

INTRO

- What is a word/phrase you are tired of hearing from this pandemic? (e.g. unprecedented, pivot, new normal, zoom)

READ

Acts 4:23-31

REFLECT & RESPOND

As we slowly emerge from this pandemic, we get to demonstrate our resilience (=capacity to withstand and recover quickly from adversity) as a people of faith. In today's text, we see 5 marks of a resilient church as modelled by the early church as they faced their own adversity.

1. An authentic COMMUNITY

v23 says Peter & John returned to their **friends**. The early church was a tight-knit community sharing the ups and downs of life together.

Qu: what are some important practices that build authentic church community?

2. Bold PRAYER

They were also a praying community that asked God for boldness and opportunity in light of the opposition they faced. Notice they didn't ask God for easier circumstances! As Martin Luther says, "prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance. It is laying hold of His willingness."

Qu: What are some bold prayers we as a church should pray in this season?

3. Trust in God's SOVEREIGNTY

Belief in the sovereignty of God is one thing (he's God after all, right?!). It's another thing entirely to trust in God's sovereignty and goodness.

Qu: In what ways does your life reflect a trust, peace and rest in God's sovereignty? Or in what ways does it not?

4. Shaped by SCRIPTURE

By quoting David's Ps 2 as "said by the Holy Spirit" (v25), they showed a high view of Scripture and its crucial role in reshaping reality from God's perspective. We become what we give our attention to. God's Word and truth must become the loudest influence in our lives over the news, social media, and even well-meaning family and friends at times.

Qu: what is your current bible-reading habit?

5. Filled with the SPIRIT

The Spirit's fresh infilling wasn't automatic but in response to their prayer. God's Spirit wants to show up in and through our lives, filling us with boldness to bear witness to the power and beauty of Jesus (like Jesus promised in Acts 1:8).

"Trying to do the Lord's work in your own strength is the most confusing, exhausting, and tedious of all work. But when you are filled with the Holy Spirit, then the ministry of Jesus just flows out of you." — Corrie Ten Boom

Qu: Out of the 5, which one challenges you the most and why?

RESPOND & PRAY

- End with a time of praying bold prayers!
- Ask God's Spirit to fill each one anew to provide courage and strength for what lies ahead.