



**Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!** If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions at the end of page 2.

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**SERMON-BASED STUDY GUIDE**  
for the sermon preached on June 13, 2021  
Finding Our Way Forward Week 9 - "The Way of the Worship" - Acts 4:23-31



We are nearing the end of our Finding Way Forward series that has been focusing on the book of Acts. In this message, Pastor Bryan called our attention to the topic of worship and asked us what we feel we have lost these last 15 months. The sermon featured on what Peter and John did after they were released from prison. In the midst of the danger and uncertainty, they gathered with their friends, prayed and asked God for power and courage and they worshipped together. There is much for us to gain from this account as we also try to find our forward as well.

**Group Discussion Questions**

Q - As you reflect back on gathering together on a Sunday, what have been some of the aspects of gathering in worship that you have missed the most?

Q – Bryan focused on Acts 4 when Peter and John were released from jail and warned to never preach the gospel of Jesus again or they would suffer the consequences of imprisonment (or worse). Luke tells us that they went back to “their people” and prayed. Most of us living in this part of our world have never been threatened with imprisonment for sharing our faith, however, can you describe a time where you went back to your “own people” and prayed similarly?

Q – Bryan asked us to take note of these particular verses 4:29-30:

*“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” Acts 4:29-30*

And then Bryan said:

“Notice what they DON’T pray for. They DON’T pray that God would never let this happen again. They DON’T pray for the authorities to change their policies. They DON’T pray for fire to come down from heaven and take out their enemies. (I point that out only because that’s how John used to pray!) They DON’T pray for safety or protection or ease. What they pray for is BOLDNESS – to live and speak and heal even more boldly in the name of Jesus.

Where did they get the courage and faith to pray that way? They got it in WORSHIP. They got it by RE-locating themselves in God – the God who MADE the universe and who RULES the nations. They got it by RE-aligning themselves with God’s purpose – to bring healing and salvation to all people everywhere.”

What can we learn or gain from their prayer for boldness and what are the areas in our lives that we need similar boldness?

Q – We are encouraging each group to take the time and have a conversation on what gathering together in worship looks like for them. Each person, each family might have their own unique perspective and our first step is listening to each other. How are you feeling about gathering together in person on a Sunday and how are you feeling about gathering together in your group in-person? And lastly, how will that impact our group this summer and later this fall?

*(Leader Note: For most groups, there is no decision that needs to be made immediately so take this time to listen, process and then pray together).*

### **Prayer Suggestion**

As we pray, let us consider that the boldness that Peter and John and their friends asked God for wasn’t to gather in-person or to gather on Zoom but rather that they would be faithful witnesses to the world around them. Whether you are gathering in-person or virtually, let us pray similarly – that God would give us a spirit of courage, wisdom, and love to share his hope with those around us.

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### **How to Use These Study Guides:**

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.

- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
  - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
  - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

**Group Leader Support:** Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Pastor Rachel from the Group Life team.