

Unstoppable

Stories from the Book of Acts

Compassion Fatigue:

A state of physical, emotional, and psychological exhaustion caused by prolonged exposure to the trauma and suffering of others.

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Global Compassion Fatigue:

Affects a culture or society large scale, looks like numbness, decreased social empathy, and a collective feeling of powerlessness.

Empathy

A shared emotional experience where you take on someone else's feelings. It is highly immersive and often overwhelming.

"I feel your pain, and now I'm hurting too."

Compassion:

Feeling FOR someone. It has a layer of emotional distance but it's combined with a desire to help. Compassion is objective, warm, supportive, and outward facing.

"I see your pain. I care about you. I want to help ease it."

**When God's People Are
Compassionate And
Courageous, the Church is
UNSTOPPABLE!**



Acts 3:1-3



Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service. As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money.

Spirit-Filled People Notice Hurting People





**Willie James
Jennings**

Before praises go up to God the poor and lame, sick and pained must be seen. This lame man lay in the path toward praise which is also the path of the disciples. This route was established by Jesus. This man is precisely the person Jesus will see and demands his disciples see. Peter and John find themselves without an option: time to see with the eyes of Jesus.

Acts 3:4-6



Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, "Look at us!" The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting some money. But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!"



There is silver and gold, the gifts of the Caesars of this world, and there are the gifts of God. Both carry power and both lead to worship.

**Willie James
Jennings**

Acts 3:7-10



Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man's feet and ankles were instantly healed and strengthened. He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them.

Acts 3:7-10



All the people saw him walking and heard him praising God. When they realized he was the lame beggar they had seen so often at the Beautiful Gate, they were absolutely astounded!

Luke 4:18-19

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord's favor has come."



Acts 4: 1-4



While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning. But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of men who believed now totaled about 5,000.

Sadducees:

- **Small but powerful Jewish religious sect**
- **Believed only the Pentateuch was God's Word**
- **Did NOT believe in the resurrection of the dead**
- **Understood messiah as an ideal rather than a person**
- **Connections and cooperation with Rome**



**Willie James
Jennings**

The holy words that bring consequences are words tied to the concrete liberating actions of God for broken people. Such holy words bring the speakers into direct confrontation with those in power. Jesus not only spoke such words but he was such a word. He was predestined to challenge those in power and confront the powers, spiritual and human. This moment was inevitable. The disciples knew this confrontation was coming.



**Willie James
Jennings**

The struggle against those in power that marked the life and death of Jesus was coming for them as well. The great illusion of followers of Jesus, especially those who imagine themselves leaders, is that they could live a path different from Jesus and his disciples. They believe somehow that they can be loved or at least liked or at least tolerated or even ignored by those with real power in the world.



...For some in power, these disciples speak heresy (Jesus is the power of God) while for others in power, these disciples speak sedition (Jesus is the power).

**Willie James
Jennings**

Acts 4:5-7



The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest. They brought in the two disciples and demanded, "By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?"

Acts 4:8-12



Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of our people, 9 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 Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead.

Acts 4:8-12



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 is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."

Acts 4:13



The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.

Acts 4:14-20



But since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them, there was nothing the council could say. So they ordered Peter and John out of the council chamber and conferred among themselves.

Acts 4:14-20



“What should we do with these men?” they asked each other. “We can’t deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and 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.”

Acts 4:14-20



So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.

But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard."



**Willie James
Jennings**

Indeed there is no such thing as individual boldness for the followers of Jesus. Of course each disciple can and must be bold, but their boldness is always a together boldness, a joined boldness, a boldness born of intimacy. The modern lie of individualism is most powerful when we imagine that boldness comes from within. It does not. It comes from without, from the Spirit of God.

Acts 4:21-22



The council then threatened them further, but they finally let them go because they didn't know how to punish them without starting a riot. For everyone was praising God for this miraculous sign—the healing of a man who had been lame for more than forty years.

Acts 4:29-31



And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.

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Acts 4:32-35



All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

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