

Lesson #3 – Fish Guts

Opening Prayer:

Father God, we ask you to open doors for each of us to share in word and deed, your Gospel message of love and salvation. Lead us to invite people to know you and to get involved in a church family. Let us be fervent in our prayers for these opportunities and alert to recognize them as You work in the world. Make us fishers of men. Amen.

Welcome: any reflections from last week? Are you praying for your mission field? For yourself?

In the last session, we saw that Christianity began as an event in history, not as a new belief system. Likewise sharing your faith is not so much about convincing someone to believe something as it is telling them about what you have seen and heard.

We all were fish once. **Read** Romans 10:14: “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”

The Word of the Lord, Thanks be to God.

Last week we referred you to Acts 4. When Peter and John went to the temple, they healed a lame beggar in the name of Jesus. They were put in jail. When on trial before the Sanhedrin the next day and told to stop preaching, they replied, “We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20). After they were released, they went back to the Church, and the Church prayed after they reported their experiences.

The Christians in the first century were motivated by the sudden realization that they were living in the midst of God’s unfolding plan for the world. That they were seeing the scriptures actually play out! They knew that God is sovereign.

So, in light of God’s sovereignty, let’s watch the video and see what the believers prayed for in Acts 4 and how that applies to us today.

Watch Video... 15 minutes.

What was it they prayed for? Boldness!

Boldness is simply **speaking up when the opportunity pops up.**

As Andy told us... When all is said and done, we want to know we were players in the activity of our Sovereign God. We stand to experience a little awkwardness, but they faced total rejection from society, persecution, and even death. And yet, somehow they persisted. Because they did, we are still talking about Jesus’ death and resurrection more than two thousand years later.

Discussion questions:

: **How** would your life be different if you truly believed God was in control?

Most of our limits in life are self-imposed. This question will help participants think about just how bold they can be in life, knowing God is fully in control of everything. We don't have to fear men. That doesn't mean we should be irresponsible, tactless, or impatient in our fishing styles. [*see 7 ways to share the gospel*] But we don't have to be timid either. Note: There is a difference between "bold" and obnoxious. We don't need to be over-the-top in our interaction. Rather, we need to take a simple next step.)

: What are the threats that deter you from speaking God's Word boldly?

(It can be helpful to identify the obstacles that hold us back from sharing the message of Jesus with boldness. Once we recognize the source of our fears and hindrances, we can begin to resolve them. A problem well-defined is a problem half-solved.)

: What would "bold" look like in your life? Consider adding this to your **prayer** list. (encourage the group to share practical ways to be bold in their faith.)

Closing prayer:

Jesus, we praise you and we are thankful and grateful. It is through you that we are adopted into Your family as children of God. You call us to share the good news about your life, death, burial and resurrection. Holy Spirit, help us to share the good news of Jesus' message with others; to go for it when the opportunity, the chance, presents itself. We ask for wisdom and boldness. Wisdom, so we may not fall into unhealthy patterns of sharing the faith, patterns that contradict the message or push people away from God rather than draw them near. When we share the gospel, may we understand that it is simply the good news about Jesus! We want to be authentic and genuinely compassionate and know we are players in the activity of our sovereign God. Grant us boldness to speak your word; boldness like that of the first believers who despite rejection and persecution, persisted. We trust you to take the little we do and multiply it. In your most precious Name, we pray. Amen.

Halverson Benediction: "You go nowhere by accident. Wherever you go, God is sending you. Wherever you are, God has put you there, He has a purpose in you being there. Christ who indwells you, has something He wants you to do through you, wherever you are."

(distribute 7 practical ways to share the Gospel and other pamphlet/tract offerings)