STONE CHURCH

POD STUDY GUIDE

SPEAK 2.0

STONE CHURCH

WEEK FOUR
SPEAK TOGETHER

With the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach will be satisfied; He will be satisfied with the product of his lips.
Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

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Introduction

Faith Was Never Meant to Stand Alone

Acts 4:23-31

When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, “O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, ‘WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS? THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.’ For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur. And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

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Think about the last time you received difficult news. Perhaps it was a medical diagnosis, a financial setback, a family crisis, or an unexpected disappointment. After the initial shock, who did you turn to? Most of us instinctively reach out to someone we trust because certain burdens are simply too heavy to carry alone.

The early Church understood this principle. In Acts 4, Peter and John had been arrested and threatened by the religious authorities for proclaiming Jesus Christ. They had witnessed a remarkable miracle when a man who had never walked was healed in Jesus' name. Yet rather than celebrating the miracle, the religious leaders demanded that they stop speaking about Jesus.

When Peter and John were released, Scripture tells us they immediately returned to **"their own companions."** They went to the people who shared their faith, understood their calling, and believed in the authority of Jesus Christ. What happened next reveals something essential about the Christian life. The believers did not allow the threats to silence them or divide them. Instead, they gathered together and lifted their voices to God.

Throughout SPEAK! 2.0, we have learned that God's Word carries His authority, that believers are called to speak in agreement with His will, and that faith must persevere when answers are delayed. Now we discover that **God has also called us to stand together in faith.** The Church is not merely a gathering of individuals who happen to believe the same things. It is the body of Christ, united by His Spirit and commissioned to proclaim His Word to the world.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think people sometimes withdraw from Christian fellowship during difficult seasons rather than seeking the support and prayers of other believers?

2. Peter and John immediately returned to their fellow believers after being threatened. What does their response teach us about the importance of spiritual community during times of adversity?

1

They Started With God Together

Acts 4:23-24

When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported everything that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard this, they raised their voices to God with one mind and said, “Lord, it is You who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything that is in them,

Matthew 18:18-20

Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

When Peter and John reported what had happened, the believers responded by lifting their voices to God **“with one accord.”**

The Greek word homothymadon describes people united in purpose, passion, and intention. Luke repeatedly uses this word in Acts to describe the unity of the early Church.

Their unity was not based upon identical personalities, backgrounds, or opinions. They were united around a common faith in Jesus Christ and a shared commitment to His mission.

Notice how they began their prayer: **“O Lord, it is You who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them.”** Before addressing the threats, they acknowledged God's authority as Creator.

Both Hezekiah and the early Church understood that prayer should begin with the greatness of God rather than the size of the problem. Colossians 1:16–18 reminds us that all things were created through Christ and for Christ, and that He is the head of the Church.

The same Lord who sustains creation is the One who governs His people. Jesus also emphasized the significance of agreement in Matthew 18:19–20, where He spoke about believers agreeing together in prayer and promised His presence among those gathered in His name.

The Greek word translated agree is *symphōneō*, from which we derive the word symphony. It communicates harmony or agreement. Just as different instruments contribute to one musical composition, believers bring their individual voices into harmony around God's Word and purposes.

In its context, Matthew 18 addresses reconciliation and accountability within the Church. The promise is not permission to demand whatever we desire, but an assurance of Christ's presence among His people as they act under His authority.

When believers come together in genuine spiritual unity, their confidence is strengthened because they are standing together before the same sovereign Lord.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. The early Church began by acknowledging God as Creator rather than focusing on the threats against them. How does beginning with God's character and authority change our perspective during difficult circumstances?

2. Jesus connects agreement in prayer with His presence among believers. What distinguishes genuine spiritual unity from simply having everyone agree with the same opinions or desired outcomes?

LIFE APPLICATION

Consider whether you have been carrying a burden that should be shared with other believers. This week, identify someone you trust within your church or POD group and invite them to pray with you. Rather than beginning with everything that is wrong, begin by acknowledging who God is and what His Word reveals about His character.

Don't allow fear to isolate you from the people God has placed in your life to strengthen your faith.

2

They Agreed on What God had Already Spoken

Psalm 2:1–12

Why are the nations in an uproar
And the peoples devising a vain thing?
The kings of the earth take their stand
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying,
"Let us tear their fetters apart
And cast away their cords from us!"
He who sits in the heavens laughs,
The Lord scoffs at them.
Then He will speak to them in His anger
And terrify them in His fury, saying,
"But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."
"I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord:
He said to Me, 'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.
'You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"
Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;
Take warning, O judges of the earth.
Worship the Lord with reverence
And rejoice with trembling.
Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way,
For His wrath may soon be kindled.
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

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Acts 4:25–28

who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, '*Why did the Gentiles rage, And the peoples devise futile things? 'The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord and against His Christ.'* For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

After acknowledging God's authority as Creator, the believers began praying Scripture. They quoted Psalm 2, where David describes the nations raging and earthly rulers gathering against the Lord and His Anointed. The early Church recognized that the opposition they were experiencing was not unexpected. Scripture had already revealed that earthly powers would resist God's Messiah.

Acts 4:27 identifies Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel as participants in the opposition against Jesus. Yet verse 28 declares that these events occurred within the sovereign purposes of God. What appeared to be humanity's greatest victory over Jesus became the very means through which God accomplished redemption.

The believers understood that their circumstances were real, but those circumstances did not possess greater authority than God's revealed purposes. **They interpreted what was happening through what God had already spoken.** This is one of the greatest benefits of studying and praying Scripture together. When a church develops a shared understanding of God's Word, its members also develop a shared language of faith. They learn to encourage one another with the promises, instructions, and truths of Scripture.

Hebrews 4:12 declares that **"the word of God is living and active."** God's Word does more than provide information. It exposes the condition of our hearts and confronts the assumptions that govern our thinking.

A church grounded in Scripture is better equipped to recognize fear, resist deception, and respond faithfully when circumstances become difficult. This does not mean every verse can be applied to every situation without considering its context. It means that Scripture provides the foundation for understanding God's character, His purposes, and our responsibility as His people.

When difficulties arise, believers who have consistently studied God's Word together do not have to begin building their faith from nothing. **They already possess a foundation of truth upon which they can stand together.**

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. The believers used Psalm 2 to interpret the opposition they were experiencing. Why is it important to understand our circumstances through Scripture rather than allowing our circumstances to determine what we believe about God?

2. How does regularly studying, discussing, and praying God's Word together prepare believers to respond with greater confidence when unexpected challenges arise?

LIFE APPLICATION

Choose a passage of Scripture that has strengthened your faith during a difficult season. Share that passage with someone in your POD group and explain how it helped you understand God's character or respond to your circumstances. As a group, consider choosing one Scripture to meditate upon and pray together throughout the coming week.

A church that learns God's Word together becomes better prepared to stand on God's Word together.

3

They Asked God for Boldness to Keep Speaking

Acts 4:29-31

And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

Romans 10:14–17

How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!" However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Perhaps the most remarkable part of the early Church's prayer is what they did not ask for. They did not ask God to remove every threat or eliminate all opposition. Instead, they prayed, **"Grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence."**

The Greek word translated *confidence* or *boldness* is *parrēsia*. It describes openness, courage, and freedom in speaking. The believers understood that their calling was greater than their circumstances.

Their responsibility was to continue proclaiming Jesus Christ, even when doing so involved personal risk. They also asked God to extend His hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of Jesus.

Notice the relationship between their responsibility and God's power. **They asked for boldness to speak His Word while trusting God to demonstrate His power**.

Acts 4:31 records the extraordinary response. The place where they were gathered was shaken, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began speaking the Word of God with boldness.

Many of these believers had already experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Yet here they were filled again, demonstrating their continuing dependence upon the Spirit's power.

The filling of the Holy Spirit was not simply an emotional experience. It equipped them to continue their mission. Romans 10:14–17 explains why this matters. Paul asks how people can believe in Christ if they have never heard about Him.

He concludes that **"faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."** The gospel must be proclaimed because God works through its message to bring people to salvation.

First Peter 1:23 describes believers as being born again through the living and enduring Word of God.

Revelation 12:11 also describes believers overcoming through the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. Their victory was grounded in Christ's sacrifice and demonstrated through faithful witness, even when obedience involved suffering.

This reveals an important truth about spiritual boldness. Boldness is not the absence of fear. It is the willingness to obey God even when fear is present. The early Church did not wait until opposition disappeared before continuing its mission. They asked the Holy Spirit to empower them to remain faithful in the middle of it.

The Holy Spirit does not merely strengthen us to endure difficult circumstances. He empowers us to proclaim Jesus Christ through them.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. The early Church prayed for boldness rather than asking God to remove the opposition. What does this reveal about their priorities, and how might it challenge the way we typically pray during difficult seasons?

2. Acts 4 connects the filling of the Holy Spirit with boldness in proclaiming God's Word. How can we become more dependent upon the Holy Spirit in our conversations, relationships, and opportunities to share our faith?

LIFE APPLICATION

Think of one person who needs encouragement, prayer, or the message of Jesus Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to provide an opportunity to speak God's truth with wisdom, compassion, and boldness.

Perhaps you need to share your testimony, offer to pray for someone, or explain what Jesus has done in your life. You do not need to have every answer before speaking. You need to remain faithful to the message God has entrusted to you.

The same Holy Spirit who empowered the early Church continues to empower believers to proclaim Jesus today.

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BRINGING IT HOME

One Church, One Word, One Purpose

Throughout SPEAK! 2.0, we have discovered that God's Word carries His authority, that believers are called to speak in agreement with His will, and that faith must persevere even when answers are delayed. Acts 4 reveals how these truths come together in the life of the Church.

The believers faced real opposition, but they refused to allow fear to divide or silence them. They gathered together, acknowledged God's authority, prayed His Word, and asked the Holy Spirit for boldness to continue their mission. Their unity was not built upon the absence of problems. It was built upon their shared confidence in Jesus Christ.

Personal Reflection

- Am I allowing fear or discouragement to isolate me from other believers?
- Do I regularly encourage others with God's Word?
- Am I contributing to the spiritual unity of my church?
- Have I become more concerned with avoiding opposition than faithfully representing Jesus Christ?

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This week, practice three simple commitments: **Pray together.** Share a burden with another believer and bring it before God. S**peak God's Word together**. Encourage someone with a passage of Scripture that reveals God's truth and faithfulness.

Ask for boldness together. Pray for opportunities to share Jesus Christ and for the Holy Spirit to empower your witness.

The Word that created the world, demonstrated its authority over creation, and remains faithful through every season is the same Word the Church has been commissioned to proclaim.

When the Church stands together on God's Word, we become a united witness to the power and authority of Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Father, thank You for bringing us together as the body of Christ. Thank You that we do not have to face the challenges of life alone, but that You have given us brothers and sisters who can encourage, strengthen, and stand with us in faith. Teach us to begin with Your greatness rather than the size of our problems. Help us become a church that knows Your Word, prays Your Word, and lives in agreement with Your will. Forgive us for allowing fear, division, or discouragement to weaken our witness. Unite our hearts around Jesus Christ and give us a greater love for one another. Holy Spirit, fill us afresh with Your power. Give us boldness to proclaim the gospel, compassion to minister to those who are hurting, and faith to believe You for healing, restoration, and deliverance. May our words reflect Your truth, our lives demonstrate Your love, and our unity reveal the presence of Jesus Christ among us. In the mighty name of Jesus Christ, Amen.