



WOODLAND HEIGHTS

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Power to Change Part #4 – Changed Lives Change Others

Small Group Discussion Guide on Acts 4:13-22

Woodland Heights Christian Church Core Value Connection

This sermon aligns with the core value of Outreach at Woodland Heights Christian Church. We believe that the Great Commission is at the heart of God's work. Our goal is to cultivate a heart for evangelism in the lives of God's people so each one can share the message of salvation with others around them.

This sermon focuses on Acts 4:13-22 where Peter and John refuse to be silent about Jesus, demonstrating that when Christ transforms a life, that life naturally overflows in a courageous witness to others. This text shows ordinary believers whose lives were changed by the risen Lord, and that change compelled them to speak of what they had seen and heard, even when pressured to stay quiet. The bold proclamation of these men before the Sanhedrin models the kind of everyday evangelism we long to see in our church family as we Reach, Teach, and Serve others for the Cause of Christ.

Section #1 – ENCOUNTER

"Observing God's Word"

Imagine a man who has never taken a step on his own, carried day after day to the same gate, his life reduced to begging and surviving, not hoping and thriving. Then, in a single moment, the name of Jesus shatters 40 years of paralysis, and he goes walking, leaping, and praising God through the temple courts as an undeniable display of God's power. The miracle draws a crowd, alarms the religious authorities, and places Peter and John before the same council that condemned Jesus, facing threats and intimidation for preaching the risen Christ. In Acts 4:13-22 we see how changed lives stand firm, speak boldly, and always point others to the Savior.

Start your study by anchoring yourself in Scripture. Read Acts 4:13-22 as a group, family, or individual, letting God's Word sink in. Picture the healed man standing beside Peter and John, the astonished council, and the unstoppable joy of a people praising God for what He has done.

Core Questions

- What do you notice about the words, attitudes, and responses of Peter, John, the healed man, versus the religious leaders in these verses? Why is this relevant today?
- What key words, phrases, or themes grab your attention in this text?
- What is the main lesson or lessons you learn about the character of God in Acts 3:1-10 and 4:13-22? How does this shape your understanding of a life changed by Christ?

Section #2 – EXPLORE

“Understanding the Passage and Sermon”

As we dig deeper into Acts 4:13–22, we discover three faith-filled lessons about how God uses changed lives to change others. Peter and John were common, uneducated men, but their courage, conviction, and obedience revealed that they had been with Jesus. The Sanhedrin could not deny the miracle standing before them, yet they still resisted the message of the Gospel, choosing control over surrender as they tried to silence the apostles. This passage reminds us that the testimony of a transformed life brings glory to God, exposes the emptiness of unbelief, and calls every Christian to a defining decision—will we obey God rather than men and speak of what we have seen and heard? Use these questions to connect the sermon's insights to your life, family, or small group.

Lesson 1 – A Courageous Faith that Cannot Be Ignored (Acts 4:13-14)

The religious leaders saw the boldness of Peter and John, recognized them as ordinary men, and yet were astonished because they could tell these men had been with Jesus. Boldness (parresia) describes a willingness to endure difficulty or persecution in order to stand for what is right and to proclaim the truth, even when it costs everything. Through the ages, from the heroes of Hebrews 11 to reformers and missionaries, God has used this kind of courage to advance the Gospel, and the sermon reminds us that the same Spirit who emboldened Peter now dwells in every believer.

Questions

- What specific evidence of boldness do you see in Peter and John in this passage, and how does the healed man's presence strengthen their testimony before the council?
- The leaders “recognized that they had been with Jesus.” In your daily routines, what might it look like for coworkers, neighbors, classmates, or family members to recognize that you have been with Jesus?
- Where have you seen God redeem past failures in your life and turn them into opportunities for courageous witness?

Lesson 2 – A Conviction that Will Not Be Silenced (Acts 4:15-18)

Once Peter and John step outside, the Sanhedrin admits that a notable sign has occurred and that all Jerusalem knows about it, yet they still choose to resist the truth rather than repent. Their solution is not to examine the evidence honestly but to command the apostles “not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus,” attempting to contain the Gospel through intimidation and threats. The sermon points out that the early believers had to be commanded to be quiet, while many modern believers must be urged to speak, reminding us that everything in church history could have shifted if the apostles had chosen silence at this crossroads.

Questions

- Why do you think the leaders were willing to acknowledge the miracle but unwilling to accept the message behind it? Where do you see similar responses to Jesus in our world today?

- How does the contrast between the leaders' fearful rebellion and the apostles' fearless obedience challenge your own responses when faith becomes costly at work, school, or in your relationships?
- Discipleship groups at Woodland Heights are helping believers grow in their faith and equipping them to share the Gospel. What steps could you take to lean into discipleship so that your convictions are strengthened and your witness becomes more effective?

Lesson 3 – A Defining Decision to Obey God (Acts 4:19-22)

When ordered to be silent, Peter and John respectfully appeal to a higher authority: “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” They do not rant, rebel for rebellion’s sake, or look for loopholes; instead, they calmly confess that obedience to God compels them to keep speaking about the risen Christ. The council can neither deny the miracle nor disprove the resurrection, so they resort to further threats and then release the apostles because the people are praising God for what has happened, revealing that politics may win a moment, but God’s truth wins the war.

Questions

- How does Peter and John’s response model both courage and respect in the face of opposition, and what might that balance look like for believers today in conversations about faith, truth, and morality?
- The sermon notes that the Sanhedrin never refute the resurrection; they only try to control the message. How does the historical reality of the empty tomb strengthen your confidence when sharing the Gospel with skeptical friends?

Section #3 – EMBRACE

“Applying God’s Word”

Go deeper into the Word of God by applying what you’ve learned to your life today. Use these action steps to help you live out the truth that Changed Lives Change Others.

Identify Your Mission Field

Think of one place where God regularly positions you around people who may not know Christ—a workplace, classroom, neighborhood, team, or social setting. Write down the names of two or three individuals in that space and begin praying specifically for opportunities to share the hope of Jesus with them this month. Ask the Lord to help you see that, like Peter and John, you have been sent into that setting as His witness, not by accident but by design.

Practice Courageous Conversations

Following the example of the apostles, commit to one intentional spiritual conversation this week—a simple step such as asking a friend how you can pray for them, sharing part of your testimony, or inviting someone to church or a small group. Before you speak, pray for boldness, clarity, and compassion, remembering that God uses both your words and your actions to plant and water Gospel seeds. Afterward, reflect on what you learned and how God stretched your faith through that moment of obedience.

Live a Life That Points to Jesus

Peter and John were recognized as men who had been with Jesus because their lives reflected His character and power. Choose one specific area this week—your attitude at work, your patience at home, your integrity online, your generosity with time or resources—where you will intentionally live in a way that causes others to see Christ in you.

Memorize and Reflect

Memorize the sermons memory verse, Matthew 5:16 (ESV): “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” Throughout the week, repeat this verse in moments of fear or hesitation and ask God to use your words and works to shine His light in dark places.

Closing Challenge

Remember that the same Lord who lifted a lame man to his feet, transformed a fearful fisherman into a bold preacher, and turned opposition into an opportunity for praise is still changing lives today. As you leave this study, remember that you are not merely a spectator to these events—you are part of the ongoing story of Acts as the Holy Spirit empowers you to speak of what you have seen and heard. Take time as a group or family to pray:

- Thank God for the people He used to share the Gospel with you.
- Ask Him to deepen your boldness, soften the hearts of those you are praying for, and open doors for Outreach in your everyday life.
- Commit yourselves to live as those who cannot help but speak of Jesus because His grace has truly changed your lives.