

“We Cannot But Speak” – How to Listen to God Rather than Men

Introduction

The Text

- A. Remember, at this point, Peter and John had been on their way into the temple, when they saw a man who had been lame from birth lying beside the gate.
1. They healed him in Jesus’ name.
 2. Then as the crowds gather round they preach in Jesus’ name.
 3. And when the religious leaders arrest them, drag them before the Sanhedrin, and put them on trial, even in the face of such opposition, they’re still exulting in Jesus’ name. “[T]here is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved,” they say in v. 12 (which I spent a whole sermon on last time).
- B. And now we come to v. 13 . . .

¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵ But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, ¹⁶ saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” ¹⁸ So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” ²¹ And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. ²² For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

²³ When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵ who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’— ²⁷ 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, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:13–31)

Who Are You Listening to?

- A. Let me begin with a question: Who are you listening to?
1. I'm not talking about musical artists.
 2. I'm not talking about podcasts or audiobooks.
 3. I'm talking about who are you listening to? Do you know what I mean?
- B. Peter and John at it right there in v. 19: [“Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge,²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”](#) “Should we listen to you, chief priests, elders, religious authorities, or should we listen to God?”
1. The word in the Greek behind our English translated [“listen”](#) here is the word [akouō](#).
 - a. Certainly it can refer to merely hearing something with the ears.
 - b. But often, as in our text, it implies something much more involved, something much deeper: it's the idea of, not just listening to someone, but heeding them, obeying them.
- C. So with all this in mind, then, I ask you again: Who are you listening to? Who holds sway over the course of your life? Who directs your path? Whose voice sounds out the loudest to your ears? Whose opinion matters more to you than any other? Who are you trying to please as you go about your day? Who are you listening to?
1. There is perhaps no more important question you could consider for yourself this morning.

Peter and John

- A. Peter and John, in our text here, it seems to me, have this very question thrust upon them in stark, unforgiving, inescapable terms.
1. They are being pressed towards a decision. They have to make a choice. There's no wiggle room. There's no way to straddle the line. There's no give and take. There's no “let me think about it and get back to you.” No!
- B. There's a fork in the road and they have to determine: who are they going to listen to?
1. Because this council of Jewish leaders, held in such high esteem among those in Israel, they say: “No more talking about Jesus; no more spreading word about his death and resurrection; no more heralding the good news. We can't have it. It's disrupting our city, our way of life—not to mention our landlords, Rome. And if Rome gets upset, who knows what becomes of us next. So stop it already. Or we may have to put an end to you ourselves.” So that's what they're saying.
 2. But then Peter and John know what God has said, what Jesus has commissioned them to do, [Acts 1:8: “\[Y\]ou will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be](#)

my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” In other words: “You must speak of me! The world needs to hear!”

- C. So there the path breaks into two irreconcilable directions and, again, they have to decide: which way are we going to go—who are we going to listen to?
 - 1. Well, of course, we know the way these apostles go. When they are later caught again and dragged before the court in [Acts 5](#), this same group of Jewish leaders will say to them: “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching . . .” And how do they respond? “Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than men’” (vv. 28-29).

Where Does This Come from?

- A. So I just want to ask: Where does this come from? How did they get like this—with this boldness, this fearlessness, where they’re seeking to please God rather than anyone else? How can we become more like this? How do we “listen” to God—how do we “obey” God—rather than men?
 - 1. To borrow the phrasing from Alistair Begg: “How are we to live for Jesus in a world that says we shouldn’t?”
- B. Now, this morning all I want to do is identify three pillars for us.
 - 1. A pillar is something that supports you in times of duress. It provides structural stability.
 - a. They may just seem ornamental and decorative in times of prosperity.
 - b. But when the ground starts shaking, you realize that without them, the whole building would collapse.
 - i. And so I want to identify for you three pillars that need to be set in place in your life now if you want any chance of withstanding and remaining stable, when the rumbling comes.
- C. I’ve chosen to express each pillar in verbal form, as an action step, as it were. I’ll give them to you up front and then we’ll consider them one by one: Pillar #1: Get Alone with God; Pillar #2: Keep Wise Counsel; and Pillar #3: Live in Community.

Pillar #1: Get Alone with God

- A. With this, of course, I am referring to the obvious fact that if we are going to live for God, we have to know God. If we are going to listen to and obey him rather than men, well then we need to know who he is and what he says.
 - 1. In other words: we have to regularly get alone with him, and seek him in Scripture, the Word of God, and in prayer.
- B. It’s obvious Peter and John already have this pillar going for them.

1. It can't be lost on us that all this commotion with the lame man and the trial, it happens as they are going up to the temple to do what, do you remember? To seek God in prayer, [Acts 3:1](#): "Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer"
 - a. Prayer and seeking God in this way was already built into their life. It was a pillar that would support them when the pressure came.

Three Things Revealed

A. But now, when it comes to spending time alone with God, especially reading the Scriptures, hearing his Word—I want to show why this is so critical if we're truly going to obey him rather than men.

1. As we read, at least three essentials things are revealed to us . . .

Revelation #1: His Will

- A. The Bible, among other things, is God's revelation to man of his ways and his will for us. We learn who he is, certainly, but we also learn who we are and what we are to do—how we ought to live.
- B. Think of it. For Peter and John, how are they able to so quickly counter the mounting pressure from these religious authorities when they call on them to shut up on the things of Jesus already?
 1. Well, part of it has to be that they knew God's word to them. They weren't fuzzy on what God wanted. As I've shown you they knew what Jesus had commissioned them to do.
 - a. They weren't swayed by these men because they knew God.
- C. I thought of Jesus, in a more docile example. You remember, when he's doing miracles in a particular region, and all the people want him to stay forever, but he says "I can't stay. I have to go." "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose" ([Luke 4:43](#)).
 1. He's willing to let these people down, to displease them, to push back on their pressuring, to not listen to or obey them, why? Because he knows what God's will for him is.
 - a. You see, before they had come to him with these requests (or even demands if you prefer), we're told that he'd pulled away and been spending time alone with his Father out in a "desolate place" ([v. 42](#)).
 - i. That's how he discerned his Father's will. He got alone with him.
- D. This is why, by the way, when the Pharisees and Herodians are talking to Jesus, though they're trying to butter him up, I do think they speak rightly of him when they say this: "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God" ([Mark 12:14](#)).
 1. It's interesting, the Greek underneath this idea that he is "not swayed by appearances" literally translates to "you do not look at the faces of men."

- a. It's a very vivid picture. I wish our English translations didn't muddle it. You get the idea, don't you? So many of us are always caught up looking at men's faces. "What are they thinking of me, am I pleasing them?"

- E. My job involves a lot of public speaking. You better believe I'm tempted to do this very thing as I preach.
 - 1. This person's into it—they're smiling.
 - 2. That person's sleeping—I better pick up the pace, I'm losing them.
 - 3. This person seems like they disagree—they've got this furrowed brow.
 - 4. That person just walked out—oh no!
 - a. How am I doing? What should I change? How can I make more people more happy with me? So what if I need to water down the Word a little if it means I can find favor with more folks. That's just contextualization right?
 - i. Listen: there's a fine line between contextualization and compromise.

- F. And Jesus will contextualize—that's what the incarnation is!—but he's not going to compromise.
 - 1. He knows he's going to let a lot of people down, he's not going to be and do the things they want him to all the time. And they're going to come at him. They're going to reject him. They're going to kill him.
 - 2. But he doesn't care. His sole aim is to please his Father. That's the face he's looking at. And it keeps him going. Even when men's faces turn against him.

- G. I thought also of the great Reformer Martin Luther at this points.
 - 1. You remember, perhaps, that Halloween is also what many Protestant Christians refer to as Reformation Day. It was the day that Martin Luther is said to have posted his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany—setting in motion what would ultimately become the Protestant Reformation.
 - 2. And what is he doing in all this?
 - a. Well, he's constrained by what he sees in Scripture to thereby stand up against the powers that be in the Catholic Church that are saying otherwise. They had lost the gospel. And he had uncovered it again in his study biblical books like Galatians and Romans.
 - b. There is a time later, when he's brought before the Holy Roman Emperor and told to recant of what he's been teaching—much like Peter and John are told here.
 - i. And, like them, he won't do it. Instead he famously says this: "I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture, which is my basis; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant .

. . . **God help me. Amen.**” Although it’s somewhat debatable, many also believe he said at this point: **“Here I stand; I can do no other.”**

- H. Isn’t that awesome?! Here he is, set before the very people who have authority to ruin his life, maybe even end his life, and he’s not going to bend or bow one inch on this.
 - 1. How did he get there?
 - a. He’s spending time in the Bible. He knows God’s Word. “What am I supposed to do? I see this in the Scriptures and you’re trying to say the opposite. I have to go with God.”
- I. As I try to apply this to ourselves now, let me put it as sharply as I can: If we are not being shaped by the Word we will be shaped by the world. Period. That’s all there is to it. There are no other options.
 - 1. If you spend more time listening to the news, watching movies, scrolling Facebook, reading pop culture magazines; if you spend more time taking in the words and ways of the world than you do ruminating on the words and ways of God, then you should not be surprised when you are moved by such things, shaped by such things, conformed into the image of such things.
 - a. **“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed . . . ,”** Paul says. How? **“[B]y the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect”** (Rom. 12:2).
 - i. What are you setting your minds on? What are you anchoring your life to?
- J. If you’re not in the Word of God, then you will be fuzzy on the will of God. And if you’re fuzzy on the will of God, then you can be taken for a ride by the whims of our fallen culture.
 - 1. You’ll go wherever they tell you go. You’ll have no backbone in the Bible that keeps you upright in the tempest. You’ll have no anchor in the storm. You’ll look at the faces and be moved by them.
 - a. So the boyfriend says: “Sleep with me just this once, it can’t be wrong if it feels so good!”
 - b. The boss says: “Let’s just fudge the numbers here a little bit. We’re not telling outright lies, we’re just massaging the truth.”
 - c. The culture says: “If you don’t affirm the transgender agenda you’re a bigot and a hater. Get on the bandwagon or get run over. This is where our enlightened society is going!”
 - 2. What do you do?
 - a. If you’re in God’s Word, then you’ll know God’s will on such things, and you can stand—with courage, and contextualization perhaps, but no compromise. You can go with God even when everyone else seems to be going the other way.

Revelation #2: His Might

- A. Another thing that's revealed to us as we spend time alone with God in his Word is, not just his will, but also his might. We see his sovereignty, his power, his glory.
- B. One of the big problems when it comes to listening to God rather than men is that we all often struggle with what the Bible calls the "fear of man." People seem big to us and God seems small.
 - 1. But when we spend time with him in the Scriptures, it reverses that, doesn't it? You remember just how big God is, and, ironically, you actually come to fear him instead.
- C. These religious leaders hounding Peter and John here, they do all that they do from the fear of man.
 - 1. That point is made plain all over the gospels and the book of Acts.
 - 2. And we can even see it right here in our text. Did you notice it there in [v. 21](#)? You better believe they wanted to go further in their punishment of Peter and John, but why didn't they? "And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them [why?!], because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened."
 - a. Don't you see? They were looking at the faces. Their hands were tied. Peter and John healed this man. Everyone could see that. They didn't commit a crime. If they came down on these apostles the crowd would come down on them.
 - i. They have no real backbone. They have no real freedom. They're beholden to the crowd. Because they have the fear of man.
- D. But the apostles Peter and John are different.
 - 1. They're not afraid of these religious authorities. They're not worried about what they think are what they could do to them. They're free.
 - a. It's interesting, the Greek word translated "boldness" in [v. 13](#), it refers to a certain [freedom of speech](#), a [frankness](#), an [openness](#). They didn't feel the need to censor or hide or modify anything to conform or please. They weren't worried about what others thought. They were bold.
- E. They didn't have the fear of man. Why?
 - 1. Because they had the fear of God!
 - a. Listen, they'd seen Jesus conquer death. "What's the worst these men could do to us? Kill us, like they killed him. Well, we serve the one who beat death. He put death to death. We're not afraid of you and what you think."

F. And for us, we may not get to see the risen Lord with our eyes like they did, or put our fingers in his scars, but we read about his victory as they bear witness to it in the Bible. We see the glory of God in the face of Christ as we read the Scriptures.

1. And when you see that, people come back into their proper place, right?

a. We love people, we serve people, but we don't have to cower before them. We don't have to give into codependency. We don't have to find our sense of identity and self-worth and security in pleasing them. We don't have to fear them and their opinions of us above all.

b. Because God is over them and he's got us. So you can let them down if that's what it means to be obedient to Jesus. They may come at you, they may get online and run a little smear campaign, they may unfriend or unfollow you, but God's not doing that.

i. And if he's for you, who can ultimately be against you?!

G. If you don't know how to be alone with God, you won't know how to properly be with people. They'll mean too much.

1. But if you do learn how to spend time with him in that quiet space, you'll be alright—you'll be able to navigate contrary opinions and opposition in a Christ-honoring way.

H. And this really leads to the last revelation I wanted to highlight . . .

Revelation #3: His Love

A. When we spend time with God in his Word and in prayer, we don't just get a clearer sense of his will and his might, we also—maybe even above all else—get a clearer sense of his love.

1. And I think this is really what snaps the power that other people may have over us at the deepest level.

a. Because, at the end of the day, we do what we do a lot of times because we want to be liked, we want to fit in, we want our approval ratings to go up.

b. But when you get in the Scriptures and you uncover the truths of the gospel, and you realize that the one who is above all—he doesn't just put up with you, he loves you, he delights in you . . . what else really matters? Who cares what anyone else thinks at that point?!

B. I came across something the other day that I think illustrates this a bit for us. I'm a Coldplay fan. I love their music. It was on Megan's and my bucket list to go to one of their concerts and we actually did that a few years back. It was awesome.

1. But, recently, I saw this video where Chris Martin, the lead singer, at another concert, as he often does, he called this person from the audience up on stage.

2. And it was this boy and his mom. And he starts talking to the little guy and you realize it's his ten year old birthday and he wanted more than anything to come see Coldplay as his first ever concert.
 3. And so Chris Martin has him come sit down with him at the keyboard, his name is Leo, and on the spot, he makes up a song for him, calls it "[Leo's Birthday Song](#)", you could look it up. I actually really liked it :)
 4. But as I'm looking at this kid, all the crowd cheering, and the mom there by his side, Chris Martin hits the chorus, and she starts crying.
 5. And I find myself moved to tears. And I'm wondering: Why? Why do find this so special, so moving?
 6. Well, I was just thinking about how incredible this would be for that little guy. What an amazing thing for him, right! Here you have this rockstar on top of the world, and out of a crowd of thousands upon thousands, he just picks this little nobody, a kid. No one coming in even knew who he was, but by the end they were all cheering and singing out his birthday song.
 7. That would make his day, his year. He'll never forget that.
- C. And this is just a faint, dreadfully imperfect analogy of what Jesus does with us. Chris Martin isn't Jesus, alright. I'm not saying that. I'm just saying . . .
1. Jesus is the King of kings, he's on top of the world. We're nobodies. A face in the crowd, looked over by everyone.
 2. Beyond that we're sinners, his enemies. We're not just cute little ten-year-old boys. We're rebels. We're gross.
 3. But he comes down and he calls us by name anyways. "Get up here!"
 4. And because of the cross—where he took on himself my sin and did away with it once and for all—now we know he rejoices over us with loud singing ([Zeph. 3:17](#)).
 5. In Jesus, we are forgiven, we are accepted, we are protected, we are loved.
 - a. And when you get that, you don't walk around needing it from anyone else. "Notice me, approve of me, applaud me" . . . who cares?! I have the affection of the Maker of galaxies. Why would I leave him to get you to like me. No thank you.
- D. Don't you understand, that's where Peter and John are. This is what they experienced when they were with Jesus.
1. Peter blew it. Jesus doesn't abandon him. He singles him out, draws near, and restores him in his love ([John 21:15-19](#)).
 2. John, he refers to himself as the disciple "[whom Jesus loved](#)" ([John 13:23](#); [19:26](#); [21:7](#); [21:20](#)). What does he mean by this?
 - a. Did Jesus love him, but not the others? No.
 - b. He knows Jesus loves them all.
 - c. But it highlights how personal this love is for John. It was so real, so tangible, so intimate for him that he felt like he might as well have been the only disciple Jesus loved. You see?

- i. Have you ever experienced this sort of thing with Jesus? He knows you. He loves you. He died for you. His love is broad, it's corporate, it's for all his people, but it's also deeply personal and satisfying.
- E. This is why there's a sort of compulsion that marks these apostles. Did you notice that?
 - 1. It comes out there in [v. 20](#) when they say in response to the Sanhedrin's threats: "[W]e cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." "We don't have a choice. It's coming out whether you want it to or not."
 - a. It's the language of love. "We've been so moved, so struck, we have to speak. We've been captivated by this Christ."
- F. And that's the sort of thing that happens when you meet with him in the Scriptures, when you truly unpack the gospel and all it means for you—your past, your present, your future.
 - 1. You see his love and you fall in love. And in that, you want to listen to and please him rather than men.

Pillar #2: Keep Wise Counsel

- A. Any Christian who really knows his Bible knows that getting alone with God is not enough when it comes to discerning his will and walking in it come what may. We can't do this alone.
 - 1. Jesus, maybe he could, he's the Son of God, okay.
 - 2. But we're fallible men, sinners. And even if we think we discern God's will and all this through the Scriptures and prayer, sometimes we're wrong in our interpretation or application of it.
 - a. We're both finite and fallen creatures.
 - i. So, first, we don't know all things.
 - ii. And, second, even the things we do know we twist to serve ourselves a lot of times.
- B. That's why the author of Proverbs warns famously in [Prov. 18:1](#): "Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment." Or consider how he put it earlier in [Prov. 11:14](#): "Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety."
 - 1. All this to say: we need to seek and keep wise counsel. We need other eyes on it. We have blind spots.
 - a. Here is the idea of checking things with mature Christians—with people who know and love God and know and love you and will speak the truth to you whether you like it or not.

- C. Do you have any of those kinds of people in your life? Who are the people you'd go to when you're facing mounting pressure and making tough decisions? Who will support you and hold you accountable.
1. Don't just think of people who are like you. I'm not here encouraging you to form a clique or an echo chamber. Quite the opposite actually.
 2. We're talking about forming an "advisory board" of sorts.
 - a. These are the voices that you are going to let mean a bit more to you in moments of confusion and challenge because they have a proven track record of walking with Jesus and speaking the truth in love.
 - i. For me, my list includes both people I know and pastors/scholars/ministries I appreciate and follow from afar. I check myself with this "board" and let them correct me a bit. Do you have that? You need that.
- D. I see this hinted at in our text with that little detail there in [v. 19](#). If you noticed it wasn't just Peter who responded to their warning here. We're told that "[Peter and John answered them . . .](#)" They did it together.
1. Everywhere else in [Acts 3-4](#), the speaking, at least so far as Luke records it for us, is done by Peter.
 2. Only here are we told that both "[Peter and John](#)" are answering together.
- E. It's a way of emphasizing I think this essential point.
1. When the heat is turned up. When the dragon's breathing on our neck, we need each other then more than ever. We need wise counsel, support, and accountability.
 2. They could help each other remember what they had both seen and heard, what Christ had called them too. They were stronger together.
 - a. It's not us versus the world. No. We go to mature Christians. We go to solid ministers and ministries. "Help us understand and apply . . . and obey God not men!"
- F. This second pillar dovetails into the third . . .

Pillar #3: Live in Community

- A. Here is more than just the idea of having a smaller circle of wise counsel that you check in with regularly, but the idea of living out your faith in the context of a broader Christian community, the church. Both are equally important.
1. You don't just pick your little group and you're good to go.
 2. You become a vitally connected member of a larger community, using your gifts, sharing burdens, praying for one another, doing life together for Jesus in the place he's put you.

- a. This is yet another way we are helped in our effort to listen to God rather than men.
- B. I've always been struck by Paul's flow of thought in Eph. 4: " ¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love" (vv. 11–16).
- 1. Did you hear it? How are Christians kept from being drowned under every wave of heresy or swept up by every wind of false doctrine?
 - a. It's only as they are vitally connected as members of a healthy and fully functioning body of Christ. That's where the strength is found—"when each part is working properly" (v. 16), as Paul says.
 - b. The implication is plain: if you are trying to stand firm and live for God on your own, without support of a healthy and loving Christian community, you will quickly flounder and fall.
 - i. The devil isolates his meal before he sinks his teeth. For, as Peter puts it, "Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).
- C. We see this at work even with these apostles in Acts 4.
- 1. Did you notice? Where do they go after they're released? What do they do? Look at vv. 23-24: " ²³ When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God"
 - a. Isn't that awesome?! They didn't just go back to their fellow apostles. They went back to their Christian community, their "friends". And they prayed together.
 - b. And the prayer (which we'll look at in more detail next week) brings encouragement and help. It brings them back to Scripture, reminds them of the sovereignty of God, and the mission he's put them on.
 - i. They find help and support from the broader church in their time of great need.
- D. So let me ask you, again: Do you have this? Are you living in community? Are you a vitally connected member of a local church.

1. If you are not you are endangering your own soul. I'm sorry to put it so bluntly, but there is simply no other way for me to put it. It's life together, or no life at all.

Conclusion

- A. So . . . do you want to be the kind of Christian that doesn't flinch in the face of adversity, but stands boldly like Peter and John do here? Do you want to be free from people-pleasing, from the fear of man, from the seduction of false teaching and worldliness?

1. How do you do it?

- a. Get alone with God. Keep Wise Counsel. Live in Community.

- B. You get those three things in place and that will go a long way towards helping you listen to God rather than men and walk in obedience to him whatever the cost.

1. Did you notice? That is the outcome of all of this for these threatened apostles. Look at [v. 31](#): "And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness."

- a. Oh Jesus, may it be so for us in this time and place as well!