

August 30/31, 2025  
"Courage Under Fire"  
Pastor Jeff Manion



## **SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.**

### **2025 Focus: 50 Key Truths**

Each Friday, explore a key truth about our Christian faith and how we can live in light of this truth.

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## **Day 1** [Acts 4:32-35](#) | Testify

"With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." Acts 4:33

The apostles continue to testify of Jesus's resurrection. Crucifixion was a gruesome, humiliating death. Anyone hung on a pole was believed to be cursed ([Galatians 3:13](#)). Death on a cross was considered abandonment by God. Jesus's crucifixion appears to be proof that God turned his back on him. But the resurrection changes that narrative. Jesus is alive. He is not a failed messiah. He is the risen king. Many saw Jesus's resurrected body. They walked with him and shared meals. So, they courageously testify to what they have seen and know. Jesus was dead, but now he is alive.

The resurrection is still crucial for our faith. Jesus wasn't simply a good teacher or a visionary. His resurrection is not a hum-drum old story we've heard a million times. Resurrected life walked out of a tomb. The crucified messiah rose as the victorious king. Jesus is alive and working today. This is worth reorienting our whole lives around. Because he is alive, we can have eternal life and that life starts today. His resurrection emboldens us to courageously testify to our faith in Jesus.

**TODAY:** Consider how Jesus's resurrection affects how you live. Does it empower your conversations, your work, your life? Spend time journaling about whether you treat Jesus's resurrection as a cool story or a reality that affects every area of your life. Ask God to help you to live a life powered by the reality of the resurrection of Jesus.

## **Day 2** [Acts 4:1-31](#) | Courage

"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." Acts 4:13

Peter and John meet a lame beggar outside the temple. Peter heals him in Jesus's name. Many see the man jumping and praising God for this miracle. The crowd is astonished. Peter and John testify to those witnesses about Jesus's truth. Threatened by what they hear, the religious leaders throw them in jail. The same religious leaders who had Jesus killed question Peter and John.. They could sentence Peter and John to a similar end. Threats are hurled. Jesus trained them for a moment like this. He promised that the Holy Spirit would provide the right words to say when they are arrested ([Matthew 10:19-20](#)). Empowered by the Holy Spirit, they refuse to stop testifying and healing in the name of Jesus.

We can courageously face trials knowing that God will meet us there. The same Holy Spirit who strengthened the apostles is alive in believers today. We are not promised that everything will go right. Life is like a minefield. We don't know when pain will come. Sudden loss, job insecurity, loneliness, sickness and broken relationships meet us unexpectedly, but we can hold onto one thing. When we are afraid, we live with the confidence that God meets us there. Confidence in God's presence gives us the courage to face our daily trials.

**TODAY:** Acknowledge a situation in which you need to trust God. Pray with open hands, "Father, I am facing \_\_\_\_\_ and I don't know what the future holds. I trust you to meet me there, in the midst of my fear and uncertainty. Help me to see your goodness and feel your peace, no matter the outcome."

## Day 3 [1 Peter 3:13-22](#) | Be Ready

"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." 1 Peter 3:15-16

The apostles are the ideal representatives of the gospel. They witnessed Jesus's death and resurrection. They personally experienced his teaching and miracles. So, Peter encourages suffering Christians throughout the Roman Empire. He calls them to "be prepared to give an answer." He wants them to see persecution, trial, insult and questioning as opportunities to share the good news of Jesus. Peter experienced God's provision and presence as he shared the reason for his hope while under trial. He calls persecuted Christians to be prepared to courageously do the same.

Most of us will never experience physical danger while sharing our faith. However, people are watching us. Curious onlookers observe us and ask questions about how we conduct ourselves. They might not ask us why we follow Jesus. They may pose subtle questions about our integrity at work, our patience with difficult personalities or our confidence in difficult circumstances. These observations are invitations. Opportunities for us to share the hope we have in Jesus.

**TODAY:** Are you equipped to "give the reason for the hope that you have"? Pray for people in your life who don't know Jesus yet. Pray for boldness and opportunities to share the gospel with them. If you want help preparing to share your faith, join us for our next Sharing Your Faith Workshop on September 28. Learn more and register [HERE](#).

## Day 4 [Acts 4:32-35](#) | Word and Deed

"With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them." Acts 4:33-34

Peter and John continue to preach despite threats and persecution. Thousands accept their message and join the body of believers. As the needs increase, so does the generosity. Wherever the gospel is preached and accepted, there appears to be a societal shift. The poor are fed, the wealthy share their abundance and needs are met. The early church is all-in on sharing the gospel and meeting physical needs. They are courageous in word and deed. This marks the authenticity of their faith. James, an apostle and brother of Jesus, later confirms, "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" ([James 2:17](#)).

We live out our faith in both word and deed. These separate things always belong together—the gospel and the results of the gospel. However, we may have a predisposition toward one or the other. We may be uncomfortable verbalizing our faith, but always willing to help meet physical needs. Others can share the love of Jesus freely, but rarely act in faith. Our calling is to commit courageously to both.

**TODAY:** Consider your walk with Jesus. Do you lean more into sharing your faith in word or in deed? If you are vocal about your faith, find one physical need you can meet in someone's life this week. If you have a hard time sharing your faith, find a way to express it to someone this week. A great way to grow in both word and deed is through community with other believers. Small groups are starting soon! Learn more and register [HERE](#).



## Day 5 [Galatians 5:22-23](#) | Question 34: Fruit of the Spirit

**Question:** What is the fruit of the Spirit?

**Answer:** The fruit of the Spirit is a supernatural work of the Spirit that shapes believers' lives into Christlike character as they walk in the Spirit.

**"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."** Galatians 5:22-23

Paul writes to Galatian believers trying to earn God's favor through rule-following rather than walking by the Spirit. He contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit, showing them a completely different way to live. These nine characteristics—love, joy, peace, forbearance (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control—are not human achievements but supernatural fruit the Spirit produces in believers' lives. Paul uses the singular "fruit," indicating these qualities work together as a unified whole in the believer's character. No law could be written against such character traits because they reflect God's nature. The Galatians learn that spiritual maturity comes not through rule-keeping but by yielding to the Spirit's transforming work.

These fruits are produced in our lives when we walk in step with the Spirit and submit to his guidance. As the Spirit transforms us, we grow less hateful and more loving, less cynical and more joyful, less anxious and more at peace, less impatient and more patient. This spiritual formation is a lifelong pursuit empowered by the Holy Spirit, not something immediate or achievable by our own efforts. Transformed lives are the result of actively obeying the Spirit's guidance and his indwelling. The more we live according to his will, the more these Christlike qualities become natural expressions of our hearts.

**TODAY:** Ask the Spirit to show you which fruit needs to grow and submit to walking with the Spirit. Learn more about the Spirit's work in believers' lives in our We Believe document [HERE](#).