

Week 47: The Book of Acts - Power and Boldness of the Early Church

A Sabbath Family Bible Study

Introduction

After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the mission began. The Book of Acts records the birth and expansion of the early Church. Ordinary men, once fearful and scattered, became bold witnesses of Christ. This transformation was born through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Acts is a model of what happens when God's people are filled with His Spirit, committed to truth, and willing to obey regardless of cost. The early Church faced opposition, persecution, imprisonment, and even death. Yet it grew. Why? Because truth was preached boldly, authority was recognized clearly, and compromise was rejected completely.

This week's study teaches families that Christianity has never been passive. Faithful households have never shrunk back in fear, but stood firm, spoke truth, and trusted in God for the results.

Scripture Reading (KJV)

(Acts 2:1-13, Acts 2:14-18, Acts 4:13-20, Acts 5:27-29, Acts 2:41-47, Psalm 27:1-3)

Acts 2:1–8: The Coming of the Holy Spirit

1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Acts 2:14–18

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy

18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

Commentary

Pentecost marks a turning point where the Spirit of God is poured out, empowering believers for their mission. The signs (wind, fire, languages) demonstrate divine authority. Peter, once fearful, now stands boldly and speaks publicly. This is the result of the Spirit's work.

We must understand that true spiritual strength does not come from personality or confidence, but rather from God's Spirit working within us. The same Spirit that empowered the early Church is still active today, producing boldness, clarity, and conviction.

Acts 4:13–20: Boldness in the Face of Opposition

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

Acts 5:27–29

27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,

28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine

29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

Commentary

The early Church did not operate without being attacked and threatened, Authority figures regularly attempted to silence them. The response was obedience to God overrides obedience to men.

Peter and John were not educated elites. Yet their boldness revealed they had been with Jesus. Boldness is clarity combined with conviction. We must teach our families that truth is not negotiable. When cultural pressure contradicts God's Word, the response must be firm and faithful. Silence in the face of truth is compromise!

Acts 2:41–47: The Life of the Early Church

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Commentary

The early Church was marked by consistency, unity, and devotion. They were: Steadfast in doctrine, committed to fellowship, faithful in prayer, generous in provision, and unified in purpose. Also notice that the growth of the Church was not manufactured through the watering down of scripture - "The Lord added to the church."

Families must see that strong community flows from shared truth and shared commitment. It does not come from entertainment or convenience. The home plays a central role. Meals, teaching, and fellowship often took place "house to house." The household was foundational to the life of the Church.

Discussion Questions for All Ages

Young Children

- Who gave the disciples power?
- What did Peter and John do when they were told to stop?
- Did the early believers share with one another?

Older Children & Teens

- What changed in Peter after Pentecost?
- Why did the apostles refuse to stay silent?
- What does boldness look like in your life today?

Adults

- Are you relying on the Spirit or on your own strength?
- Where are you tempted to remain silent instead of speaking truth?

- Does your household reflect the priorities of the early Church?
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Psalm Reading: Psalm 27:1–3 (KJV)

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

Commentary

Fear loses its power when we recognize God as our strength. Because of this the early Church faced deadly opposition, yet remained steadfastly confident. Not because circumstances were easy, but because God was greater than their fears. Confidence in God always produces boldness in action.

Hymn: “Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus”

By George Duffield Jr. (1858)

1.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss.
From victory unto victory
His army shall He lead,
Till every foe is vanquished
And Christ is Lord indeed.

2.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
The trumpet call obey;
Forth to the mighty conflict
In this His glorious day.

Ye that are men now serve Him
Against unnumbered foes;
Let courage rise with danger,
And strength to strength oppose.

3.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you,
Ye dare not trust your own.
Put on the Gospel armor,
Each piece put on with prayer;
Where duty calls or danger,
Be never wanting there.

4.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle,
The next the victor's song.
To him that overcometh
A crown of life shall be;
He with the King of glory
Shall reign eternally.

Family Application Points

1. Depend on the Holy Spirit

Teach your family that true strength comes from God, not from human ability.

2. Speak Truth Boldly

Do not compromise truth to avoid conflict. Stand firm in obedience.

3. Prioritize Fellowship and Teaching

Build rhythms in your home that reflect the early Church like teaching, prayer, and shared life.

4. Obey God Above All

When authority conflicts with Scripture, choose God's command.

5. Live as a Witness

Your household should reflect Christ in both word and action.

A Sabbath Feast Prayer

Father, we thank You for the example of the early Church. As we sit at this table, bless this food before us and bless the loving hands that prepared it. Fill our home with Your Spirit. Give us boldness to speak truth, strength to stand firm, and unity in our household. Help us to live faithfully and to reflect Your power in all we do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Closing Prayer

Lord, You are our strength and our courage. Remove fear and hesitation from our hearts. Fill us with Your Spirit so that we may speak truth boldly and live faithfully. Strengthen our home to stand firm in obedience and to reflect the example of the early Church. May our lives point others to You. In Your holy name we pray, Amen.