

# ACTS 3:11-4:22

## Peter in the Portico

### Memory Verse

“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, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.’”

Acts 4:19-20

### Real-life Problems

**Uncertainty**—Peter and John find themselves in an uncertain situation. They’re marginalized and brought before the seat of power to explain themselves. There’s a lot of uncertainty we might feel in a situation like theirs—or in any number of situations in our own lives. One of the things we constantly have to deal with in this life is the constant of uncertainty.

### The Good News

Jesus doesn’t eliminate all uncertainty in our lives this side of heaven. However, because of His life and His death on our behalf, He does give us certainty that our biggest problem in the world—our sin that separates us from God—is taken care of. Come whatever uncertainty is thrown at us, we can be certain in the midst of it that, because of Jesus and His work, God loves us and is for us.

## I. Introduction

### OPENING QUESTIONS

**Idea #1:** When was the last time you were scared?

**Idea #2:** What relieves you of fear whenever you get scared or anxious?

**Idea #3:** Can you think of a movie or a TV show in which someone had to deal with uncertainty? What did it feel like as you were watching that character?

### PRAY

Open your time together in prayer.

### REHEARSING THE GOSPEL

#### What does gospel mean?

Good news

#### What’s the good news?

Jesus died for my sins

#### Why did He die for your sins?

So that I can have abundant life in relationship with Him now and forever

#### What is grace?

God’s undeserved love for sinners

## REVIEW

### 1) Who wrote the book of Acts?

Luke wrote Acts as a history of the earliest days of the church.

### 2) Who was the original audience of this book?

The original audience of Luke, narrowly speaking, is Theophilus. More broadly, though, Luke has written Acts with elements that appeal to both Jew and Greek, so the ultimate audience appears to be any Christian from any ethnicity.

### 3) Why was the book of Acts written?

The book of Acts was written to record the works of God in the early church.

## *What's going on?*

---

### REMINDE

Last week, we learned that Jesus' death and resurrection are the sources of our life with God.

### TODAY WE'LL LEARN

- 1) About the uncertainty we face in this life.
- 2) About Jesus' work on our behalf and how it removes our greatest uncertainty.
- 3) How Jesus' work in our lives makes us bold to live for Him.

## *Read*

---

Read **Acts 3:11-4:22** aloud in your group.

## II. Questions for Discussion

### A. WHAT?

**1) Where are Peter and John when this passage begins?**

They're in Solomon's Portico at the Jerusalem temple.

**2) According to Acts 3:12, how did the crowd respond to Peter and John healing the man who couldn't walk?**

They responded by wondering and staring.

**3) In verses 13-15, what event does Peter say the crowd is responsible for?**

He says that they're responsible for denying and killing Jesus.

**4) What made the man strong enough to walk?**

It wasn't the power or piety of Peter and John, but rather faith in Jesus' name.

**5) What does Peter tell the crowd to do in verse 19?**

He tells them to repent and turn back so that their sins will be blotted out.

**6) According to Acts 4:1-3, what happened as Peter and John were speaking to the people?**

The priests, the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them. Then they arrested them.

**7) When the Sanhedrin asks by what power Peter and John do these things, what do they say (Acts 4:10)?**

They tell the Sanhedrin that it is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth that the man who stands before them has been made well.

**8) According to verse 13, what is the reaction of the Sanhedrin to Peter and John?**

They perceive that Peter and John are uneducated, but also that they were with Jesus. Thus, they're astonished at their boldness.

**9) What did the Sanhedrin charge Peter and John to do after they had been questioned?**

They tell Peter and John not to speak any more about Jesus.

**10) How do Peter and John react to this charge from the Sanhedrin?**

They say that they can't help but speak of what has been seen and heard of Jesus. As a result, the people praise God for what had happened (v. 21).

### B. SO WHAT?

**1) Why are members of the Sanhedrin (the Jewish religious council) astonished at the boldness of Peter and John?**

Peter and John, from a worldly perspective, should not be approaching the Sanhedrin with this kind of boldness. They're uneducated, common men speaking with confidence to some of the most powerful people of the day. And yet, because Jesus' work has given them certainty that they're on good terms with God, they're free to approach the Sanhedrin with confidence in Christ and His care for them.

## Jumping Into a Father's Arms

---

When I was a kid learning to swim, one of the first things my dad did to teach me not to fear the water was to have me jump into his arms from the side of the pool. As a toddler, I was terrified that I would sink and drown. There was so much uncertainty about the water, about my own ability, and about a number of other things. My floaties didn't provide me with the certainty I needed, and frankly, neither did the lifeguard. It was only my dad, who loved me, whom I could trust in that uncertainty. Whether I jumped in and went under completely, or whether he caught me by the waist and only my legs got wet, I knew that my dad wouldn't let anything ultimately bad happen to me. The situation is similar with the Lord. In this life of uncertainty, we might get a little wet, or our heads might go under the water for a second. But in both situations, the Lord's arms are firmly around us because of the work Jesus did for us.

### **2) Why does Peter tell the crowd they're responsible for the death of Jesus (Acts 3:13-16) before he tells them that it was faith in Jesus' name that the man is made well?**

Before we can revel in the grace of Jesus, we must come face-to-face with our need for that grace. Thus, before the crowd can marvel at what Jesus did for this man—and what He can do for them—they have to be confronted with their own sinfulness.

### **3) What seems to be the source of the boldness that Peter and John have?**

If you remember the Gospel accounts, Peter and John (along with the other disciples) aren't portrayed as the most courageous people. Something massive has changed between then and now in the storyline—Peter and John have been confronted with Jesus' grace in a unique way after His resurrection. Because of what He has done for them, they know their biggest problem is resolved. In addition, according to Acts 4:8, Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. All of this frees them to speak boldly before the Sanhedrin.

### **4) Why do you think the Sadducees and other religious leaders are annoyed with Peter and John?**

There could be a number of reasons why the Sadducees and other leaders are annoyed. One is that Sadducees didn't believe in resurrection, so that element alone would frustrate them. Another could be that adoration and love for Jesus takes power away from the religious leaders because, as people move closer to Jesus, they move farther away from the temple and its sacrifices. *Other answers may come up as well.*

### **5) Is anything interesting about Peter's response to the Sanhedrin's charge in Acts 4:8-10? What and why?**

Peter shows the Sanhedrin the bizarre reach that they're making. He confronts them with the fact that they are punishing John and himself for a good deed done to a blind man. This is obviously not a crime under any reasonable legal system—it shows the religious leaders to be trusting in their own power and influence rather than in the Lord.

### C. NOW WHAT?

**1) In Acts 4:12, Peter says that “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Are there any “names” by which you’re trying to be saved that aren’t Jesus’?**

Answers may vary. That being said, any other name by which we seek salvation necessarily leads to uncertainty. If we seek certainty or security through our spots on the sports team or our GPAs, those things won’t be able to bear the weight we place on them; only Jesus can.

**2) Does the boldness of Peter and John encourage or discourage you? Why?**

Answers may vary, but leave this open to either option. Ideally, John and Peter encourage us because they show us what Jesus can, and does, do in His people. However, some might read this as an indictment of themselves because they aren’t as bold as Peter and John. Be open to that, and encourage those students with the fact that we grow in boldness over the course of our Christian lives and that God saw fit to do this work in Peter and John. If He sees fit to do the same in any of us, He will do it, and it won’t only be up to us.

**3) Do you think Peter or John felt any uncertainty as they spoke to the Sanhedrin? Can you relate to them at all? Why or why not?**

Answers may vary. We don’t get that tone from the text; there doesn’t seem to be any uncertainty reported in this situation. But, if we place ourselves in their position, nearly everyone would feel uncertain or scared. We may not know whether or not Peter or John felt uncertain, but because of their behavior, we do know that they weren’t bold in their own strength. They were bold because of the work Jesus was doing in them through His spirit. In our uncertainty, or in our boldness, it is always Jesus doing the work.

### *Main takeaway*

In the midst of this world of uncertainty, Jesus’ work makes us certain that our biggest problem—our sin— is taken care of. This allows us to be bold and courageous, even in the midst of our uncertainty.

## *III. Closing*

### REMEMBERING THE GOOD NEWS

Because of who Jesus is, and what He has done, we don’t need to have any uncertainty about whether or not the God of the universe loves us.

### CLOSE IN PRAYER

Lord, we’re thankful for the work of Your Son, Jesus. We’re thankful that because of His work on our behalf, we can be certain of how You feel about us, and we can be certain that You keep Your promises and will make us bold in the midst of that uncertainty. Amen.

## *Supporting Resources*

---

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) In Acts 3:19, Peter tells the crowd to repent so that times of refreshing may come. Are there areas of your life for which you need to repent?
- 2) Are there areas in which you need refreshment?
- 3) Where do you need boldness in your life or your relationship with the Lord?

### QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- 1) Talk to your student about a time when the Lord was faithful in the midst of your uncertainty.
- 2) Have you ever had to be bold, either in your own choices or before others, for your faith in Jesus?
- 3) How has the gospel given you security during your seasons of uncertainty?