

**Series:** Wind in the Sail  
**Title:** Fresh Wind for a New Boldness  
**Text:** Acts 4:1-20  
**Key Word:** Qualities  
**Proposition:** Everyone can receive the Spirit's fresh wind by demonstrating these qualities of boldness.

In 1972, a young Egyptian businessman lost an \$11,000 watch. He was stunned when a garbage man dressed in filthy rags found it and returned it to him. He asked the garbage man why he didn't just keep the watch. The garbage man said, "My Christ told me to be honest until death." The Egyptian businessman later told a reporter: "I didn't know Christ at the time, but I told [the garbage man] that I saw Christ in him. I told [him], 'Because of what you have done and your great example, I will worship the Christ you are worshiping.'"

The business man studied the Bible and grew in his faith. Two years later he visited the garbage man's village outside Cairo, where thousands of people were living in poverty and filth. There was no electricity or running water. Alcohol, drugs, and gambling were pervasive. Men, women, and children sifted through huge mountains of garbage, looking for something of value that could be sold for cash or traded for food. The businessman found himself reflecting on the words of Jesus: "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" He also remembered the words of the apostle Paul: "*We have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things.*" (1 Corinthians 4:13) He and his wife began serving the people's spiritual and material needs. They shared the gospel throughout Egypt, and thousands of people turned to Christ.

In 1978, he was ordained by the Coptic Orthodox Church and became known as Father Sama'an. Now, about 10,000 believers meet in a large cave outside the garbage village. It is the largest church of believers in the Middle East. In May of 2005, a day of prayer was held for Muslims to turn to Christ. More than 20,000 Arab Christians gathered. All this, because one garbage man chose to humbly return a watch that would have made him the richest man in town. One poor man's courageous act of kindness made thousands rich with the love of Jesus.

Peter and John, humble Galilean fishermen stood before the rich and prestigious Hebrew Supreme Court for an act of courageous kindness which resulted in thousands hearing and believing in the claims of Christ. Imagine standing before a scowling, angry, hostile group of leaders. Empathize with what these followers of Christ must have felt as they stood in the center, all eyes fixed negatively on them and the lone beggar Christ had healed. Feel their conflicting emotions which surged within them as they looked into the eyes of the very people who had condemned their beloved Lord to death less than two months ago. One wonders if they remembered that heart wrenching Passover night. They needed the fresh wind of the Spirit for a new boldness.

Indeed the Spirit's fresh wind began to blow within Peter and John filling them with a holy boldness that confounded even their accusers. The Holy Spirit took possession of Peter's mind, saturated his emotions, compelled his will, and energized his body.

Yes, on the day of Pentecost, Peter and the rest of the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. In their worshipful waiting they surrendered their lives and will to the Lord, and opened themselves completely up to be the container and transmitter of the Holy Spirit.

In this hour of trial, Peter and John were given a special surge of this Holy wind so that they could witness to the power of the Resurrected Christ. The Spirit flowed into their sails in order to overcome this pressing problem, this difficult challenge, and yes, a dangerous situation.

Peter and John's new boldness before the Sanhedrin gives us the assurance that we too will be given a "fresh wind" of the Holy Spirit when we attempt to do that which we could not do without an extra surge of power. What is it about our lives which, demands a bold explanation? Friends, God wants to send a "Fresh Wind" of His Spirit into our lives as we dare to do what we could never accomplish on our own strength and insight.

So let's see some qualities of this new boldness produced by the Holy Spirit. **First, we see that the Fresh Wind of the Spirit gives us the ability to risk "acts of kindness."** Peter raised the issue, "*If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness.*" In other words Peter filled with the Holy Spirit called attention to the reason why he believes he and John were on trial, 'helping a sick man.' They were caught being good for Jesus sake.

A couple years ago at Enon we took a group of seventh grade students to a local supermarket parking lot. After we had parked our cars and gathered outside with paper towels and window cleaner in hand, we paused and prayed. “Lord, thank you for this opportunity to show your love and kindness by washing the windshields of our neighbors. Give us courage to not only demonstrate your kindness but also to explain your kindness. In Jesus’ name. Amen. Then we disbursed throughout the parking lot and began washing windshields. After we completed the washing, we placed a connection card under the wiper blade. It said, “We hope your clean windshield enables you to see God’s love among you. Sincerely, Students from Enon United Methodist Church.”

One man approached one of our adults and asked about why we did this and how much it cost. The adult volunteer simply said, “We do this free act of kindness because Jesus loves you. We don’t expect anything in return. A simple thank you will do. The man reached for his wallet, pulled out some cash and handed it to the volunteer who again said, “Sir, it doesn’t cost you a thing. God’s love and kindness can not be earned. It is a free gift.” And the man walked away shaking his head as if he couldn’t understand why anyone would ever offer to do something for another simply out of love. Expressing love and kindness always involves risk, risk that it may not be understood or accepted or embraced. But failing to love, neglecting kindness is even riskier. Someone may never know how much God loves them.

**Next, we see that the Fresh Wind of the Spirit gives us the ability to give a Christ-centered testimony.** With the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter said, *“It is by the name of Jesus of Nazareth...that this man stands before you healed...salvation is found in no one else.”* Before he died Jesus promised his disciples that He would be with them and whatever they asked in His name it would be given to him. The authority and the power which was in Jesus was now delegated and entrusted to the apostles and the church. Jesus told the lame man by the pool, *“Get up, pick up your mat and walk.”* And the man got up and walked. Peter and John saw a lame man by the door of the church and Peter said to him, *“In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”* Matthew, one of the Gospel writers wrote, *“He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.”* Luke, another Gospel writer records the sending of the 72 ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, *“Heal the sick who are there and tell them the Kingdom of God is near you.”* Friends, the Scriptures are quite clear, the power and authority of the Risen Christ was at work through the early church. The Acts of Jesus were continuing through his followers.

They believed in who Jesus said He was? Do we? They saw him do miraculous things in the lives of people. Do we really believe that Jesus actually did the works of God as recorded in the Scriptures? Do we accept that what He did as Jesus of Nazareth he continued to do through the first Christ-followers and the church? Is Jesus ready and willing to do the same today in the next chapters of the

book of Acts being written in our day? Are we open to the possibility that this can be a time of extraordinary testimony and wondrous Spirit filled activity if we dare to believe and pray boldly in Jesus' name?

Peter testified that there is salvation in no one else but Jesus. This is exactly what Jesus came to be and to do for us. Jesus said, "*For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it.*" John 12:47

**Next, we see that the Fresh Wind of the Spirit gives us the ability to practice holy resistance.** (vs 19, 20) Peter and John were confronted with a choice, either to obey God or to obey human beings. The ban against speaking and teaching in the name of Jesus solidified these followers of Jesus and the church's courageous witness in a way that could never have happened with out opposition. Peter and John had to decide whether to be obedient to God or to the Sanhedrin. When we know who we are and what we are to do because of prolonged prayer, we can play to the right audience. When we confront difficulties and obstacles we can deepen our determination to pursue God. Conflict forces us to clarify what we truly believe and what we are willing to die for.

If you find yourself in a relationship or in a life situation requiring a surge of the courageous wind of God's Spirit, calling you to daring acts of kindness, to a Christ-centered testimony, and/or to practice holy resistance, then let me offer a few ways you can raise your sail to catch the courageous wind of God's Spirit.

First, you need a sail. That sail is faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Peter and John had a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, trusting Him for forgiveness and salvation. They loved and trusted Jesus so much that they made him the center of their very lives. This sail of faith enabled them to catch the Wind of God's Spirit. If you have not accepted Christ Jesus as your Savior and Lord, then today is the day for you raise the sail of faith.

Second, you need to open up your sail by admitting you are powerless and fearful without the wind of God's Spirit. The Bible says, "*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, then to God...Come near to God and He will come near to you...humble yourselves before the Lord and He will lift you up.*" (James 4:6-10)

Third, ask for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "*If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more, will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.*" Luke 11:13

Finally, receive the fresh wind of God's Spirit. After Jesus resurrection, Jesus appeared to his followers and breathed on them and said, "*Receive the Holy Spirit.*" (John 20:22) Peter told some religious leaders, "*We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.*" Acts 5:32 Receiving the Holy Spirit is an obedient response to God's invitation to be filled with His Spirit. Following these steps will put the courageous Wind of God's Spirit within you.

