**“We Cannot Help Speaking”**

Going deeper in Acts 4:1-20

**INTRODUCTION –** In Acts 3, Peter, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, had healed a man crippled since birth. A large crowd witnessed the miracle and Peter seized the opportunity to preach the good news of the resurrection of Jesus to the crowd. The crowd and Peter’s testimony caught the attention of a group of Jewish religious leaders.

**READ** – *Read (passage) aloud. Read it several times. Listen for what the Spirit of God is saying, don’t just think about it.*

4 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. 2They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 3They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. 4But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.5The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. 6Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest’s family. 7They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “By what power or what name did you do this?”8Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! 9If 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, 10then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. 11Jesus is

“‘the stone you builders rejected,
    which has become the cornerstone.’[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+4%3A1-20&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27034a)]

**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.”**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. **14**But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. **15**So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. **16**“What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. **17**But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”**18**Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. **19**But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! **20**As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

**ENGAGE** – *Questions for going deeper. God is speaking… to you.*

1. Why are the Jewish religious leaders so opposed to Peter and John sharing the gospel of Jesus?

2. What would you feel if you were one of the new believers who saw Peter and John taken to jail for evangelizing? If you were Peter or John?

3. How does Peter respond to the amazed crowd in chapter 3 and to being questioned by the rulers and elders of the people in chapter 4?

4. By what power are Peter and John who are “unschooled, ordinary men” able to preach with such boldness?

5. Which experiences in the time you have “been with Jesus” compel you to never stop speaking the good news?

**PRAY** – *God has spoken. So, reply.*

\*Give thanks for the saving power of the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth!

\* Ask the Holy Spirit to help you seize opportunities to share the good news.

\* Continue to pray for those who have not yet responded to the saving grace of Jesus.

**LIVE** – *This is where the rubber hits the road.*

Peter, John and the other leaders of the early church faced sever persecution for spreading the gospel message yet they refused to let anything or anyone stop them. What is stopping you?