**Unleashed - wk 6 - To Boldy Go – Idiots for Jesus**

**Jesus is risen – “Now what?” Acts is the “What now?”**

**Acts is Jesus: The Sequel - It is Luke Volume 2**

**\* A narrative - \* Has innocence and childlike wonder – they’re wingin' it.**

**(Starts off with a clear mission) Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (what follows is unstoppable!)**

**Jesus said wait for the HS and it was - "legendary"**

**They began to live under HS influence, and it affected everything**

**Let's pick up were we left off – Peter and John had just been agents for God healing a man in the Temple courtyard & started preaching Jesus.**

**Crowds gathered - thousands were turning to Jesus. The city was on the verge of a move of God – then… they were arrested.**

**(They spent the night in the pokey) Acts 4:5 The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. 6 Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. (very people who condemned Jesus to death - they thought they stopped this thing... but it was only beginning) 7 They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" (Q was not "if" he was healed, but how did you heal him?)**

**What to expect when your expecting - A move from God**

**When God starts working in your life - you can expect a few things. Maybe you're new to the journey - you can expect this...**

1. **Expect Opposition - they were arrested**

**There is an inevitability of persecution when serving Jesus**

**Sometimes obedience will bring great opposition.**

**What follows is a standing cycle in the early church - talk about Jesus, go to jail - some made it out alive, some did not. Starting here all but 3 of the chaps in Acts mention persecution.**

**And today more have died for Christ in the last 30 yrs than the first 300**

**Somehow, in the US, we feel we are supposed to have it easy- we often live our life to avoid suffering or feeling uncomfortable. The church is exploding in persecuted nations**

**Some of the greatest moves of God are during persecution**

**(It was a vague charge - but not a vague answer) 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, (this is Peter 2.0 - not just Peter but empowered) said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! 9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, 10 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. (Couple months earlier Jesus was standing in the same spot, before the same people condemned to die – Jesus said they will hate you too.)**

**\*\* Expect Opposition – don’t back down.**

**Opposition may not be our CURSE, but our REWARD.**

**11 He (Jesus) is " 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.' (Ps 118:22 - You rejected the chief cornerstone of God's Kingdom - And then one of the great declarations of scripture) 12 Salvation is found in no one else, (NO ONE ELSE) for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."**

**No one else - Not Buddha, Confucius, Allah, Krishna, an ancient tribal god, a distant alien, Joseph Smith, L Ron Hubbard, Mary Baker Eddy, Charles T Russell, Dr Phil, Oprah, positive thinking guru, or fav preacher. Jesus is exclusive - not one of many or an option to pick from – no one else. Jesus is the only way.**

**13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, (id-ee-o-tace - ignorant / idiot - these guys were idiots - kind of harsh - no) they were astonished (confused) and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. (Those leaders knew Jesus - spent years entrapping him - now these Galilean country boys are standing up to them)**

1. **Expect misunderstanding**

**Some people just won't understand how you could be so different.**

**Jesus can take the ordinary and - makes you extraordinary**

**Jesus can take the idiot and makes you - even more unusual**

**1 Co 1:27 God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and chosen the weak things to confound the mighty.**

* **How does ordinary us - become extraordinary plus?**

**It says right there -" and they took note that these men had been with Jesus."**

**How does someone become like another? Spend time, listen, read about, emulate - before you know it, you're that person. A teen and a band - even preachers. We see it with young kids - they often talk and act like us. Spending time w/ Christ thru God's word & prayer.**

**Doesn't matter personality - background - status - country boy - or city son - prison past - or perfect parents. Spending time with Jesus changes everything - even change you.**

**So, these idiots had been with Jesus - Acts 4:14 But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. (The healed witness was irrefutable, just as the empty tomb was indisputable. Imagine 70 religious / political loud mouths with nothing to say)**

**\*\* Expect People to not understand - but don't be defensive**

**Let what God is doing be the evidence of the truth**

**Acts 4:15 So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. 16 “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. (So, they had a closed-door meeting - It's like ants trying to figure out how to stop a raging river - If we keep them, it will get worse they are growing. Some believe Saul / Paul was likely in the meeting.) 17 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.” 18 Then they called them in again and commanded them (made it law) not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. (Arrest you - beat you - cause you and your family trouble - maybe kill you)**

**It would have been understandable to stop - their lives were in danger - family in danger – a little compromise would've been understandable… right?**

1. **Expect compromise - others will try to get you to compromise**

**When God is moving in your heart - the enemy will drop in and suggest a little diversion - a little change - a little, you deserve it**

**So, Peter says - Sorry - we won't do that again - we should have kept this to our self - faith is a personal issue - we will not talk about it anymore - I'll take it off my profile. Sorry - my bad**

**Acts 4:19 But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! 20 As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” (Hands weighted - you or God - Hmmm - when it comes to civil law - the Christian must always choose God over man)**

**\*\* Expect others to get you to compromise - but don't give in to it**

**It's just a little, just one hit, just one day, one look, just one night, but we love each other, doesn't hurt anyone...**

**Don't give in. You can expect tempting offers... Compromise will kill the conviction and confidence of a Christian**

**BTW – this is an example of civil disobedience of govt. laws.**

**4:21 After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. (They governed by opinion polls, remember we are looking at more than 7000 already)**

**Word Got out to family and friends. Peter & John were arrested - last time that happened Jesus was killed... they knew well the seriousness - might come back beaten or not return at all – killed**

**How they responded to Opposition**

**When confronted with opposition, misunderstanding, and compromise.**

**Acts 4:23 On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people (Hugs & kisses) and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. (That it's against the law to talk about Jesus – we will be arrested and tortured)**

**So they called a quick meeting - Okay damage control - We need to change our strategy - lets get these guys out of office – or move to the country & worship on our own before we're all dead.**

**1st response – Pray**

**Dangerous moments - lead to dangerous prayers**

**24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God.**

**What's the first thing you do when crisis hits? Post it on Facebook, get mad, get drunk, get high, punch a wall, put on fav sad song, get depressed, pout, blame... God's 1st responders - Pray!**

**Praying w/ our girls when they were hurt - it silenced the cry**

**4:24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. (verse??) 25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: “‘Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? 26 The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.’ (verse??)**

**Notice they prayed scripture - Learning to pray scripture - Some of you need to start praying scriptures over your life, family**

**2nd Response – Recognize God’s sovereignty - God you are in control!**

**Essential - God you are good - faithful and - in control. We've got to get this established if we are ever going to grow and move forward w/ God!**

**A key to every prayer they prayed - God you're in charge**

**Job 42:2 - Job replied to the LORD: 2 “I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you.**

**Psalm 115:3 - For our God is in the heavens, and he does as he wishes.**

**Jeremiah 31:27 - “I am the LORD, the God of all the peoples of the world. Is anything too hard for me?**

**Isaiah 46:10 - Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,’**

**You can't stop God - people will try - but God has his way**

**(They pray) Acts 4:27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire (own volition) against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. (When fear came, when opposition came - they looked to the Cross of Christ!)**

**It may seem the enemy has won, but in reality, the One has already won. When you don't understand the circumstance or the outcome - God is still in control!**

**God's written the script, the producer, the director, & financier We are the extras in his story - an Action-adventure love story!**

**3rd response – Trust God for boldness - to speak your name**

**29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.**

**Notice what they didn't pray - God change the situation - protect us - stop persecution - God tell us were to picket and protest our rights - give us place in the country to hide in and do our thing… No - They did not duck and run - it was...**

* + **God give us courage to not quit!**
  + **God give us boldness to not give up!**
  + **God give us the guts to keep reaching out to people!**

**Winfrid Boniface, 8th cen Christian missionary - 723 traveled to a German shrine hidden deep in the sacred forest of Thor, the god of thunder. When he realized they would turn from their pagan beliefs, Boniface took his ax to a huge oak that was the very holy altar of their worship of Thor. He challenged Thor to strike him as he began to chop down the sacred tree. The people ready to attack him suddenly stopped - when a mighty wind blew the mammoth oak tree down as if by God himself. Amazed and awestruck they turned to Jesus who was mightier than their gods. Boniface, then took the wood from the tree and built a church - and Germany saw a great revival. He was later killed traveling on a mission trip.**

**God give us courage. Courage faces fear and punches it in the face. \*\* Funny thing about boldness - it is not the leader who leads - but the first follower**

**(4th response - they prayed, God) Acts 4:30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”**

**4th response – Trust God for power to touch hurting lives**

**This was not a bless me prayer - give me - profess, confess and possess – a blab it and grab it - empower me for me prayer -**

**This was empower me, to reach others and help others.**

**Sadly, we often find a majority of our prayer life are lists for our self. We like the bless me books - blessing is coming - your right now is here - how to get what's yours…**

**If they had prayed like that - we would not be here today.**

**God give us boldness and power to reach people - I know that’s the kind of prayer God loves to answer**

**Look what happened - 31 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. (The whole place was shaken, and it left them all the more unshaken)**

**There is no other name, no other mode, no other hope, no other way but Jesus. The world needs to hear it and needs to see it.**

**God has written the script - God is the producer - the director, and financier - we are the extras in his story - Jesus - write me in!**

**I think of this Axe - it powerful... but only when it's in the right hands - in the wrong hands it can be violent and destructive - but in the right hands it’s a tool for building and protecting. Your life in the hands of God - is powerful!**

**Acts 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."**

**Prayer**

* **God give us boldness**
* **Give us courage**
* **God help us to see things how you see things**

**\*\* Next week - one of the more bizarre and disturbing stories in the NT**