

## **BIBLE STUDY – ACTS Chapter 4 – Leader Notes**

**1. Quotes from Leonard Sweet's book, "Soul Tsunami" on the apathy and hostility toward Christianity at this time in history.**

**"In Sandra Loh's novel, 'Depth Takes a Holiday,' evangelism is equated with sexual abuse and body violation." PP 47-48**

**US News & World Report, Time, Newsweek consistently choose the holiest Christian week of the year to present cover stories raising questions about what can be believed in the gospels and explore whether or not Jesus did what the Bible says he did." P.52**

**New York City schools allowed Muslims in area to pray during Ramadan but allowed no language that talked about Christmas. (Ft. Wayne Newspaper)**

**This opposition, as all of us know, goes on still today. A successful film producer recently advised would-be writers that no movie can succeed unless its characters break at least three of the Ten Commandments! Sadder still, the young people to whom he spoke probably would have had trouble naming three commandments. (LL)**

**Political correctness is probably the greatest danger to Christianity. Apathy ranks right up there as well.**

**2. We may be persecuted but the Word will do its work?**

**3. Peter is filled the Holy Spirit who works through the Word of God that Peter explains and even quotes. In verse 11 Peter is quoting Psalm 118:22.**

**4. Peter and John had not been trained in the rabbinic schools, nor did they hold official positions in recognized religious circles. (CSB) That meant that being with Christ had greatly impacted them. We, too, can have that said about us if we surround ourselves with God's Word. In our devotions, worship and Bible study we will be empowered to speak boldly about our faith.**

**5. Peter being so filled with the Word can't stop witnessing. These verses can be our guide with confronted with persecution.**

**6. A few examples might be...**

**a) They joined with many other Christians to have the unity and power given to believers. In Matthew 18:19 Jesus tells His disciples "Again, truly I**

**tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.”**

**b) They recognized the power of their God.**

**c) They used the Scripture (Psalm 2:1-2) as a way of praying. The Psalms are said to be the Prayer Book of the Bible. Martin Luther loved the Psalms. He used them as his daily prayer book. We have psalms as a part of our worship services. Dietrich Bonhoefer says of prayer, “The child learns to speak because his father speaks to him. He learns the speech of his father. So we learn to speak to God because God has spoken to us and speaks to us. By means of the speech of the Father in heaven His children learn to speak with Him. Repeating God’s own words after Him. God’s speech in Jesus Christ meets us in the Holy Scriptures. (Psalms – The Prayer Book of the Bible – Dietrich Bonhoeffer p. 11)**

**d) They prayed with great faith. God gave them a sign that their prayer was answered. They had not asked for a sign or for a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They had asked for boldness in speaking the word. The boldness was given with the filling of the Spirit. (PBC)**

**7. A few learnings might be...**

**a) Surrounded and infused by the Word—the Word incarnate in Jesus, and spoken by him—they knew Christ’s love and strength, gave it away, and found new life in the grace that flowed directly from God’s heart.**

**b) God gives us property and resources for our neighbor’s benefit. The early Christians fully shared with one another, but not in the same way as the failed communist experiments of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Here there is no compulsion or involvement of the State - only believers are affected, and only goods are shared, not their production. (TLSB)**

**c) And this picture is truly all the more remarkable because all the elements for disharmony and squabbling were present! This congregation, was made up of a vast variety of people, old and young, rich and poor, with many differences in occupations, education, gifts, temperaments, etc. This is food for serious thought for us: We have the same Word, and the same Holy Spirit stands ready and waiting to make us, too, more ready to share our blessings with those who have need of them. (LL)**

**d) Although Levites owned no inherited land in Palestine, these regulations may not have applied to the Levites in other countries (Cyprus). So perhaps Barnabas sold land he owned in Cyprus and brought the proceeds**

to the apostles (v. 37). Or he may have been married, and the land sold may have been from his wife's property. It is also possible that the prohibition against Levite ownership of land in Palestine was no longer observed. (CSB) Barnabas means "encourager."