**Extraordinary Courage from Ordinary Men**

**The Word**

Read together Acts 4:1-22

**The Big Idea**

The extraordinary courage of Peter and John in a moment of crisis came from their long-time presence with Jesus and the Spirit’s empowering in the moment. This world is in desperate need of men and women who exhibit spiritual courage for the sake of others.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Sunday’s message reminded us that our performance in critical and dramatic moments is contingent on our daily faithfulness over time. How does the following quote strike you as it relates to your own life right now: “The general human failing is to want what is right and important, but at the same time not to commit to the kind of life that will produce the action we know to be right.” – Dallas Willard

2. Sunday’s message was a call to consistently and passionately seek the face of the Lord so that we begin to reflect him in the world. As you consider that call, is there any particular way you feel called to pursue the Lord more intentionally?

3. On Sunday it was suggested that the practical effect of being filled with the Spirit is that God suddenly gets bigger in your heart and mind and everything else gets smaller in comparison. What do you think of that idea, and how have you understood what happens when a person is filled with the Spirit?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

 A. Uneducated ordinary men exhibiting tremendous courage (v. 13)

 B. We are called not to be settled but to be sent

 C. Christ has made us strange in the world for the sake of the world

 D. Our world is in need of men and women of spiritual courage

II. Their courage came from being with Jesus (v. 13)

A. The religious leaders had put Jesus on trial in a very similar way, and there’s something about these two fisherman that reminds them of Jesus.

B. Their three years of living with Jesus has changed them.

1. Like glow in the dark stars that radiate after being in the presence of light

2. As we behold Jesus, we reflect his glory (2 Corinthians 3:18)

3. As a result, there was a spiritual authority to their presence (not positional authority or educational authority but spiritual authority)

 C. In similar fashion Jesus’ spiritual authority came from all his time with his Father

1. He taught with spiritual authority (Mt 7:28-30)

2. This came from his time with the Father in solitude, prayer, Scripture meditation, worship, and daily surrender (see Mk 1;35, Lk 5:16)

 D. Likewise we are called to spend time with Jesus, seeking the face of the Lord

1. There are so many spiritual resources out there today, but we shouldn’t overcomplicate this. This is about seeking him daily in prayer, pouring out our hearts to him, finding his voice in Scripture, surrender to him in the daily moments, practicing the presence of God.

2. Our courage in critical moments is contingent on this life-long pursuit over time.

a). If we hope to perform like the star athlete in the moment, we must commit to their overall pattern of life daily.

b. “The general human failing is to want what is right and important, but at the same time not to commit to the kind of life that will produce the action we know to be right.” – Dallas Willard

3. We are called to seek the face of the Lord daily (see Psalm 27:4, 8)

III. Their courage came from being filled with the Spirit in the moment (v. 8)

A. Peter’s transformation is remarkable considering his 3-fold denial of Jesus to avoid this very scenario.

B. The Spirit gives him a message to the leaders that is direct (v. 10), articulate (v. 11), and compassionate (v. 12).

 C. Jesus’ promise of the Spirit in moments of crisis is fulfilled here (see Luke 12:11-12)

D. When the Holy Spirit fills people, they are led to do various things (preach, praise, repent, give, etc), but the common theme is that when someone is filled, God gets big for them and everything else becomes small in comparison.

E. Here the invisible God is becoming more real to Peter and John then the visible leaders in the room as they experience the fear of the Lord

1. They are more concerned about what God says than what these leaders say (see v. 18-19)

2. So what the leaders are experiencing as boldness, they are actually experiencing as rational based on who God is

3. Jesus commanded them not to fear those who could only kill the body but fear God who can kill body and soul (Mt 10:28)

 4. See Psalm 27:1

5. In Exodus 1:15-18 two women, Puah and Shiphrah, exhibit the same kind of boldness because of their fear of the Lord

 F. It’s the fear of the Lord that spurs us on towards courage, boldness, and faithfulness

IV. Conclusion

A. It’s this combination of a faithful pursuit of the Lord over time plus the empowering of the Spirit in the moment that leads to lives of bold witness for the sake of the world

B. What would it look like to become the kind of people who say, “we can’t help but speak about what we have seen and heard?” (v. 20)