



SEMI-ORGANIZED LOVE Wk 4: *Church is Fearless Love* @pastorerichuffman @thestoryhouston www.thestory.church

Today's message is about how Church should be fearless about her mission like a mother is fearless about her kids. How have you experienced the *fearless love* of a mother, grandmother, or mother-figure in your life? What difference did it make?

Unfortunately, sometimes Church is more about *creating* fear than overcoming it. What did Eric mean by the "helicopter culture" that's so pervasive within Christianity? How has fear played a part in the churches you've been a part of?

In the *Acts of the Apostles*, we have the documented history of the very first church. In chapters 4-6, the believers begin to encounter serious opposition from established religion and government. Here's what happened:

Acts 4:1-4 The priests and the captain of the guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

Who were the Sadducees?

What were Peter and John proclaiming, and why was it so upsetting to them?

"...many who heard the message believed..." What do you think compelled "many" to believe Jesus really came back from the dead?

Acts 4:5-12 The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is: 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone' (Psalm 118:22). Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."



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What is the significance of the phrase “the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone”?

How do you see the fearless faith of Peter and John in this story? What do they say or do that could potentially get them locked up or killed?

What’s the meaning of “there is no other name under heaven...by which we must be saved”? Why is that a fearless thing to say?

Acts 4:13-20 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. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.” Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, “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.”

Why did it surprise the members of the Sanhedrin that Peter and John were uneducated and ordinary? Given their obvious limitations, how were Peter and John able to speak so eloquently as witnesses to the gospel?

Where would you say you stand with Jesus right now? What’s holding you back from taking the next step of faith in Christ?

What are you most afraid of when it comes to giving your whole life to Jesus? Make a list if you need to. How does the courage of the first believers inspire you to be more fearless?