

Family Bible Series for April 30: Don't let fear interfere with sharing the gospel

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Don't let fear interfere with sharing the gospel

- Acts 2:1-4, 22-24, 32-33, 36-41

By Greg Ammons

First Baptist Church, Garland

The beautiful float made its way through downtown Pasadena, Calif., in the Tournament of Roses Parade. Suddenly, the float sputtered and slowed to a stop. It ran out of gas. The entire parade halted until someone could get gasoline and refuel the float. Ironically, the float represented the Standard Oil Company. It was striking to see a float representing a vast oil reserve sitting powerless because of a lack of fuel.

Many believers in Jesus Christ have difficulty sharing their faith. They often feel powerless in witness. Yet Jesus promised all power would be given to us (Matthew 28:19). The early disciples realized this power as the Holy Spirit helped them witness.

The Holy Spirit equips witnesses (Acts 2:1-4)

The celebration of Pentecost came 50 days after Passover. The word “Pentecost” means “50.” Jesus was crucified and resurrected during Passover. Fifty days later, his disciples were together in one place when the Holy Spirit came upon them.

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Suddenly, there was a sound like the blowing of the wind. Notice the passage does not say it was a wind but a sound (v. 2). Tongues of fire came to rest upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit (vv. 3-4).

The same disciples who were fearful at the cross were now bold at Pentecost. What made the difference? It was the empowering of the Holy Spirit to equip their witness.

As a part of the preparation for a Billy Graham Crusade in Detroit, counselors completed a survey about their faith. One question on the survey asked, “What is your greatest hindrance to witnessing?” Only 9 percent of the respondents said they were too busy to share their faith. Another 28 percent said they lacked enough information to witness. The largest percentage (51 percent) admitted fear was the primary reason for not sharing their faith in Christ with others.

The same Holy Spirit who empowered the first-century believers will equip Christians today to witness. There is no need to fear.

The Holy Spirit uses the message (Acts 2:22-24, 32-33, 36)

Peter stood up at Pentecost, raised his voice and addressed the crowd (v. 14). Again, Peter was the same disciple who denied Jesus three times at the crucifixion. Yet, now the Holy Spirit made him bold to share his faith.

Each of the sermons recorded in the book of Acts had a common element to them. The common thread was the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

It was known in the New Testament and the Greek language as the kerygma. Peter proclaimed the kerygma to the crowd gathered at Pentecost. It was this message the Holy Spirit used. Peter concluded, "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (v. 36).

D.L. Moody was a great Christian evangelist in America in the 1800s. He established many schools in the Northeast and Midwest. Moody also was known for his unorthodox method of presenting the gospel. On one occasion, a woman approached Moody and criticized his gospel presentation. Moody replied, "I am not always pleased with my presentation either. What is your method of presenting the gospel?" The woman stated she had no such method. Moody replied, "Then I like my method better than your method." However we present Christ, it is the kerygma message that the Holy Spirit empowers.

The Holy Spirit moves people to respond (Acts 2:37-41)

When Peter preached, the Holy Spirit moved the hearers to respond. They were cut to the heart and asked, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (v. 37). Peter replied: "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of

Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (v. 38). About 3,000 people accepted the message, were baptized and added to the kingdom of God (v. 41).

As believers in Jesus today are faithful to share Christ, the Holy Spirit moves the hearers. Many Christians feel it is their job to move people to respond. However, this is the work of the Holy Spirit. We must be faithful to witness and allow the Spirit to accomplish his work.

One theologian noted Jesus had 132 specific contacts with people in the New Testament. Interestingly, only six of these specific contacts occurred in the Temple while four of them took place in the synagogue. The remainder of the contacts, 122 of them, took place outside the walls of the religious institutions of the day. Most of Jesus’ contacts occurred in his normal traffic pattern of life on a daily basis.

As you go about your daily activities, be faithful to share his message. The Holy Spirit will use the kerygma of your message and bring others to faith in Jesus. We have the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to be effective witnesses for Christ.

Discussion questions

- What is your greatest hindrance to sharing your faith?
- What is your favorite method of presenting the gospel?
- Do you share your faith consistently in your daily activities?



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