

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, June 28th, 2026
Rev. Gerry Gallant

The Fragrance of Fellowship with the Risen Lord
Proper 8
Acts 4:13-22

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Come, let us worship the Lord with reverent joy.
We come to exalt the living God who reigns forever.

Draw near to the One who calls us from darkness into light.
We draw near with open hearts, seeking His presence.

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised!
Let all the earth worship before Him with holy reverence.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Lord God, Almighty Father,
You have established Your church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.
We ask that the very same Spirit who filled Peter and John in the courts of Jerusalem would fill
us this morning.

Open our eyes to behold wondrous things out of Your law.
Grant us ears to hear Your voice,
minds to comprehend Your sovereign truth,
and hearts made ready to obey.

For we ask it in the mighty and matchless name of Jesus.
Amen.

Call to Confession

Our God is merciful and just, yet we often fall short of His perfect will. Let us humbly confess our
sins together, trusting in His readiness to forgive all who turn to Him.

Prayer of Confession

Most merciful God,

we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed.
 We have not loved You with our whole heart,
 nor loved our neighbor as ourselves.

We have been proud where we should have been humble,
 anxious where we should have trusted,
 cold where we should have loved,
 and silent where we should have spoken what is good and true.

Forgive us, we pray.
 Cleanse us from our sin.
 Renew in us a right spirit,
 and lead us in paths of holiness for the honor of Your name.
 Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Brothers and sisters, all who truly repent and trust in Christ are forgiven, accepted, and reconciled to God through His finished work. Thanks be to God.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name
 Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven
 Give us this day our daily bread
 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one
 For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
 Forever and ever, **Amen.**

Hymn #706: "Come, Let Us Sing" (V 1,2,4)

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
 tender and true, tender and true;
 out of the heart of the Father love,
 streaming to me and to you:
 wonderful love, wonderful love
 dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus the Saviour this Gospel to tell
 joyfully came, joyfully came,
 came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
 sharing their sorrow and shame:
 seeking the lost, seeking the lost,
 saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love;

come and abide, come and abide,
 lifting my life till it rises above
 envy and falsehood and pride:
 seeking to be, seeking to be
 lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

Responsive Reading

Psalm 63:1-8

¹O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;
 my soul thirsts for you;
 my flesh faints for you,
 as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

**²So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
 beholding your power and glory.**

³Because your steadfast love is better than life,
 my lips will praise you.

**⁴So I will bless you as long as I live;
 in your name I will lift up my hands.**

⁵My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food,
 and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,

**⁶when I remember you upon my bed,
 and meditate on you in the watches of the night;**

⁷for you have been my help,
 and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.

**⁸My soul clings to you;
 your right hand upholds me.**

Anthem (Music Ministry): "Jesus my Lord, My God, My All"

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Acts 4:13-22

¹³Now 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. ¹⁴But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, ¹⁶saying, '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. ¹⁷But 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.

Sermon

The Scripture we are studying today does something special. It speaks to Christians in a special way. It reminds us of who we are, whose we are, and what we are called to be in a culture that often pressures us toward silence or compromise.

But to fully understand it, we need to remember some of the things we have gone over the past few weeks. Peter and John had gone up to the temple at the hour of prayer. At the gate called Beautiful they encountered a man who was lame from birth; a man well known throughout Jerusalem, a man who had spent forty years being carried and laid daily at that gate to beg for alms.

And in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, that man was instantly and completely healed. He rose, walked, leaped, and praised God. This undeniable miracle drew a great crowd into Solomon’s Portico; everyone was shocked and wondering what had happened.

Peter seized the moment and turned their attention away from himself and the miracle. He preached Christ; crucified by wicked hands, raised by the power of God, and now exalted as the cornerstone. He made it clear that the healing was not by their own power or godliness, but through faith in the risen Jesus.

The message spread: many who heard believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

But the religious authorities were greatly annoyed; especially the Sadducees, who denied any resurrection of the dead. The priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees arrested Peter and John and held them overnight.

The next day they were brought before the Sanhedrin; the full council of rulers, elders, and scribes. This was the highest court in Israel, the same body that had condemned Jesus only weeks earlier. Annas and Caiaphas presided.

These were powerful, politically connected men who maintained their influence by cooperating with Rome. They demanded, ‘By what power or by what name did you do this?’ Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter declared that the healing was by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they had crucified but whom God raised from the dead and then came those clear, exclusive, and uncompromising words in verse 12.

Acts 4:12

¹²And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.'

That declaration still echoes through the centuries and confronts our own age. It is the foundation beneath today's passage. The rulers have heard the truth. They have seen the living evidence in the healed man standing before them.

Now the question presses upon them—and upon every generation, including ours:

What will we do with this Christ we cannot control? And what will we do with His witnesses who refuse to be silenced by human threats?

In the Scripture today, Luke sets before us four great realities that are vital for the modern Christian and Modern church to understand.

First, the world is astonished by true Christlike boldness.

Second, unbelief resists even the clearest evidence of God's work.

Third, the church must obey God rather than men.

And fourth, the kingdom of Christ cannot be stopped by any human power.

And underneath it all, is this glorious and transforming reality: the risen Christ is still with His people, filling ordinary believers with extraordinary courage. This is not ancient history. This is the life of the church in every age—including ours in the face of secular pressures, cultural relativism, and not so subtle calls to soften our witness.

It starts like this:

Acts 4:13-14

¹³Now 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. ¹⁴But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition.

The Sanhedrin was shocked. They were the most formidable religious, political, and academic elite in the land; the seventy-one men representing the highest powers in Israel. Annas, the cunning former high priest and puppet master; Caiaphas, the current high priest; all the high-priestly families; the elders; and the scribes. The same council who had met illegally just week prior in the middle of the night to condemn Jesus. Peter and John should have been trembling in fear before them

Yet Luke records: 'Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John... they were astonished.'

The Greek word for boldness is *parrēsia*.

In classical Greek it described the cherished right of a free citizen to speak openly and candidly in the public assembly, especially the right of freedom of speech.

However, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Luke fills it with deeper meaning: in Biblical Greek this word becomes the fearless, open, plain speech that flows from communion with Christ and the filling of the Holy Spirit. When Peter spoke, it was not arrogant bluster, natural loudness, or fleshly swagger. Instead, it was with courage that was born out of his conviction; with a confidence that does not shrink back even before those who could imprison or punish him.

The Scripture also tells us that the rulers ‘perceived that they were uneducated, common men.’

In Greek the word used is *Agrammatoi*, which translates literally as ‘without letters,’ meaning they lacked the formal rabbinic training in the elite schools of Jerusalem. They had not sat at the feet of the famous teachers like Gamaliel.

The second word they use might sound familiar to you *Idiōtai*, which is the word that we get our word idiot from. However, in the Greek of that time it meant an ordinary laymen, private citizen, or non-professional, which these simple fishermen from rural Galilee surely were.

In the eyes of the religious establishment, these two men were nobodies; they were men without titles, credentials, or institutional pedigree. They had no right, humanly speaking, to speak with such authority in that chamber.

Yet, as we have seen the most educated, powerful men in the room were left speechless, while these ‘unschooled’ fishermen spoke with exegetical precision, theological depth, and scriptural insight.

Luke then tells us, ‘And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.’

What a testimony this is!

Not ‘They recognized that they had impressive academic credentials.’

Not ‘They recognized that they had mastered rhetorical techniques or the latest ministry strategies.’

But simply, ‘They recognized that they had been with Jesus.’

Their speech, their composure, their courage, their steady gaze, their entire bearing reminded the Sanhedrin of the Lord Himself. Peter and John had walked with Jesus for three years. They had listened to His teaching, witnessed His miracles, seen Him crucified, met Him risen, and been filled with His Spirit at Pentecost.

And now they carried on His ministry.

The early Reformers loved this passage. Justus Jonas noted that God deliberately chose unlearned fishermen so that the power would be seen as coming from God alone, not from human wisdom.

John Chrysostom noted that the rulers likely remembered these two men as the same men who were frightened and scattered during the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus.

And now they stood transformed—completely different men. The resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit had changed everything.

To understand this better there is a simple yet powerful illustration that will be easy for many of us to understand.

Sometimes you can tell immediately when someone has been standing near a campfire or BBQ.

Their clothes hold the distinct, unmistakable aroma of wood smoke.

They have not brought the whole fire with them, but the evidence that they were near its heat is undeniable.

This is what happens to every Christian who spends consistent, deliberate time with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We do not become Christ. But we carry the fragrance of Christ with us, we are steadier in our trials, gentler in our interactions with others, braver in our witness, more loving in our homes, and more faithful at work. Not because of our own natural strengths or personality, but because of our nearness to the living Saviour.

This nearness is not reserved for apostles, pastors, ministers, or those with public gifts of the Holy Spirit.

This is for every single member of the church.

Think of the farmer rising before dawn to tend his fields, depending on God for the weather and the harvest.

The welder laboring in the heat of the shop, seeking to work as unto the Lord.

The nurse walking the halls on a night shift, showing compassion to the suffering.

The school teacher preparing lessons and pouring into students.

The retiree facing the limitations and loneliness of age.

The teenager sitting in a high school classroom or scrolling through social media, facing peer pressure to conform.

The office worker in the city, tempted to compromise integrity for advancement.

You may possess no worldly credentials, no impressive platform, no great wealth or social status; and yet your life can carry a spiritual weight, a quiet dignity, and a supernatural reality that the watching world cannot fully explain away.

Why? Because you have been with Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, this raises a searching, personal question: Is this how people see you? Is this how people see this church?

Not that we are clever, successful, respectable, or growing numerically by the world's standards, but that we have been with Jesus; in the reading of His Word, in dependent prayer, in faithful attendance upon the means of grace, in obedience even when costly!

The more time we spend at His feet, the more we will reflect His character. Our neighbors, our families, our coworkers, our fellow citizens, do they recognize that we have been with Jesus, do they see Jesus in us and the way we think, speak and act?

Verse 14 deepens the scene dramatically: 'But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition.'

For over forty years this man had been crippled, a familiar sight at the temple gate. Many in the Sanhedrin had undoubtedly passed him countless times. Now he stood whole—literally standing, no longer begging, no longer helpless—right there in the courtroom as a living, breathing, public testimony.

The Greek word for 'say in opposition' means to contradict or refute. They could not. The promise Jesus gave in the book of Luke as being fulfilled before their eyes.

Luke 21:14-15

¹⁴Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, ¹⁵for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict

Faced with such strong evidence of Christ, we might expect the Sanhedrin to repent and change their ways. However, the rulers send Peter and John outside while they deliberated behind closed doors.

Acts 4:15-18

¹⁵But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, ¹⁶saying, '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. ¹⁷But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.' ¹⁸So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

They ask 'What shall we do with these men?'

Notice what they did *not* say. They did not question whether the miracle happened. They did not deny the facts. They admitted freely, 'For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.'

This is noteworthy. The highest religious court in Israel publicly acknowledges a genuine, public, verifiable miracle—a *gnōston sēmeion*, a notable sign that points beyond itself to the reality of the risen Christ and the dawn of Salvation. Yet they still refused to believe and submit.

This reveals the worldly reality and deep tragedy of unbelief.

Not believing in God is not a logical, rational, or intellectual problem caused by lack of proof or evidence. It is a moral and spiritual heart problem.

The issue with the Sanhedrin was not insufficient proof, they acknowledged the reality of the miracles. The issue was an unwillingness to submit their lives, their positions, and their authority to the lordship of Christ.

The reality is that the miracle threatened their control. The Gospel threatened their system.

John Calvin said it is their own words that condemned them. They saw a manifest work of God yet deliberately chose to oppose Him.

Augustine of Hippo wrote that unbelief is not merely blindness of the eyes but a self-inflicted hardness of the heart.

Even in our culture today many still say, 'If only I had more evidence, I would believe.'

But the Sanhedrin had overwhelming evidence and still rejected the truth. The Pharisees saw miracles. The crowds saw miracles. Even the resurrection, a living Jesus Christ returned from death upon the cross did not persuade everyone.

Fallen humanity suppresses the truth in unrighteousness. The problem is not lack of God's light shining into someone's life; it is their deep love of the darkness.

In our own modern context, people are comfortable with a privatized Jesus who serves as personal inspiration or a moral example but makes no exclusive claims.

But the Christ of Acts 4, the crucified, risen, cornerstone, only Saviour, offends human pride and self esteem.

A faithful church that proclaims salvation in no one else will always face opposition, because it keeps naming the name that exposes sin and offers grace.

The Sanhedrin's strategy was suppression: 'in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.'

They could not even bring themselves to utter the name of 'Jesus.'

They issued a formal gag order. This was the first official attempt to silence Christian preaching, but it is far from the last. Yet it could not succeed, because Christ is building His church.

Peter and John's reply to the Sanhedrin is one of the great confessions in all of Scripture:

Acts 4:19-20

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.'

They spoke respectfully but with unyielding conviction. They placed the entire question in the right courtroom, 'in the sight of God.' not in the court of man.

Human authority is real and ordained by God. Both Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2 call us to honor governing authorities, pray for leaders, and submit in all things lawful.

Authority is a gift from God. But it is specific and limited.

As John Calvin taught so clearly for the persecuted churches of the sixteenth century, and as we still need to hear in the twenty-first: 'We must obey princes and others which are in authority, yet so that they rob not God (who is the chief King, Father, and Lord) of his right and authority.'

This means that when any human authority; nation, province, employer, school, or even church —commands what God forbids or forbids what God commands, Christians must obey God rather than man.

Peter and John could not remain silent even if they were ordered to, because they were eyewitnesses. They had seen the risen Lord. They had heard His teaching. They had witnessed His power. 'We cannot but speak' is a statement of holy, moral necessity. Silence would have been sin; indeed, in fact knowing the truth about God and not speaking is a form of apostasy. True Christian witness is not inventing stories or clever sales techniques. It is simply reporting what we have seen and heard in Christ.

This has direct, practical relevance for each of us. Most of us will never stand before a formal religious court like the Sanhedrin, but every believer faces moments when silence equals compromise with the world instead of obedience to God. It might be in family conversations, workplace discussions, classroom debates, online interactions, or even in cultural pressure around marriage, life, sexuality, and the exclusivity of Christ.

Christian students and youth: do not be ashamed of the Gospel among your peers.

Christian parents: do not outsource the discipleship of your children to a secular culture; instruct them diligently in the fear of the Lord.

Christian workers: maintain Biblical integrity even when it costs.

Christian families: let your homes be outposts of the kingdom.

Each of us need to decide in advance, before the pressure comes, that our conscience is captive to the Word of God. We will obey God regardless of the cost to us.

Why do we need to do this. Because it is the truth of God's Word that serves as a warning to the world, it shows that Jesus is the only way to Salvation. The world and many churches today teach that God's love is acceptance and affirmation. However, the reality is that is not love at all.

Imagine driving down a dark road and discovering a bridge has collapsed, with cars speeding toward disaster. Love and basic humanity would compel you to wave your arms, flash your lights, and shout a warning to prevent people from careening off the bridge to their deaths. Not pulling over so that they can pass by and continue their way without interruption.

If that is true, then how much more should we be doing when that danger is not just physical, what about when the danger is eternal? Because Christ alone saves, proclaiming Him is the most loving thing we can do. Love compels honest and truthful speech.

Remember Peter's own history. This is the man who once denied Christ three times before a servant girl out of fear. Boldness is not native to any of us. It is a gift of God's grace. The same Lord who restored that denier, filled him with the Spirit, and made him bold will strengthen us as well.

The rulers then threatened them further but ultimately are forced to let them go,

Acts 4:21-22

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.

The common people recognized the hand of God and glorified Him. The Sanhedrin's hands were tied by public opinion and fear of unrest with Rome.

Human opposition has real sting, but it is never ultimate. The Sanhedrin had every earthly advantage; power, prestige, institutional authority, Roman backing and Peter and John had none.

Yet the rulers were powerless to stop the advance of the Gospel. The enemies of Christ may bark loudly and inflict real pain on us, but they are on a short sovereign leash.

God binds their fury and uses even their wrath to praise Him. The Gospel advances not because the culture approves, but because the risen Christ is alive, enthroned, and actively building His church.

The age of the healed lame man, that forty-year detail carries profound spiritual comfort for us.

Some of you may feel spiritually lame for a long time; bound by longstanding patterns of sin, fear, bitterness, pride, unbelief, or spiritual coldness. You may whisper, 'It is too late for me. I have been this way too long.'

But this text declares otherwise. No case is too old. No history too tangled. No heart too hard for the sovereign grace of Christ. Long years of bondage only make His mercy shine brighter when He sets you free.

So what are we to take away from the Scripture today.

First, boldness comes from being with Jesus. We need to prioritize daily communion with Christ in the Word and prayer. For the church this means that our strength is not in impressive programs or worldly influence but in nearness to Christ. So, let each of us be devoted to the ordinary means of grace.

Second, the evidence of changed lives is a powerful testimony. Like the healed man standing there, let our transformed marriages, integrity at work, joy in suffering, generosity to the needy, and faithfulness in trials serve as 'notable signs' pointing to Jesus.

Third, we must obey God rather than men in all things. In a world and culture that pressures compromise on so many Biblical issues including the exclusivity of Christ, we need to hold fast with gentleness and conviction. Our ultimate allegiance is to King Jesus, not to this world.

Fourth, opposition cannot ultimately stop the Gospel. Trust God's sovereignty even on difficult days and in difficult situations. He has placed a leash on human power and influence.

Finally, praise God continually for His works. Cultivate corporate and personal gratitude for every conversion, every answer to prayer, every faithful sermon, and every evidence of grace among us.

Remember that the Sanhedrin did not do these things, they did not repent. They did not bow before the cornerstone they had rejected. Even though they could not deny the truths about who Jesus was and what Peter and John had done.

Let none of us be like them!

It is fine if we were the cleverest, most successful, or most culturally relevant church or people.

What matters is that our families, neighbors, coworkers, and community can clearly see the evidence that we have been with Jesus. That our lives carry the fragrance of Christ. That our speech, our courage, our love, and our faithfulness point unmistakably to Him.

Go and be with Jesus in the secret places of your life so that you can stand for Jesus in the public square.

Speak of what you have seen and heard in Him, His death for sinners, His resurrection victory, His sovereign reign. Christ is risen. Christ is reigning. Christ is with His people to the end of the age.

Remember that the world will try to manage, contain, and silence Christ. Do not follow their path. Repent and believe. There is salvation in no one else.

So, let us go from this place with hearts steadied by His promises, eyes lifted to His throne, and lips unsealed to proclaim His name and may this church and its people be known not for worldly achievements, but because we walk with Jesus as the Salt and Light of His Word in this dark and broken world.

Let us pray,

Almighty God,
even though we are scattered throughout a busy and complicated world today,
we ask that You would fill us with a holy courage.
Help us to stand strong against the hidden traps of the devil
and the constant pressures of the culture around us.

Root us so deeply in the truth of Your Word that we will not waver.
Give us the strength to keep going,
to endure through every trial,
and to stay faithful to You until the very end.

In everything we say and do,
may our lives bring true honor and glory to Your name.
Keep our eyes fixed on the future,
until that wonderful day when we finally enter into the eternal joy of heaven
the glorious inheritance that Your only Son, Jesus Christ,
purchased for us at the ultimate cost of His own precious blood.

Amen.

Based on the prayers of John Calvin

Invitation to Offering

Offering Prayer

Closing Hymn #690: "Fight the Good Fight" (V 1,2,4)

Fight the good fight with all your might;
 Christ is your strength, and Christ your right;
 Lay hold on life, and it shall be
 Your joy and crown eternally.

Run the straight race through God's good grace;
 Lift up your eyes, and seek God's face.
 The way of life before you lies;
 Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.

Faint not, nor fear, those arms are near;
 And, changing not, still hold you dear;
 Hope and believe, and you shall find
 Christ is your all: heart, strength and mind.

Pastoral Prayer

Heavenly Father,
 we thank You for the privilege of gathering today in Your presence
 to worship You, to pray, and to hear Your truth.
 We ask that You would sustain us throughout the coming week.
 Keep us steadfast in faith,
 joyful in hope,
 and rooted in love.
 Protect our families,
 guide our steps,
 and grant us opportunities to demonstrate Your grace to a world in need of hope.

As we leave this sanctuary and transition to our time of fellowship,
 we ask Your special blessing upon the food,
 the conversation, and the community we share.

Sanctify our refreshments and sweeten our relationships.
 May our time together strengthen the bonds of our church family,
 that we might encourage one another in love and good deeds.
 We commit all things into Your hands, in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Benediction

Now may the God of all grace,
 who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ,
 equip you with everything good to do His will,
 working in you that which is pleasing in His sight.
 Go in the peace and power of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**