

# What Comes of Pentecost? – Acts 4:1-31

**Introduction** – Ten days after Jesus ascended and fifty days after He rose from the dead, on the day of Pentecost, while the disciples tarried in Jerusalem as Jesus had instructed, the Holy Spirit of God was poured out in abundance. The result was the preaching of the gospel in the power of that Spirit in the languages of all peoples by the Spirit-filled apostles. This initiating baptism of the church was followed by many other fillings of the Spirit, in the book of Acts, and throughout the history of the church. A certain kind of boldness is evident in those who are filled with the Spirit. This spirit of boldness is love made perfect; it is truth on fire.

**Peter the Bold Spokesman** – After the Spirit fell on Pentecost in tongues of fire, filled with the Holy Spirit, the apostles spoke in various tongues to the multitudes that had come for the feast, “*declaring the wonderful works of God*” (Acts 2:1-13). Peter, who had denied the Lord repeatedly just a few short weeks ago, stood up and gave a Spirit-filled, Word-drenched gospel calling on all to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus (2:14-39). Three thousand souls were added that day to the new church and they continued daily, with this teaching, seeing many added to their assembly (2:40-47). Peter and John went up to the temple for prayer one day and Peter spoke to and healed a man born lame (3:1-10) which sparked another opportunity for open air preaching where he boldly declared that Jesus, “*whom you delivered up and denied...and killed the Prince of life*” was the One who had healed the man (3:11-26). Such courageous obedience got Peter and John arrested by the very men who had conspired to have Jesus killed (4:1-7). Now before Annas the high priest and his cohort, they were asked, “*By what power or by what name have you done this?*”

**Conflict as Opportunity** (4:8-12) – What comes of being filled with the Spirit? Conflict. Problems. Or, if you are looking through Spirit-filled eyes, opportunity. Here is an opportunity to honor the name of Jesus (the desire of the Spirit). And the signature of the Spirit doing this work is the name of Jesus proclaimed with boldness.

**Spirit-filled Boldness** (4:13) – The rulers recognized the boldness of the apostles, and it was a boldness they had seen before. “*They had been with Jesus.*”

**Spirit-filled Steadfastness** (4:19-20) – If the boldness is Spirit-wrought, it will attract and provoke enemies. This is what gospel preaching does: it brings light into dark places and the darkness does not appreciate it. And when attacked, this boldness is sustained with steadfastness.

**Spirit-filled Prayer** (4:23-28) – The example from the Christians in Acts is not that they prayed *in order to* get filled with the Holy Spirit. They prayed *because* they were filled with the Holy Spirit. After an attack, the Spirit-filled Christian turns to the Psalms, prays and sings (think of Jesus’ teaching in Matt 5:10-12).

**Bold Prayer for More Boldness** (4:29-31) – Didn’t they have enough boldness? But this boldness longs for more boldness.

**Boldness Marks the Preaching and Witness of Christians** – Paul prays for more boldness while he is in chains boldly proclaiming the gospel to enemies which stirs up boldness among the rest (Phil 1:12-13, 19-20). In the same way, he asks for prayer from the Ephesians, “*and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*” (Eph 6:19-20). Obviously Paul is not asking for prayer because he gets nervous when speaking publicly. He also is not looking for razor-sharp rhetoric skills; the ability to be the best public speaker. His speech and preaching were “*...in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God*” (1 Cor 2:1-5). There is a difference between self-confident arrogance and a humble boldness. And the difference comes when we have come to the Cross.

**Pursuing This Boldness** – Timothy had need of being stirred up by the Spirit to remove a spirit of fear (2 Tim 1:6-7). Look where Paul leads him. He turns Timothy to Jesus and the work of the cross (2 Tim 1:8-11). For this reason, Paul was not ashamed (vv12) and exhorted Timothy to hold fast to the teaching in faith and love, kept in us by the Holy Spirit (vv13-14).

**Boldly Going to the Throne of Grace** (Heb 10:19-22) – Boldness before men will not occur unless we have boldness as sinful men before the presence of God. How in the world can a man be bold before God? Only when He recognizes, acknowledges, and draws near to the throne of grace. “*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*” (Heb 4:16). Apart from the blood of Christ, there is no way to draw near to God, let alone boldly. But in the free justification of His resurrection, we may come boldly. We may boldly confess our sins, shout our praise, enter into His counsels, and join in the work of His exploding gospel to all nations. This occurs all day, every day, for the Spirit dwells in us. But it occurs centrally, covenantally, and corporately here in this service of worship. We come into this service of Word and Spirit and we are sent with more boldness because it is the boldness of Another, the righteousness of Another, the forgiveness of Another, the gospel of Another.

**Love Made Perfect** – “*Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world*” (1 John 4:17). What comes of Pentecost? A spirit of boldness, perfected love for God and for His glory, love that will see the world turned upside down. Truth on fire.