6.21 Group Leader Guide

Acts 4:1-22 | Under Pressure

Main Idea

Pressure does not create our response. It reveals it.

In Acts 4, Peter and John are arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin, the same religious leaders who played a role in Jesus' crucifixion. Just weeks earlier, Peter had denied knowing Jesus in a nearby courtyard. Now, standing before powerful leaders under intense pressure, Peter boldly proclaims the gospel. The difference wasn't Peter's confidence or qualifications. The difference was the presence and power of God at work in him.

Scripture

Acts 4:1-22

Start Here

Icebreaker Question: Tell about a time when you felt pressure to perform, make a decision or respond quickly. What did that experience reveal about you?

Read

Acts 4:1-22

Discuss

Observation Questions

1. What stood out to you most from Sunday's message or from reading Acts 4?
2. Why were Peter and John brought before the Sanhedrin?
3. What differences do you notice between Peter in Acts 4 and Peter during Jesus' trial?

Interpretation Questions

4. Pastor highlighted that Peter had failed publicly just weeks earlier by denying Jesus, yet now stands boldly before the same power structure. What does this teach us about God's ability to redeem our failures?
5. The message emphasized that "pressure doesn't create our response, it reveals our response." Why do you think that's true? What examples have you seen in your own life?

6. Peter's boldness wasn't the result of greater self-confidence. It came from being filled with the Holy Spirit and spending time with God. Why is that distinction important?

Application Questions

7. Are there any places, situations or relationships where you feel God may be inviting you to revisit an area of past failure in order to experience healing, redemption or growth?
8. When pressure rises in your life, what typically comes out? Fear? Anxiety? Anger? Control? Trust? Dependence on God?
9. What practices help you stay connected to God's presence throughout the week?
10. If someone observed your life under pressure right now, what would they say fills your heart?
11. Where is God inviting you to demonstrate boldness in your faith this week?

Leader Note

Some group members may resonate deeply with Peter's story because they carry shame from past mistakes. Remind your group that Peter's failure was not the end of his story. God restored him, empowered him and used him mightily. The same God who redeemed Peter still works in our lives today. Transformation is possible through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Key Takeaways

- God is not finished with us because of our failures.
- Pressure reveals what is already filling our hearts.
- We do not need Peter's confidence. We need Peter's Helper.
- The presence of God transforms ordinary people into bold witnesses.
- Time spent with God shapes how we respond when pressure comes.

Prayer

Spend time praying for one another in these areas:

- Freedom from shame, regret and past failures
- Greater awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence
- Courage to follow Jesus in difficult situations
- Boldness to share the hope of the gospel
- A deeper desire to spend time with God throughout the week

Close by thanking God that our failures do not define us and asking Him to fill us with His Spirit so that what flows out of us under pressure reflects Jesus.