

# Plugging In

**Series:** "Living in the Power of God"

**Sermon 1:** "Plugging In"

**Scripture:** Acts 4:13-22

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What do table lamps, hair dryers and waffle irons all have in common? Yes, people often use them to get ready for their day. But, more importantly, they won't work very well unless they are plugged in. Believe it or not, I've had a lot of experience with this. There have been many occasions when I have turned something on and then noticed that I forgot a very important step in the process. I forgot to plug it in. Then, once again I'm reminded that there are some things in this life that work much better when they're plugged in.

In the same way, our Christian lives work much better when we are plugged into the power of God. But what does that look like in everyday living? What does it look like when the Holy Spirit is working in and through your life? What does it mean for the Christian to be plugged into the power of God? We're going to look for the answer to that question in the book of Acts. Would you turn to Acts 4:13-22?

In the book Acts, Luke describes the ministry of the New Testament church. As you begin to read the book of Acts it doesn't take very long to clearly see what it was that made this church so effective. It was the power of Holy Spirit working in and through their lives. Luke never leaves us guessing when it comes to what made these people so effective in living out their faith. Luke consistently and unapologetically describes how the people of God were caught up in the power God.

In [Acts 4:13-22](#) we see an example;

*"When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. <sup>14</sup> But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. <sup>15</sup> So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. <sup>16</sup> "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. <sup>17</sup> But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name."*

*<sup>18</sup> Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup> But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! <sup>20</sup> As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."*

*21 After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. 22 For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old."*

Before we explore this particular passage, I would like to take you back to Acts chapter two. In chapter two of Acts, Luke paints this beautiful picture of the New Testament church. This picture helps to give us some key insights into who these people (like Peter and John) were. Luke tells us that these people were devoted to God's word. He tells us that they were committed to supporting each other. He tells us that they prayed together. He tells us that they shared all that they had. What was the result of their commitment to Christ and each other? Luke tells us that their very lives gave praise to God and, because of their witness, other people were saved.

But Luke does not stop short after giving us this description. After Luke describes these people, he begins to give us examples of what God was able to do in and through their lives. It's as if he says to the reader, "This is what happens when people live like this for the Lord." The examples that Luke gives us then show us what it looks like to be plugged into the power of God.

The example that we are going to explore this morning begins in Acts chapter three. At the beginning of chapter three Luke tells us that Peter and John are on their way to the temple. This wasn't something new. Every day they would walk into the temple to pray. So it wasn't a surprise to them when they saw a lame person sitting outside the temple gates and begging for money. It's certain that they had seen this man many times before.

But this time Peter does something different. This time, Peter stops, he looks right into the lame beggar's eyes and he says, "Look at me." He then tells the beggar, "I don't have any money but in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Now the wording here is very important. He says, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." There's power Jesus' name.

After Peter tells him to walk, the Bible says that Peter reached down, took the man by the hand, and the man got up and he walked. Then, as you can imagine, everything suddenly sinks in and the man realizes that he has just been healed. So what does he do next? He creates a huge scene right there in front of everyone. He's leaping, and he's running, and he's shouting and praising God. I'm sure it was a sight to be seen by all.

So let's put ourselves in the scene for a second. Have you ever been in a public place with a lot of people when suddenly someone in the crowd starts to make a lot of noise? What happens? People's curiosity takes over and they start looking around to see what is going on. That is exactly what took place here in scripture. The man starts causing a commotion and that commotion then attracts a huge crowd. Many people in the crowd recognize that this is that lame man who always begs at the temple gate. The difference is that he's not lame any more. This man has now been healed.

So there is a huge crowd of people standing there. Then Peter does something that he would never have done before now. He boldly seizes the opportunity and begins to tell the crowd of people about Jesus. Five thousand men are suddenly persuaded and they all become believers and followers of Jesus Christ.

Word of this event gets back to some of the religious leaders and they're not happy about what they're hearing. So they arrest Peter and John, and they hold them overnight in jail. The next day, they put them on trial before a council of religious leaders called the Sanhedrin council. This council was extremely intimidating. For one thing it was made up of 71 men. There was a high priest who led the meeting. You also had the Sadducees and Pharisees who were "experts" of the law. Then you had the elders on the council who were some of the more respected men who lived in the community.

All of these council members are there for one underlying purpose; to maintain the status quo. They wanted to maintain their influence on others. They wanted to maintain their power and control. That's why they had Peter and John arrested. Too many people are talking about what Peter and John did. Too many people are saying, "Jesus may really have the power to make a difference in our lives."

Now if you look closely into this passage you will notice that the council only asked Peter and John one question, it's found in Acts 4:7, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" Did you notice what they are asking? "By what POWER or by what NAME have you done this?" Peter and John say, "We're living for Jesus. We're letting His power move in and through our lives."

The Sanhedrin council then considers the evidence that they were given about Peter and John and then, in verse 13, they point out three things that they had seen in them. Look closely with me at verse 13. There are three things about Peter and John that the Sanhedrin council makes note of.

*"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13)*

- 1) They saw the boldness of Peter and John.
- 2) The change they saw was not the result of training or education.
- 3) They realized that Peter and John had been with Jesus.

The first thing *The Sanhedrin saw* was the *boldness in Peter and John*.

Peter and John were not wishy-washy when it came to their faith in Jesus. They were confident and passionate about living out their faith in Him. But this wasn't what amazed the Sanhedrin council the most. What amazed them the most was the fact that these men had changed. Members of the Sanhedrin council knew that these men were different than what they had seen before. The Sanhedrin council knew that before now, these men were timid and afraid. But now (they can honestly say) things are different with Peter and

John. Peter and John are now fearless. They're confident. They are boldly claiming the work of the Lord.

These are the type of things that happen when you're plugged into the power of God. The Spirit of God gives you the courage that you need to press through your fears and live out your faith in Him. When God does that in and through your life, there is no doubting the fact that you have been changed. That is what the Sanhedrin council saw. The Sanhedrin council saw that these men were different. They had been changed.

Not only were these men different. The Sanhedrin council quickly determined that

*The change they saw was not the result of training or education.*

Now don't worry; I'm not going to begin preaching against training or education. There is power in education. But God's power is not the same. The power of education is the ability to pass the test. For example, I can construct and articulate a good sermon because I've been educated and I have passed a seminary test. I was trained to write good sermons.

You can get a good education and you can even pass the test but that's not the evidence of God's power. The evidence of God's power is made known through transformed lives. That's what the Sanhedrin council had to admit in verse 16. In verse 16 the Sanhedrin council is talking among themselves and someone says, "You know, we can't deny that a miracle has been done. Everyone in Jerusalem can see that a miracle has been done." What they had to admit is that no one could deny the changing of lives!

We're living in the information age but when it comes to Kingdom of God which one is more important; information or transformation? I would agree that the right information can be very useful but God never intended for His Word and grace to simply be used for information. God gave us His Word and grace so that we can experience His power of transformation. To plug into the power of God means to allow Him to have full access and free reign so that He can bring about His transformation in our lives.

In the Sanhedrin's quest for answers they found two facts that could not be denied. The first one was that the lame man had been healed. They had to admit that everyone in Jerusalem knew that the lame man had been healed. The other fact that they could not deny was that

*Peter and John had been with Jesus.*

Can you imagine what it would have been like for Peter and John to stand before the Sanhedrin having not spent any time with Jesus? In the same way, neither can I imagine standing before any adversity having not spent time with Him.

There is power in the presence of God and the way I live can either invite His presence into my life or resist what He wants to do in and through me. If I invite His presence into my life then I'm given everything I need to live in step with the Spirit of God. My life then becomes

a beacon of hope and praise to Him. In Acts 4:18 the council tries to intimidate Peter and John so they won't speak or teach in the name of Jesus again. Sometimes we are faced with those circumstances where we feel intimidated if we stand up for our Lord. But Peter and John don't yield to intimidation. In verse 19 they say,

*"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard."*  
(Acts 4:19-20)

When you've been with Jesus two things are sure to happen. He is sure to be your source of strength, and He will help you to live a life of praise to God. This morning, I want to invite you to plug into His power through prayer. That's what Peter and John did when the Sanhedrin council finally let them go. They went back to their Christian brothers and sisters and together they prayed for more of Jesus. They asked God to give them more confidence and the peace that only comes from Christ. They asked God to give them more opportunities to share His love with others. They asked God to give them more of His presence so that their attitude and actions can show others who they are living for.

Are you willing to pray for the things they prayed for? Are you willing to ask God to make His presence shine in and through your life? Are you willing to ask God to help you to plug into His power? There are some things in this life that work so much better when they are plugged in. Our Christian lives work so much better when we are plugged into the power of God. That's why I'm inviting you to ask God to give you more of His love.