

**Acts: Shaken to Boldness**  
**Sermon 2-25-18**  
**By Pastor Curtis Dehmey**

**Acts 4:27-37**

<sup>27</sup>For in this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, <sup>28</sup>to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. <sup>29</sup>And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, <sup>30</sup>while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” <sup>31</sup>When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.

<sup>32</sup>Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. <sup>33</sup>With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup>There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. <sup>35</sup>They laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. <sup>36</sup>There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”). <sup>37</sup>He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.

**Message:**

(Play Video at <http://www1.cbn.com/features/how-prayer-paved-the-way-to-olympic-gold-for-gabby-douglas>) It’s incredible what can happen when we go to God in prayer. God wants to perform signs and wonders in our lives. God wants to answer our prayers. It was incredible when Gabby’s mother prayed that her child would feed and all of a sudden Gabby would eat as an infant. It was incredible when Gabby’s siblings sacrificed their wants and needs to help Gabby succeed. Each time they prayed with boldness for answers, God shook them with surprise and awe. Which then spurred them on to continue to pray in boldness. And each time their faith and confidence in God grew. They came to trust the Spirit of the living God more and more. The Spirit of God was evident among Gabby and her family.

It was also evident in Peter and John. In order to understand our passage more fully, it’s important to know what happened before our passage. In the

beginning of Acts 4, Peter and John are confronted by the Sadducees and are arrested for healing a cripple and preaching about the resurrection of Jesus. They met before the high priest council of Jerusalem on the next day. The council requested that Peter and John stop these signs, wonders and preaching about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Essentially, Peter says “no” and proclaims the gospel to them. Starting in verse 13 it says, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus. When they saw the man who had been cured standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. So they ordered them to leave the council while they discussed the matter with one another. They said, ‘What will we do with them? For it is obvious to all who live in Jerusalem that a notable sign has been done through them; we cannot deny it...’” And the council goes on to tell Peter and John not to speak anymore of these things and they will let them go. And again, Peter and John, in so many words, say they won’t do that. And the council let’s them go anyways.

And the following verses celebrate Peter and John’s boldness until it gets to our text. Look especially at verse 29, “<sup>29</sup>And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness.” The “threats” they’re talking about is those who oppose the gospel like the Jerusalem Council. Can you see how their acts of faith in this instance stirred them on to great boldness? Their ability to stand-up to the Jerusalem Council in confidence that their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is with them actually further inspired them to pray for more boldness among themselves and among those who believe. And then other incredible things happens. “<sup>31</sup>When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.” They were shaken. I don’t know what exactly that means, but I imagine that as they prayed the Holy Spirit came over them in strong ways. Strengthening their confidence and their courage. Giving them what they need to speak the word of God with boldness. That when they tell people about the Jesus story that those who are timid, become bold. That those who may not have the greatest ability to speak, all of a sudden are given the words to speak. That those who do not have much energy, are all of sudden given a new burst of energy and enthusiasm to share the Gospel.

What would happen if, we, the people of God and of Providence, would pray for boldness in our lives? It’s a dangerous prayer. The type of prayer that I’m sure many of us will walk away from today’s worship service unmoved to pray such a prayer. We know that it is going to require something of us. It may require sacrifice. It may require for us to do things that we are uncomfortable with. It may require change. But it’s not merely because we’re cowards. It’s mainly because we would rather stick with the comfort of familiarity and safety than to strive for

something greater than what we have. It's because we would rather stick with the comfort of familiarity and safety than to strive for something greater than what we have. To strive for the greatness of the Kingdom of God. You know, Peter and John could have settled for not responding at all after Jesus' death and resurrection. They could have gone back to their professions and continued in a very comfortable lifestyle. They could have just simply taken the Jerusalem Council's warning and stopped preaching the Gospel. They could have deceived the Council, agreed to their terms and then behind their back still preach the Gospel—another cowardice choice. But instead they spoke boldly, graciously and confidently with the Council and they still let them go. And because of their boldness, a great many things happened.

Everyone who was with them and around them were inspired with the same boldness. Starting in verse 32, “<sup>32</sup>Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. <sup>33</sup>With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup>There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. <sup>35</sup>They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.” Take note of a few things here. They started to share. What a novel idea. The community of God, the church, starts to share their resources with one another. What would it look like for the people of Providence to share their resources? I'm not just talking about money. It could be talents, skills, an encouraging word. We all have something to share. And here it is again, continuing in the 2018 theme of testifying. “With great power the apostles gave their testimony...” “With great power...” Their conviction was strong. We've seen evidence in all the testimonies so far and I would venture in all the testimonies to come, that they come with great power. Because of your willingness to share and be bold in sharing your story, we are all blessed by God's deeds of power in your life. Each testimony makes a difference in our lives. Now here is a bold verse 34. I'm not sure I could live up to this. “<sup>34</sup>There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold.” Can you imagine that for the need of your brother or sister in Christ, that you would be willing to give up your homes, your land, your investments for their need? Talk about being all-in. These people weren't joking around. They were not just dipping their toe into the living water of God. They were sold out for the Gospel. When we pray for boldness, we are going to be asked to do bold things. Just like if we pray for patience, God is going to give us things to be patient about. But I believe, Providence Church, this is one of the things we could do better here at Providence. To pray for boldness in our

lives. God's call to boldness may not look like these stories and images in Acts, but what would it look like? What is God calling us/you to have faith about and be bold about?

In his reflection on this passage, Biblical Scholar, Robert Wall, said this, "If the church is too timid of what others may think and does not ask God for enough 'boldness' for ministry, it must have timid convictions about who God is, what God has done, and what God will do." I'm moved by this statement. It hurts a little, but it's convicting. I probably don't pray for boldness enough in my life. In my walk with Jesus. Like many of you, I would rather settle for the easy and safe path. But that's just what the evil one wants. To pacify us. To have us give up. To say "It's too hard." To believe that we are incapable. But if we are unwilling to pray for boldness and be shaken to bold action in the name of the gospel, then what does that say about our faith in God? What does that say about our conviction and who we believe God is? Folks, God is so much more powerful than that. Do we not believe it? And don't just say you believe in the power of God and then go on in the actions of safety and comfort. That's not conviction. That's timid belief. Be open and willing to take bold action when God calls for boldness in your life. We would not know of an incredibly loving savior or be released from our sins and guilt if it were not for the boldness and sacrifice that Jesus did on the cross. Folks, death is not the end. Death is not the end. Jesus died on the cross and it was not the end. What happens after death? Resurrection!! New Life!! God's bold deeds of power in our lives. Are we going to be known for our courage and faith in God's deeds of power? Or we going to be known for our choices of safety and comfort? What kind of legacy do you want to leave behind? Hint: people who only live by safety and comfort, are not usually people who are remembered. I mean, look at the reaction of the media and even the nation this past week when Billy Graham passed away. I've never seen so many news articles and coverage over one man of faith. I've never heard so many people talk about how Billy Graham was the agent of delivering the gospel, the salvation of Jesus, into their lives. Billy Graham's call to boldness and prayers of boldness is what changed so many lives. His willingness to be God's agent for the gospel, God's ambassador for the gospel, is what he will be remembered for. No doubt, his conviction was strong. In fact, the interesting thing is that I found this video on the website Dolph suggested the other week, iamsecond.com, before Billy Graham's passing. Kathy Lee Gifford's testimony incorporates Billy Graham's impact of boldness on her life. Watch carefully and note the moments where Kathy had to choose to live boldly in her faith in Jesus. (Play Video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MS017vHWMr0&t=7s>)

Incredible! Right!?!? I never knew Kathy Lee Gifford was a Christian, let alone, having such an incredible faith in Jesus! Some of you may be asking, how

do I get this boldness for Christ? Robert Wall names it pretty clearly, “Vital witness is not possible without fervent worship.” “Vital witness is not possible without fervent worship.” In other words, if your worship to God is stale and boring, then your life is not going to reflect the boldness of the Spirit. And by worship, I’m not just talking about Sunday morning service. Your worship on Sunday mornings is one spot to enhance your passion for Jesus. It’s not the job the praise team or myself, it’s a choice you have to make. We can facilitate a space for you to worship passionately, but you have to make the choice to be intimate with our God. But worship is more than Sunday mornings. What does your prayer life look like? Is it filled with honesty, passion and conviction? Do you study the scriptures? Do you take to heart the things Jesus says to you? If all these things are non-existent in your life, then you are more than likely going to have a stale faith. Something that’s past tense. And that’s not the way of Jesus. The closer you get to God, the more passionate and faithful you are, the more you will be given what you need to respond to God’s opportunities of boldness. Ask yourself today, where is God calling me to be bold in faith? To be bold in witness? Jesus wants to do great and wonderful things in your life. Jesus wants you to be able to testify of His signs and wonders. But if our belief, our conviction, our worship, is timid, then our actions will also be timid. I encourage you to step out in boldness. It’s an incredible and wonderful ride! Amen.