share the Gospel so you begin with prayer.
 - i. We had such a great class on prayer offered by Kay and James, we talked about how to pray, it was brilliant.
 - ii. But to see yourself filled with boldness to declare Jesus, this begins in prayer, on your knees if possible.
 - b. Deliberately begin each day asking God for someone to share the Good News with.
- **Equip Yourself with Knowledge:** Study the Bible and key scriptures that explain the Gospel, and be ready to share your personal testimony.
 - This is so important.
 - Remember, one of the reasons we're silent is that we don't know as much as we ought.
 - Studying helps overcome that.
 - Lots of ways to hook in more learning.
 - Here at church, Sunday School, Sunday night, these are great times to build your knowledge.
 - Online offers some great opportunities as well, let me help you find an online class that can help you.
- **Build Genuine Relationships:** Develop meaningful connections with others, showing genuine care and interest in their lives.
 - I know this is hard as many of us are settled in our lives, not meeting many new people.
 - We've got to overcome our social isolation and meet new people.
 - Maya Angelou – People don't care what you know until they know you care.
 - Work with people, find people to help as they are people you can share the Gospel with.
 - Laundry Ministry

- **Look for Natural Opportunities:** Be attentive to moments when you can naturally share your faith, such as during discussions about life's challenges or personal experiences.
- **Practice Active Listening:** Listen to others' beliefs and questions with empathy, and respond thoughtfully, focusing on sharing the love and message of Jesus.
 - o James and Kay's class, again.

Naturally tell the story of the First persecution of the church.

- Peter and John coming from a blessed community heal a lame man, visible to many.
- Their declaration causes unrest, people are getting agitated.
 - o Agitated people are a threat to the status quo so the guardians of it, the Sanhedrin, take over.
 - They are "Annoyed" so they have Peter and John and presumably the healed man, arrested.
- The next day, they ask what's going on.
 - o Peter makes a speech, typical of Acts.
 - You killed the Messiah but now those who believe in him will have power from the Holy Spirit of God.