

Your story basically consists of three parts. Follow the simple outline below that can assist you in telling your story:

1. Before I became a Christian, I lived and thought this way: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. How I came to know Christ: [I.E. how the Lord drew me to Himself > John 6:40]

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3. After I came to know Christ, the changes took place: [I.E. The Lord has been changing my life in the following ways > 2 Corinthians 5:17] \_\_\_\_\_

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**RESPOND** (Application for this week) **WHAT** were the significant scriptures for you this week? (Write them out.)

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**WHY** are those scriptures *significant to you* at this time in your life?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**HOW** can you practically apply what God spoke to you about this week?

[Try to respond in terms of specific action steps, specific people, long-term plan.]

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\_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT** will be the time frame for your application?

(1) Start Date \_\_\_\_\_ (2) Progress Check Date(s) \_\_\_\_\_ (3) Finish Date \_\_\_\_\_

**WHO** I can ask to hold me accountable for my application: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sermon-Based Devotional

Lawrence Free Methodist Church

(Based on a Sermon by Pastor Alex Alexander on May 27, 2018)

Series: The Book of ACTS: WE ARE THE CHURCH

This week: **Bold and Gracious**

**Acts 3:1-10; 4:5-31**

If we are convinced that the gospel is true, then we must act on what we believe, praying to God for boldness & then proclaiming what we know to be true. We should find ourselves compelled to say and do bold things for the sake of the gospel.

**God's people do good deeds and give glory to Jesus.**

**READ** Acts 3:1-10 & 4:5-12 Mark everything that stands out to you.

*Acts 3:1* Now Peter & John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. <sup>2</sup>And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. <sup>3</sup>Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. <sup>4</sup>And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." <sup>5</sup>And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. <sup>6</sup>But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" <sup>7</sup>And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.

<sup>8</sup>And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. <sup>9</sup>And all the people saw him walking and praising God, <sup>10</sup>and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

*Acts 4:5* On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, <sup>6</sup>with Annas the high priest & Caiaphas & John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. <sup>7</sup>And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" <sup>8</sup>Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, <sup>9</sup>if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, <sup>10</sup>let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by Him this man is standing before you well. <sup>11</sup>This Jesus is the **STONE THAT WAS REJECTED BY YOU, THE BUILDERS, WHICH HAS BECOME THE CORNERSTONE.** <sup>12</sup>And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

**REFLECT** Write your observations & thoughts from the passage above. **I.E. Peter – who had previously been afraid to be identified with Jesus – had no reservations whatsoever in identifying himself and his actions with Jesus and because of Jesus. He was gracious and respectful in his response and dialog with these people.**

(Continue to Page 2 to write your thoughts and observations →)

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**God’s people reserve ultimate allegiance for Jesus.**

Acts 4:13-18 tells us how they sought to manage the crisis:

**READ Acts 4:13-18 Mark what stands out to you.**

Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. <sup>14</sup> But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. <sup>15</sup> But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, <sup>16</sup> saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. <sup>17</sup> But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” <sup>18</sup> So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

**REFLECT** Write your observations and thoughts from Acts 4:13-18.

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**To resist the pressure to minimize Jesus, we need three things.**

**1. First, we need simply to keep our eyes on Jesus—on who He is and what His life, death, and resurrection have accomplished for us.**

The Bible is full of admonitions to “remember” our God.

**2. Second, we need the gathering of God’s people.** When we gather with the church, we’re reminded of our hope, of our confession of faith, and of the Savior who draws the people of God together. We’re also reminded that we are citizens of a different kind of kingdom and under a different kind of authority than the political and social kingdoms we live in.

**3. Third, we need the boldness that comes from the filling of the Holy Spirit.**

According to Acts 4:19-22, Peter and John were prepared for this moment, and filled with the Spirit of God, they answered their oppressors with faith and boldness, refusing to deny Jesus in order to satisfy the Jewish leaders.

**READ Acts 4:19-22 Mark what stands out to you.**

<sup>19</sup> But Peter and John answered them, “*Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge,* <sup>20</sup> *for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.*” <sup>21</sup> And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened.

<sup>22</sup> For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

**REFLECT** Write your thoughts from Acts 4:19-22.

**I.E. Peter & John simply told others of what they had witnessed God do. – And lives were noticeably transformed as a result of their faithfulness.**

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One of our most powerful tools for sharing the gospel is our story with the gospel. What we’ve seen and heard, the ways we’ve experienced the power and presence of God, the change we’ve witnessed in ourselves and in our church family—these things can’t really be argued or debated. **Spirit-empowered evangelistic boldness will often flow from our stories, and these will often be the most compelling way we can share the good news about Jesus with others.**

**God’s people pray and preach with boldness.**

**READ Acts 4:23-31 Mark what stands out to you.**

<sup>23</sup> When they were released, they went to their friends & reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. <sup>24</sup> And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “*Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them,* <sup>25</sup> *who through the mouth of our father David, Your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, “Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? <sup>26</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against His Anointed!”— <sup>27</sup> for truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod & Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, <sup>28</sup> to do whatever Your hand and Your plan had predestined to take place. <sup>29</sup> And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to Your servants to continue to speak Your word with all boldness, <sup>30</sup> while You stretch out Your hand to heal, & signs & wonders are performed through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.”*

<sup>31</sup> And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

**REFLECT** Write your thoughts from Acts 4:23-31.

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**NOTE: There is a hand out on the kiosk with these Sermon-based Devotionals that can be a helpful tool in putting your story together in a coherent, concise, compelling form. Continue to Page 4 for a very abbreviated version of that handout – and then pick up the handout entitled “TESTIMONY WORKSHEET” which is designed to assist you in your application for this week.**