

STUDY GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS
SPIRIT-FILLED LIVING

Week 3: Week of October 6

"Be Bold"

Text: Acts 3 and 4

(For Facilitators mainly - optional for the group)

- In Chapter 3, we have the first episode of the new movement – Luke chooses a miraculous healing of the cripple at the Beautiful Gate at the temple.
- Vs 1-10 - There is a beautiful and moving simplicity about this report. Notice the balance between devotion and practical piety (Temple, hour of prayer, almsgiving), the exchange between the lame man and Peter in 3:3-6. The contrast between the opening of the man lame from birth being carried and placed daily at the gate and the closing description of the same man entering the Temple healed, walking and leaping and praising God.
- The claims made for the name of Jesus are very strong: it is his name which healed the man. Only this name can achieve salvation. Evidently the name represents the person and carries his authority. There is no implication of magic here. Luke goes out of his way to show that Peter uses no physical aids.
- In Chpt. 4, Luke interrupts Peter's sermon with the account of the arrest of Peter and John. This leads directly into the first formal defense of the new movement's testimony (vs.5-12). But notice the success of the sermon. The paragraph serves, as a transition from Jesus resurrection and these people (the Sadducees) who did not believe in a resurrection.
- The description of Peter as "filled with the HS", for his defense recalls the promise of Luke 11:11-12. Note the contrast between the boldness of the unlettered apostles and confusion and weakness of all the most powerful people in the city.
- It is the name of Jesus, which continues to be the central thread. The healing of the lame man is posed to Peter in terms of the name: "By what name did you do this?" And Peter's reply focuses almost entirely on the name, attributing to it not only the causes of the healing, but exclusive power of universal salvation (4:10, 12). Also, it is the name of Jesus which the authorities are shown to fear: the point is underlined by the technique of relating the warning not to speak in the name of Jesus 2x (4:17-18).
- Boldness" becomes a key term. It foreshadows the boldness with which Jesus will continue to be proclaimed (28:31)

Discussion Questions

Opening Questions (optional – pick only the ones you want to chose).

What does the phrase, “it’s all in the name” mean to you? Whose “name” stirs strong emotion in you? Why?

Do you know the meaning of your name?

Have you ever witnessed a miracle? How do you relate to miracles in our midst?

In what situations do you find yourself praying most easily? Where do you find prayer to be difficult?

How would you describe the meaning of “being bold”?

Read Acts 3 and 4

1. Describe the scene between Peter and the cripple. In what ways would the encounter between Peter and John and the cripple been expected? How would it have been unexpected?
2. What is the connection between “faith” and “name”? Why is that significant?
3. From this, describe what it means to be a “witness” of Jesus Christ.
4. In Peter’s sermon 3:13-16, what is significant about each thing that Peter says about Jesus? How does Peter use the OT to talk about Jesus? Why does he do this? What’s his reasoning and why is that important to Luke and for us?
5. In Acts 4, what was upsetting the religious authorities and why? What action did they take?
6. What is Peter’s defense strategy? Does it work? Why or why not?
7. What strikes you as the boldest part of Peter’s defense?
8. Do you see a connection between the healing of the lame man and the message that the apostles preach?
9. Imagine you were in a group John and Peter returned to and told of what had happened. What might have been your reaction? What was theirs and why is this significant?
10. What is significant of their unity in the midst of their task and power being challenged? What do we learn from this in our own lives? Have you ever been challenged in your belief? What was that like?
11. What other “names” do people use to help them with their problems or as answers to their circumstances?

12. What does their prayer tell us about their faith in the character, power and faithfulness of God?
13. In what ways do you/we need the power of the Holy Spirit to encounter the world today?
14. How do you long to be refreshed now? In what ways might prayer be helpful to you?