

Empowered Witnesses

John 20:19-Acts 4:13

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The very day of the resurrection, the disciples of Jesus were afraid to go out in public or even talk about Jesus to someone. They were overpowered by fear and John tells us that the evening of the first day of the week (the evening when Jesus rose from the dead) they were still hiding behind locked doors. They were afraid of the Jews responsible for the death of Jesus. *What could possibly change their mood? Their attitude?*

John 20:19-21

-They were all together with the doors locked for fear of the Jews. They feared for their lives. Their leader was killed, and they thought they would be next. Fear and insecurity gripped them, paralyzed them. They were stuck. *Then what they did not expect happened and it radically changed their mood.*

Their grief turned into joy; their fear was gone. Jesus is back. Nothing remains the same when Jesus comes in the midst. *He gave them evidence that he was alive (v.20) He showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.*

Jesus empowered them to fulfill his mission: As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. **Matt.28** tells us this mission was to make disciples of all nations.

Mark 16: 15 Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. Luke tells us that repentance and forgiveness of sin must be preached in Jesus' name beginning in Jerusalem. **(Luke 24:47);**

Jesus empowered his disciples to forgive sins; this is what he had promised to Peter before he died. **(Matt.16:19)** I will give you the keys of the kingdom to lose things and to bind things. *Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom to the apostles after the resurrection.*

Jesus sent his followers on a mission; they are empowered to represent Jesus everywhere they go. When we read the book of Acts, we can clearly see how they began to fulfill Christ's mission. **The apostles began to preach the resurrection 50 days after the Passover.** During the feast of Pentecost Peter and the Eleven began to preach Jesus. **Acts 2:22-41**

-They preached Jesus alive, as Lord and Messiah. Those who believed were baptized and the number of disciples increased rapidly in Jerusalem.

In **Acts 3** Peter and John healed a man who was crippled from birth. The man who was crippled went with them to the temple; jumping and praising God for what happened. ***A crowd gathered and Peter and John get to preach Jesus again. (v.11-19)***

The religious people were bothered (greatly annoyed) by the preaching of the apostles. **(Acts 4:1-3)** The apostles went to jail for preaching Jesus.

Acts 4:4-13

Peter and John get to preach Jesus to the very people who plot against Jesus.

Those who were responsible for the death of Jesus.

Jesus whom you crucified; whom God raised from the dead is powerful enough to heal a crippled.

-Jesus is the stone you builders rejected; he is the chief cornerstone.

-Salvation is only found in Jesus, he is the only name under heaven by which we must be saved (v.12)

v.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. ESV

Did you hear it? When they saw the courage, the boldness of Peter and John.

The opposition was astonished (amaze) at their courage. Why? **It was obvious they had been with Jesus.** Their fear was gone. Jesus transformed them from coward men into bold witnesses.

Will your boldness and courage during opposition be evident to those around you? God used ordinary, unschooled men

to change the world; he empowered them to be courageous witnesses. God would use you as well; you don't have to fear; our Lord is alive, and he is sending you and I to represent him in this world. If you truly believe there is power in the name of Jesus, then you will be his bold representative in this world. We got to know the gospel of Jesus because past disciples were brave enough to tell us about Jesus.

The boldness of Peter and John was evident to the religious people that they had been with Jesus. **What evidence will you show others that you have spent time with Jesus?** Being with Jesus, spending time with him is that obvious that people will notice the change.