

Date: 24May 2026 Bethesda Community Sunday Sermon

Series: The Book of Acts. The Holy spirit.

Title: Acts 3 and 4 Facing Intimidation, Filled with the Holy Spirit

*Question 1.* Where/When have you felt: I can't say anything about Jesus/God/the bible/raise a spiritual question, because

\_\_\_\_\_ (E.G., no one ever talks about God-stuff here. I'm in a secular/Christian/religious/irreligious/casual/formal \_\_\_\_\_. We are not supposed to discuss such things here. )

*Question 2.* The thought makes you cringe. It's just so inappropriate!

Which of these *feelings* have you experienced?

- Embarrassed
- Small
- Intimidated
- Fearful
- Hot under your collar
- Tongue-tied
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Maybe you're right. The situation is sensitive. Anything you say/do will ruffle feathers. Maybe it's time to lie low, keep quiet... Maybe, if it were just you.

But what if there was someone else here? (*Who?*)

### **Context around Acts 3**

Where were Peter and John? At The T \_\_\_\_\_ Mount

What do you know about this place?

When Jesus did his first miracle, turning water into wine, no one had a problem with that. Then he headed to Jerusalem. He saw people use His Father's house to make their own profit, a system that stood in the way of people coming close to communicate with God (the purpose for why Adam was given God's spirit, in Genesis 2). He disrupted the businesses. Then, when confronted, what did he say?

John 2

18 The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

This statement, said in this temple complex, was used later to accuse Jesus of wrongdoing.

Mark 14

53 They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law came together. ...

55 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. 56 Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

57 Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: 58 “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.’”

59 Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

60 Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” 61 But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

62 “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

63 The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked.

64 “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?”

They all condemned him as worthy of death.

Back to Jesus’ earlier statement. He was actually talking about his resurrection. But everyone was thinking about the physical building.

Who built this temple? How long has construction been going on?

John 2

20 They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” 21 But the temple he had spoken of was his body. 22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed...

- Who was King Herod?
- When Jesus was born, what did King Herod do to all the baby boys? (see Matthew 2:16) Why did he do this?

Consider the tense relations between King Herod and the religious Jews. Think: Why is The Temple Mount a politically charged, highly sensitive location?

Inside this politically sensitive place, what did Peter and John decide to do?

### Acts 3

*Question 3.* How many persons participated in this partnership? Who were they?

What was the outcome? Was it good or bad? (Acts4:3,4. *On Next page3*)

**Context around Acts4**

Acts 4  
 1 The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people.  
 2 They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.  
 3 They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day.  
 4 But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

*What were the Sadducees' concerns?*

<i>Sadducees</i>	<i>Christ</i>
There is no afterlife, so no judgement after death.	Luke 12: 5 Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell.
There is no resurrection. You cease to exist upon death.	Mark 12:18 to 27 Abraham, Isaac and Jacob still exist. And God calls Himself their god.
Live for wealth and comfort today. So what is most important is political power.	Use material things as a means to eternal ends. Not as ends in themselves. <i>Parable of the Rich Fool</i> (Luke 12:13 to 21)

Reflect on yourself—which side do your concerns lie/lean towards?

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*Sanhidrin, Annas & Caiaphas*

**Acts 4**  
 5 The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem.  
 6 Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family.  
 7 They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

What's the "Sanhedrin"?

A ruling council/senate with power given by the Roman government

- governed Jerusalem and Judea.
- About 70 or so members (mostly Sadducees), powerful and wealthy people from aristocratic and priestly families.
- They had their own police force.
- They judged and punished criminals.

Who were Annas and Caiaphas?

- Caiaphas was the high priest judging Jesus in Mark 14:53 ; John11:49-50).
- Annas was Caiaphas father.
- Were they interested in a fair trial? In the truth? (see Mark 14:55-56, on page2))
- What happened to Jesus after Annas and Caiaphas tried him?

Against this backdrop of a very bad experience, what would be Peter and John’s normal feeling/reaction?

**Acts4**

Question 4. Peter and John were thrown into jail (Acts 3:3). What do you think they were doing the whole night?

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The next day, why were the Sanhedrin, Annas and Caiaphas so surprised?

Acts4:13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

What was astonishing about Peter’s response? Compare:

- The message to the people in the Temple (who were open and interested) with
- the statement given under interrogation

What was proclaimed to both groups?

<b>Acts 3 To the people in the Temple</b>	<b>Acts 4 before the Sanhedrin</b>
12 When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?	Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! 9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed,...
13 The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified <b>his servant                      Jesus.</b> You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. 14 You disowned the <b>Holy and Righteous One</b> and asked that a murderer be released to you. 15 You killed the <b>author of life,</b>	10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified

<p>but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.                  16 By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.</p>	<p>but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.</p>
<p>17 "Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders.</p>	
<p>17 "Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders.                  18 But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer.</p>	<p>11 Jesus is                  "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.'[a]                  12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."</p>
<p>19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,...</p>	

**Responding to Intimidation**

Acts4:23 On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they...

Question5: What did they do? What would *you* have done? Choose one option:

- felt sorry for themselves. "Everyone is hating on us!"
- kept quiet so no one will get into trouble.
- blamed Peter. He started all this!
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Prayed? *For what?* Protection? Blessing? "Help me, solve my problems?!"

How was their prayer different than how you pray? (Then use their prayer to write your own.)

<b>Acts4:</b>	<b>Prepare your own prayer:</b>
they raised their voices together in prayer to God. they said,	Do you gather with other Jesus followers to pray together as corporate prayer?
"Sovereign Lord," you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them.	Who are you addressing? Speak truth and honor about God.

<p>25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:          “Why do the nations rage          and the peoples plot in vain?          26 The kings of the earth rise up          and the rulers band together          against the Lord          and against his anointed one.’</p>	<p>How does God view this situation? What has God said in His word?</p>
<p>27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.          28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.</p>	<p>Tell God what has happened. Remember, it’s not about <i>you</i>, but about Jesus.</p>
<p>29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and <b>enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.</b>          30 <b>Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”</b></p>	<p>Ask. For what?:</p>

What resulted from this corporate prayer? The Holy Spirit came upon them. Then?

- Filled with \_\_\_\_\_
- Spoke \_\_\_\_\_
- Were one in \_\_\_\_\_
- Shared \_\_\_\_\_

31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.**  
 32 All the believers **were one in heart and mind.** No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they **shared everything they had.** 33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And **God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all 34 that there were no needy persons among them.** For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

*Application:*

How does Acts 3&4 challenge how you think about *Question 1 and 2* (on page 1).

Have you started waiting on the Holy spirit? When will you do so? (with your cell/mentor/spouse/etc). Pray *your prepared prayer* (done on page 5&6).