

Good morning. Thanks to all of you who have weathered the storm outside. For those of you watching online, because you don't want to go in the rain, then I'm sorry, I don't. I'm not going to say thanks to you. Just kidding.

Just kidding. Hey. The word for this morning is wow. All right? The word wow.

The word wow was first used, at least from research and studies, first used in the Scottish world in the 1500s. It didn't become popular in the US or didn't show up in the US till, like, the 1920s. It gained momentum in the 1960s. Wow. Everybody say that with me?

Wow. Somebody just told me in the last service, wow is mom upside down. So it was a mom who told me that, of course. But when we say wow, we say it because we're astonished by something, we're amazed by something, or we hold something in awe. Wow.

First time I was on Pikes Peak in Colorado, I remember getting up there and just like, wow. First time I saw the ocean when I was 22 years old, it was like, wow. When I saw Keith Smart in 1987, those of you who weren't born hit the winning shot for IU basketball. One of our last March Madness proud moments, right? It was like, wow.

I mean, how many times? March Madness, wow. And then a couple weeks ago, I had a dessert that my daughter wanted me to have, and it was one of the best desserts I've had. And it was like, oh, wow. Wow, Right?

So we say wow at a lot of things, and the Bible is full of wow moments. We're gonna look at a wow moment or actually multiple wow moments today where something happens and it's like, wow. Wow. So like Quentin said, this is the last week of a series on prayer called Hungry. Hungry humble, and hungry humble.

Because we really don't know how to pray. We're still learning. None of us are experts. The pastors here, we aren't experts. We're all learning, but hungry because we want to know more.

We want to know how to communicate with God. So we've had sermons like, the first one was listening to the voice of God. We've had talked about praying where you're praying for other people, praying for yourself. Maggie talked about praying in terms of spiritual warfare and the invisible world. Last week, Sean talked about prayers of gratitude and celebration.

So it's all about how do we communicate with God? So today is the last one of the series, and today we're gonna be talking about praying for boldness. How do we become the kind of bold people that God wants to be. So we're gonna be looking at passage from the book of Acts. Acts

Chapter four.

Put it on the screen here. So here's the. What I call the puzzle box, top of the sermon. Peter and John thrown into jail and threatened for using the name of Jesus. They're thrown into jail.

Acts Chapter four. And they're threatened. Actually, it's ended up they got thrown in jail in Acts 3, and they're threatened for talking about Jesus. All right, let me give you a little context. So the book of Acts is the book that follows the four Gospels.

The four Gospels are the story of Jesus ending with, of course, the resurrection. The greatest wow moment of history. We'll celebrate in a few weeks. But in the book of Acts, some people call it the Acts of the Apostles, some people call it the Acts of the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit was active in their lives and the world began to change.

Right. So Acts Chapter two is when Pentecost happened. That would have been like seven, eight weeks after Jesus resurrection. And they're all gathered. Believers are all gathered in the room.

And the Holy Spirit comes on them. And it's a supernatural wow moment because there's tongues of fire. They're speaking in other languages. And it says they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. So the disciples and other Christians were there in that room.

And that's the beginning of their mission to carry out what Jesus told them to do was make disciples of all nations, teach them, obey what I said. So Acts Chapter three. They're still in Jerusalem. Acts chapter three. We pick up a moment where Peter and John are walking to the temple for the three o'clock prayer time.

So they were. Yes, they were Christians. Cause they just. Jesus just rose from the dead. But they still observed some of the Jewish habits.

Go to the temple at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and you pray. So they'd probably done that many times. And as they walked to the temple, there's this man over here who's been lame for 40 years. They probably walked by him many times. Of course he's there and he's begging for money.

Cause he has, you know, there were no social services then, so they probably passed by him many times. And Peter and John passed by him. And the guy's got his hand out. And for whatever reason, Peter saw the opportunity. He'd probably seen this man many times before.

But this time he stopped and he said to the man, look at me. And the man looked at me and says, I don't. I don't have any money. I don't have silver and gold for you. But what I do have, I give you in the name of Jesus.

Get up and walk.

This guy had been lame for 40 years. Everybody knew it. He got up and he didn't just walk. The Bible tells us he was walking and leaping, praising God. There's a little kid's song, maybe some of you know it, because he was walking and leaping and praising God.

Walking and leaping and praising God. It's a kid's song, but it was a real moment. Can you imagine what that guy's life changed? Life was like, can you imagine Peter and John like, wow. But Peter saw the opportunity.

And then, of course, what happened was crowds started to gather. Because everybody knew this guy 40 years lame. Crowds started to gather. They were astonished. It was a wow moment.

Crowds started to gather. This is Acts chapter three. And then it says, Peter saw the opportunity. And I'm saying that because we all have everyday lives where you might see an opportunity to talk to somebody about Jesus. You don't force it.

He didn't wake up that morning thinking, okay, I think on the agenda today, I'm gonna heal somebody and then see a moment and speak to thousands. But that's like you and me. We don't know when our moment's gonna come. We don't know when the opportunity of the Holy Spirit. But he knew he was supposed to speak.

That man, he was healed. Crowds gathered around. They were astonished. Peter saw the opportunity. He starts talking to them about Jesus.

He talks about the resurrected Jesus. He actually tells the crowd, Jesus, who you crucified. Remember, that was like eight weeks earlier. Jesus, who you crucified, was raised from the dead by God. And at Pentecost says there were 3,000 who came to know Jesus after this sermon.

There were 5,000. Because people were like. But because of this commotion, the council, which would be the Pharisees, the leading priests and the elders, the Jewish leaders who had put Jesus to death two months before, they were. The Bible says they were disturbed because they. This crowd was gathering and they heard about this guy being healed.

And they're really, really bothered. And they're bothered most. That's why on that opening slide, they're bothered most that they healed in the name of Jesus. Cause the council, you remember months earlier, had him killed. They hated Jesus.

They hated the way he exposed them. So that's Acts chapter. So they

come and get Peter and John and they arrest them because they're so bothered, and they throw them in jail. In Acts chapter four, what we're gonna be looking at the scene kind of takes place the next morning when they're taken out of jail to be called in front of the council, which should have been dozens of men who are the leaders of that day, the religious leaders of that day. So here's how we're going to do this.

We're going to read it, but you're going to be reading it, and I'm going to ask you to. You're going to take a character, so to speak. One of the ways I think, find helpful to read scripture sometimes is to put yourself in the story and see what they see and feel what they feel. Because the biblical stories are more than just words on pages, right? So there's two main characters in this conversation.

In Acts, chapter four, there's the council, and then there's Peter and John. All right, you half here are going to read the council's words. You're the council. I'm sorry. All right, you are the Pharisees, the leading priests, and you are proud people.

You care really about tradition. You care more about your own reputation because Jesus exposed some things and you hated him for that. So you're proud. You're. You're disturbed.

The Bible tells about what just happened. And again, I'm sorry, if you're on this side this morning, I. I just picked it randomly, and then I saw Sean and Amber sit there. I feel really bad. But this is the council, right?

You're the council. There may be somebody on the other side who was here in the first service, wanted to redeem themselves, but you're the counsel. You're reading that line, all right? You're angry, you're proud, and you're really perplexed and disturbed. This group, you're Peter and John, and balcony will split you the same way.

If you're watching online and you can't come because physically you're Peter and John. If you just didn't want to come, you're the Pharisees, right? Okay. I'm just saying that. So Peter and John, you.

They are proud and they are angry. You are ordinary, uneducated people. Uneducated? Me? They could read and write.

They just weren't educated to the standards that they were supposed to be, to be religious leaders. So you're ordinary people. Three years ago plus or so you started following this guy named Jesus, and he changed your life. And you saw him do incredible things, but then you saw him brutally murdered and you thought the world had ended. You didn't know what to do.

And then you saw the resurrected Jesus, and it changed your life. And

not only that, on the day of Pentecost a few months later, you had an experience with the Holy Spirit that filled you with the spirit of Jesus. But you know your ordinary people, but you know what they can do to you. You saw them do that to Jesus. You know what they can do to you, right?

So the next day, they get Peter and John out of jail and they send him in front of the council. All right, Council, you're gonna read this with me, and we're saying this to them. All right? All right, out loud, here we go. By what power or in whose name have you done this?

All right, now kind of lean this way. Read from this screen one more time. By what power and in whose name have you done this?

You know whose name they did it. It was Jesus. That's why you're ticked off, right? Whose name? What power did you do this?

And I have the name highlighted because you're going to see in all these passages, it's the name of Jesus that bothered them. It wasn't the good deed of healing somebody. It was doing it in the name of Jesus. All right, so then over here we're going to. This is the Peter and John section.

Peter replies, and Scripture says he was filled with the Holy Spirit. And he said this. There's two slides, so be ready. But we're talking to them. All right, here we go.

Rulers and elders of our people, are we being questioned today because we've done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus. Read the yellow again. The powerful name of Jesus, the Nazarene, the man you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead.

For Jesus is the one referred to in the scriptures where it says, the stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone. There's salvation in no one else. God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. Do you realize what they can do to you? What you just said?

Wow. Do you realize what they could do to you? Now I'm the narrator. So the narrator, the writer of the book of Acts, was most likely Luke, who would have gathered all the details. And so I'm going to read the narrator part.

So they just challenged you, Peter and John. And Peter and John replied. So you could. And you should feel the tension in the room. Maybe not with you, because you're like.

But the tension over here, the anger. The members of the council were

amazed. Wow. They even said wow when they saw the boldness. Say that word with me.

Boldness. Of Peter and John. For they could see they were ordinary men with no official training in scriptures. They also recognized that these men had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them, there was nothing they could say.

Let me. Let me stop here. On the word boldness. We're not done with the conversation. We're just freeze.

Framing the moment of the council conversation. Let me start with the word boldness. So if you. If you're a food person, boldness shows up all the time. Starbucks serves a French roast coffee.

It's known as their boldest, darkest roast. I got an email last week about Starbucks now having a new jalapeno chicken pocket. A bold new way to spice up your day. Fireblaze. Lavish flatbread stuffed with chicken, smoky gouda and zesty peppers.

I also got an email. This was actually, I just had. This is what got me thinking about this. I got an email from Buffalo Wild Wings. They have a Thai curry sauce, has bold flavors with a bite.

Sweet chilies blended with spices, coconut and curry. And then. And this one, I didn't get an email, but I looked for this. There's a company, I think it's British, called Bold Beans. Like white beans and lima beans.

I mean, lima beans are like result of the fall, right? Bold beans. And they said their mission is to get people obsessed with beans. I find nothing bold about the taste of beans. I find something bold about the after effect.

Right? And so this. And one of their statements is, beans can change the world. I think you can buy them at fresh time. If anybody wants to buy a can, I will not eat them.

Sorry. So when you read about. And then. So the bold in the food world is spicy. It's unusual, it's intense, it's assertive.

And then I was reading this food critic, a marketing person, talking about the word bold. You slap in on any item in the store or in the restaurant. It gets people's attention, especially the new generation. We're into bold. And this is what they wrote.

Today's consumers are hungry than ever for adventurous and exotic flavors. They're seeking bolder experiences to test their own limits and discover something new. Let me flip that a bit. Those of us who

follow Jesus were seeking bolder experiences because we want to test our own limits. What are we capable of?

The spirit of God in us. And we want to discover something New. So the word bold in this particular passage, the word bold kind of. They're not talking about Peter and John being bold like food wise, but we get the sense. But bold is free.

Speaking freely, fearlessly, open, courageously, plainly, no nuance. We're just going to say and see boldness. I'll say this to you, boldness is not a personality trait.

I'm loud, I'm not necessarily assertive. I'm actually more quiet in social situations. But boldness is not a matter of my personality. Boldness in this case is a supernatural enablement to speak clearly and openly and courageously. So don't think if you're a quiet person.

Well, that's not me. I mean, boldness isn't brashness. We're not that. They're just talking about that. They noticed that Peter and John were bold.

They spoke openly and freely, courageously, knowing what could happen to them. So bold. That's the word.

So they ordered the council, order. You're going to speak here in a second council. They ordered Peter and John out of the room. They had to talk among themselves because they didn't know what to do with these bold, ordinary fishermen, people who followed Jesus. So this is what the council says now.

Council, we're saying this to one another. You don't need to face each other because you have to read the screen anyway. The council is saying this. Ready? 1, 2, 3, go.

What should we do with these men? We can't deny they have performed miraculous sign. Everybody in Jerusalem knows about it. But to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in Jesus name again. Start with a we must.

One more time. We must warn them not to speak to anyone in Jesus name again. You see, we're not done yet with the conversation. But it's the name of Jesus that throws people, right? I mean, Quentin was talking about, you know, helping somebody with their dentures and other.

We don't do those things just because we want to do good deeds and give back to the community. We do those things because we are compelled by the person and the name of Jesus inside of us. The culture doesn't mind us. We do good deeds. The Pharisees didn't mind that Peter and John healed this guy.

They were really, really ratcheted up because they did it in the name of Jesus. Because you talk about Jesus, it changes things. You can say to people, I'm a Christian or I'm religious or I go to church, I go to Sherwood Oaks. You say to people, I Follow Jesus, it changes the air. Right?

And I'm not saying in a jerky way I follow Jesus, but I tell people anymore. I don't tell people I'm a Christian because I don't know what that means anymore in our culture. I tell them I'm an avid follower of Jesus because you say you're a follower of Jesus. That defines you. Right.

So they're upset at the name. If you took out the name of Jesus in this passage, it's Peter and John doing a good deed for people. And the council wouldn't care, but they do it in the name of the resurrected Jesus. Easter is three weeks away, four weeks away, right? So then they say, we're gonna warn them not to speak in the morning in Jesus name.

And then they call Peter and John back into the council, and they commanded them. They commanded you never to speak again in the name of Jesus. And let's read what Peter and John say. Peter and John, people, here we go. Do you think God wants to obey you rather than him?

We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard. But they just commanded you not to speak in the name of Jesus. Do you know what they can do to you? But they're like, yes, we do. But we're going to obey God rather than you.

We can't stop telling people about what he's done.

So we read that the council then threatened them further. They were really good at threatening people, and they finally let them go because they didn't know how to punish them. Scripture says they didn't know how to punish them because they knew if they punished them, there'd be a riot. Because everybody in Jerusalem knew what happened. They knew it was a miracle.

So if they punished Peter and John, it's like, well, there'd be a riot. So last time I'll talk about you people over here, they were scared. They were angry, but they were scared because they didn't know what was coming. So now we. What happens is Peter and John are released and they go back to the.

They go to the Scriptures. They went back to other believers. And what happened? Well, one of the believers probably said, you know what? Let's just lay low for a while till the smoke clears.

And let's not just not. Let's just be good people and do good things, but not talk about Jesus. Yeah, we don't need to be talking. That's

just. We don't want to make people uncomfortable.

No, that's not what they said. Peter and John went back there and the believers prayed. It says they raised their voices together and prayed, and they had a long prayer. We're just going to read the last part of the prayer and now for this one. We're all going to be the believers.

You've redeemed yourself for all the believers. All right? Because they pray. And this is in Peter and John coming back. They know what these people can do to Peter and John.

They know what they can do to them. But they pray this bold prayer, and it says they raised their voices and this is the end of the prayer. So stand up with me, because we're gonna. I want you to stand up. Cause I'm guessing they were probably standing up.

Cause they said they raised their voices. I want you to raise your voices. So this was their response to the threats, to the threats of the Pharisees. Now, I want you to stop thinking about this, too. We don't feel threats if somebody's gonna arrest us, but we feel the social threats talking about Jesus.

So we'll tone it down and just be Christians, right? So they raised their voices, and out loud with me, here we go. And now, O Lord, hear their threats and give us your servants great boldness in speaking your word. Stretch out your hand with healing power. May miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant, Jesus.

One more time, Ratchet your volume a little bit more. And. And now, O Lord, hear their threats and give us your servants great boldness in speaking your word. Stretch out your hand with healing power. May miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

Yellow part. One more time. Through the name of your holy servant Jesus. All right, go ahead and have a seat.

They were praying for boldness. They weren't praying for personality changes. They weren't praying to be jerks. They were praying for this supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to speak clearly, openly and freely about Jesus. Because they knew there was no other name under heaven.

Anybody could be saved. Anybody could be redeemed and changed. They saw his power, right? So here's what we're going to do. I'm going to do a couple things.

First, we're going to two parts in terms of the practice. All right?

This is practice number one. You know the practice. They're going to be praying.

I'm going to say, like, you're a Christian, aren't you? And I want everybody to reply, yes, I follow Jesus. Right? Have a couple of questions, but your reply is, yes, I follow Jesus. So you're a Christian, aren't you?

Aren't you religious?

You go to Sherwood Oaks, don't you?

I had a student. I teach some classes at iu. And I tell the students, first day of class, I'm a pastor. And after class one day a couple semesters ago, student stopped and said, I was really kind of nervous when you told us you were a pastor. I teach a class for education, right?

I said, why? Well, I thought you'd flash John 3:16 on the screen every day. And I said, why would I do that? He said, that's what Christians do. And he said, well, aren't you a Christian?

And this is my standard response now, so you'll hear me on this. I said, I don't call myself that anymore. I call myself an avid friend and follower of a man named Jesus. He's changed my life, and he will change the world.

That's what we follow, right? I am a Christian. I'm not ashamed of saying that. But Christian in our culture, what does that mean anymore? But you say, I followed Jesus, you know, and Peter.

And this is challenge you too. Peter saw an opportunity and said when he crowd gathered, he saw an opportunity. You have opportunities like that. You don't have people gathering around you, but you will have those opportunities if God, if you keep your eyes open. Years ago, we had a friend of ours, a neighbor, Chris came over and he was fixing our dishwasher or our stove or something.

He was a. He was a electrical engineer from Crane or something like that. All you Crane people, thank you so much for what you do. But he was fixing our stove and he was not. Didn't go to church or anything.

And I was in a hurry because I needed to go shopping for Christmas because I hadn't bought any of my wife's gifts yet. And I was behind. So I was hoping, hurry up and fix it got done. And then he stopped and he said, I got a question for you. I thought I was going to ask about the dishwasher.

He goes, why did Jesus have to die? I'm just like, oh, I gotta go. I gotta go. But it was an opportunity, and I knew it was from God, and I

had to scratch my agenda and follow the opportunity. You will have those opportunities.

We all do, where you scratch your agenda. And then you realize this is a time to talk about Jesus, not about church, religion, American politics, but just, yeah, I follow Jesus, and he's changed my life. That's a pretty powerful, powerful statement right there, when you make that to people. So here's what I want us to do. You'll have everybody has the cards if you haven't passed them down.

Pass those cards down. And the card looks like this. It says, give your servant blank, Great boldness and speak in the name of Jesus. I want you to write your first name in the blank, right? Your first name goes in the blank.

So if your name's Bob, give your servant Bob. Great boldness in speaking in the name of Jesus. All right, put your name in there. Here's what we're going to do. So this is the response time, but this is also a time where we've been stretching ourselves in prayer.

So there's going to be people, prayer team members, elders, some of the pastors, probably as well. I'll probably be standing down here as well. And you can either do communion first or afterwards. And you don't have to even do this. I'm telling you, I think you will benefit from this.

You're going to hand that person the card. And again, if that person, if your name is Bob and I get your card, I'm just going to say, God, give your servant. I might put my hand on your shoulder. I might not. I don't know.

Whoever else the prayer people may do differently. God, give your servant Bob. Great boldness in speaking the name of Jesus. Some of you probably haven't been prayed for by name in a while, but this. We're praying for you by name, for a supernatural awareness and a supernatural courage to speak about Jesus.

It's not about guilt. This is not about motivation by guilt. And I got to do this. It's more of I'm. I'm going to see a moment, and I'm going to feel the boldness of the spirit in me.

All right? So at the same time, before or after we have communion, we do that every week here at Sherwood Oaks. And you have the little cups with the. The bread in the bottom. If you're new here, you got to rip off the bottom and rip off the top.

You'll figure it out. Don't worry. You'll figure it out. But it might take you a while. But what we're doing here is Jesus, every time you eat this and drink this, remember me.

Remember me. And yeah, he wants to remember his death and resurrection, but he wants to remember everything he taught us. And one of the things he said was, when you're called in front of people, in this case, the disciples, don't worry about what you'll say. The Holy Spirit will tell you what to say, Right? Remember that.

Because when Chris, my neighbor, said, why did Jesus have to die? I didn't have to pull out an outline. I just, I just talked and you may have somebody in your life this week ask you about. You go to church, are you a praying person? You know, you will know what to say.

Don't worry about pulling out an outline. If you have the spirit of Jesus in you, he will tell you so. Remember, that's what Jesus said. He promises that. So we're grateful for his death and resurrection, but we're grateful that his spirit is with us.

That was one of his promises. So again, I'm going to pray here in a second. You can come up, you communion first. Find the people with the orange lanyards or people. You'll notice that they're praying for people.

You hand on the card, won't be a conversation, no long prayer. Just going to pray your name, pray the words of the card, pray for you. We do think prayer matters, right? If we're praying for boldness, God will give you boldness supernatural and then take the communion before or after. All right?

So, God, I pray for these my sisters and my brothers who, like me, sometimes are afraid or maybe ashamed in some way of talking about Jesus, even though we really aren't ashamed. But we just, we don't like the social threats of people thinking we're weird or odd or freakish. We want to fit in, but Jesus, we really don't want to fit in because we're different people and we have this, your spirit inside of us. So would you fill us with boldness from your holy spirit, Give us your servants great boldness in speaking your name, and we love you and we want to change our neighbors, our places of work again. Not out of force or guilt or fear, but because we've seen the mighty name of Jesus and how he's changed our lives.

We ask this fellow Jesus, in your name. Amen. Yeah. So bring your card with you, hand it to somebody to pray for you. New communion.