

Monday, April 15

When Opposition Comes... Acts 4:5-12

⁷ When they had made the prisoners^[d] stand in their midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹ if we are being questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are being asked how this man has been healed, ¹⁰ let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,^[d] whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.

Peter wasn't new to being questioned about Jesus. He met resistance with Jewish leaders and doubters from the moment he said 'Yes' to following Christ. I can imagine Peter, along with all of the other disciples, being fearful for their lives--maybe questioning why they would still face trouble or pain or loss while being called to heal and proclaim in the "powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene."

Yet in this passage Peter doesn't come across as impulsive like he's been so famous for in the past. We meet a new Peter in the book of Acts. A tenacious Peter; a powerful Peter; Simon isn't showing face anymore, and it's because there's something new on the inside.

That power and tenacity is revealed in verse 8 where we see he is "filled with the Holy Spirit."

He risks his very life to stand up to these elders and rulers and not only question their accusation, but to also state that it was all done through the very One *they* crucified! He continues saying the one they rejected is now the only one that can save, that can heal! Wow! Go Peter!

We would like to think we would have the same boldness and backbone in that position, but the truth is, we don't know how we will respond until the opportunity arises. Whenever I am questioned or interrogated or accused, I pray I am able to reply with the wisdom by the Holy Spirit giving me the words.

Luke tells us that when we "are brought to trial in the synagogues and before rulers and authorities, don't worry about how to defend yourself or what to say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what needs to be said" (Luke 12:11-12). This does not mean we never need to read the Word and just rely on the Spirit to tell us what to say. How can we recognize His voice if we never know His Word? We have to prepare daily.

We don't know what path we will encounter each day, but we know as representatives of the King, we need to know Him well enough to know when it's Him speaking to us. And don't be nervous and timid about speaking up for Christ. He has already given us a "Spirit of power" (2 Timothy 1:7). My job, and yours, is to spend daily time with Him to know Him more than the day before. We must be ready at all times to live boldly and preach the gospel, and be ready to use words when necessary.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I thank you for Your Spirit of power that lives within me. I ask you to continue to speak to me daily as I read your word, so that I can recognize your voice when opposition comes my way. Help me as I strive to be worthy of the calling to which you have called me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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