

# The One Thing Necessary

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Acts 4:13-31 “When they saw the **courage** of Peter and John, and realized that they were **unschooled, ordinary men**, they were **astonished** and they took note that **these men had been with Jesus**”

## Intro

- well, church - this passage begins with the words “they were unschooled, ordinary men”
  - of all the descriptions of the men and women of God - this is one I resonate with
- **From the beginning of this church - Acts 4:13 has been the heartbeat**
  - this is our story - of our pastors, staff, our church planters - unschooled, ordinary people - yet with the priority of being with Jesus
  - if you look throughout church history - this is a very common thread for the mighty men and women God has used for his glory - many were unschooled and ordinary
  - my story
    - 2010 - Ariona my fiancé at the time and I were seniors at Westmont
      - our plan was to move back home to Rancho Cucamonga - I was going to attend a seminary down there
      - we were at a Reality Carp anniversary service at the high school
      - etc.
      - struggle for me, pride, family...
      - stayed for this church - worked at Starbucks for 3 years
      - learned more about Jesus and his Word and Ministry

## Previous Context

- Peter and John just healed a man
- facing persecution simply for preaching Jesus - thrown in prison
- here they are, the next day - getting questioned before the religious leaders
- Peter responded, full of the Holy Spirit, speaks the truth about Jesus from Scripture

## Present Context

- verses 13-22 - we see Peter and John stand firm in the face of opposition

- verses 23-30 - we see them report the story to the church, and then they call a prayer meeting
  - we see the majority of their prayer is formed by Scripture
- verse 31 we see God pour out his spirit again upon the church
- as we've walked through Acts, we've covered these themes in depth -
  - opposition last week
  - the Spirit coming upon the church in power for bold evangelism
  - We've seen time and time again how Scripture is shaping their thoughts and prayers

*\*yet verse 13 provides us as a church with new ground in Acts,*

*\*and it is such a pivotal verse for us as a church, for the people of God - we're going to unpack this verse pretty thoroughly*

**Verse 13** “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were **unschooled, ordinary men**, they were astonished and they took note that **these men had been with Jesus**”

- **First** - remember - Peter and John.
  - anyone remember their previous job? fishermen!
    - **uneducated** - greek = *AGRAMMATOS* = without learning, unlettered, could even mean illiterate in some contexts
      - the sense here is that they were not formally and religiously trained as the religious leaders were
    - **common** - greek = *IDIOTES* = unskilled, lay person, non-expert, outsider
- these regular old blue collar guys - are going head to head with the most trained and revered and respected and educated religious leaders in the world
  - and as the next verse reads...
    - **verse 14** “since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say...”
    - basically - Peter and John just won.
    - untrained, unschooled.

- healed a man, and courageously standing face to face against the religious leaders
- and verse 13 says they were ***astonished***
  - **if we're honest - we have to admit - we tend to think just like these religious leaders do**
    - ***we tend to expect exceptional people to do exceptional things***
      - and to see these uneducated, common men leading such a movement, healing a man crippled his entire life, and doing so with boldness, confidence, courage - it just didn't make sense
      - they were astonished
  - **this is how people think - exceptional people to exceptional things**
    - we think that people with the greatest gifts and talents and resources and discipline and drive are the one's who become great and do the exceptional things
- **this is not how the kingdom of God works**
  - **in the kingdom of God, regular people, unexceptional people, do exceedingly exceptional things, because they are in God's hands**
    - Peter and John's greatest hope in life was to capturing enough small scaly creatures in nets to not starve to death
    - literally - that's it.
    - we never would have heard of Peter or John.
    - they were absolutely regular guys
    - the Holy Spirit just called them "uneducated" and "common"

*\*it's been this way from the beginning*

- **List the people - in spite of who they were - God used them**
  - We never would have heard of **Abraham**.
    - He was one man among all the nations of the earth.
    - **But God called to him. Said I will make a mighty nation out of you.**
  - We never would have heard of **Moses**.
    - He'd spend his days working for his father in law in the wilderness.

- **But God called to him from the burning bush, and gave him a call, a mission. Gave him his Spirit and power and authority to work wonders, and lead God's people out of slavery.**
- We never would have heard about **David**
  - the youngest and forgotten son. He would have lived out his days as a shepherd
  - **but God called him out among his brothers, anointed him to be king of his people - filled him with his Spirit - killed Giants and armies through him**
- We never would have heard of **Gideon**.
  - he would remain but another common slave worker, oppressed by the enemies of Israel
  - **but God called to him one day - said - The Lord is With you, mighty warrior"**
  - **and made Gideon the head of but 300 men, and used these men to defeat an entire army**
- We never would have heard of **Mary**
  - she would remain one of countless wives and mothers in Israel
  - **but God called to her one day - set his Spirit upon her - and placed his own son within her womb.**
- Hudson Taylor (pioneer missionary to China)
  - *"All God's giants have been weak people who did great things for God because they reckoned on his being with them"*
- this is one of the great themes of the Bible -
  - not by the strength or power of people - but by God and his strength
- *Paul put it like this...*
  - 1 Cor 1:26-29
    - **"26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God"**

- **prophetic application - college degrees, Ph.D.s**

- (Westmont Graduation this weekend)
- but there is a danger to education - the more “qualified and trained” one becomes the more one is prone to forget where one’s true qualification comes from.
- one can think that one’s wisdom increases with the letters at the end of their name
- the key to an education is to take all you’ve learned, your training, your new abilities to be a doctor, engineer, and learn **to leverage it all to be a fool for Jesus**
  - that in all you do - people see the glory of Jesus - and not you
  - in all your learning people see the truth of Jesus and not your wisdom
  - in all your study - you are more able to see and proclaim the truth of Jesus, and not simply more wisdom of the world
- we have a few biblical examples of educated men - Moses, Luke, Paul
  - **Paul** - religiously trained, top of the top.
    - That training had actually led him away from Jesus.
    - It wasn’t until a radical encounter with Jesus that Paul was of any use.
    - and then, by God’s grace, Paul was able to use his sharp and trained mind, to write things like this:
      - “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power” 1 Corinthians 2:4-5
- **whatever training, education, position, power - is to be leveraged that people would see Jesus, his truth, his cross, his beauty in our lives**
  - **that we would decrease, and he would increase**
  - **writer?**
    - C.S. Lewis - great example. Too educated - became a fool for Christ
  - **doctor?**
    - Luke - used his sharp mind and resources to aid the ministry of Paul
  - **mother?**
    - more direct ministry than most of us

- the point in all of this - is that common, ordinary, untrained people are the perfect type for God to use.
- and if you are trained in some way - be sure to use your influence to bring glory to Jesus, and not to yourself
- *\*because the key to life in the kingdom of God is not our own gifts and abilities and training and qualifications...*

*\*the key is found at the end of verse 13...*

## The Key

**Verse 13** “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men **had been with Jesus**”

- this was the first thing Jesus called his disciples to do - to be with him
  - Mark 3:14 “And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach”
    - not to change the world
    - not to evangelize
    - not to cast out demons
    - not to heal
    - not to care for the poor
- **Jesus follower: your first priority in life, which means every day, is to be with Jesus**
  - **mom: your first job as a mom is to be with Jesus**
  - **husbands: your first job as a husband is to be with Jesus**
  - **worker: your first job is to be with Jesus**

*\*but there's too much to be done!*

- See this in a story about two sisters - Mary and Martha

- Luke 10:38-42

• Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but **one thing is necessary**. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her'

- **The Secret Sauce - The Key - The Secret to the Christian Life**

- Paul said it like this

• "I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me" Philippians 4:13

- Hudson Taylor's son and daughter in law said it like this in Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret:

• "Taylor had many secrets, for he was always going on with God, yet they were but one — the simple, profound secret of drawing for every need, temporal or spiritual, upon "the fathomless wealth of Christ."

- **to say you're too busy to be with Jesus...**

- is like saying you're too tired to sleep, you're too hungry to eat
- Jesus is our source, our strength, our life
  - we just had a baby - it's some work
  - Jesus and his presence and his Spirit and his Word is our lifeline. When we neglect this, things begin to fall out of place

*\*the last thing to notice in verse 13 was their boldness*

## **Boldness**

- **when these common men had been with Jesus - they were courages**

- "When they saw the courage of Peter and John"

- **look at how Peter responds in verse 19 when they are told not to preach Jesus**

- "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" 19-20

- **look at their prayer in verse 29 - boldness**
  - “Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness”
- **look at God’s response in verse 31 - boldness**
  - “After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly”
- **when you’ve been with Jesus, even as an ordinary person - you are filled with boldness**
  - **Jesus is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah**
    - when you’ve been with Jesus, other people are put in perspective
    - he’s a lion - claws, teeth, power, fearless
    - when you’ve been with that Lion - people suddenly are much less impressive
    - and when that Lion is for you - suddenly you don’t have much to be afraid of
      - if Jesus, the Lion of Judah is for you, what are people?
      - we can be bold because we’ve been with Jesus

### **Martin Lloyd Jones**

- “May we all learn the lesson of this old incident. Let us meet with this Jesus and listen to Him, and soon we, too, will become phenomena”
- **if you are feeling discouraged at your life, your lack of boldness, your lack of courage, your lack of fruitfulness**
  - go be with Jesus
  - make it a priority to sit at his feet every single day
    - morning and night
    - in his word
    - praying continually
    - casting all your stress onto him as often as it comes

## **Gospel - After Prayer - Communion**

- Jesus doesn't just love ordinary people
  - he love sinners
- and before any of us went to spend time with him...
  - he came to be with us
- Jesus became just like us - a common, ordinary man
  - the king of kings was born in a manger, raised by a poor family, worked a blue collar job
  - then humbled himself to the point of death on a cross
- and because Jesus came to be with us
  - we have hope
  - we can turn to him - repent of our sin - and be rescued
  - the veil has been torn, we are no longer separated from God
  - our sin and shame and guilt has been nailed to the cross
  - now we can commune with him
  - we can find help and hope in our time of need
  - we can grow in boldness and join him in his mission that more would know his name