

**COMPELLED TO SPEAK**

*“For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:20, NIV)*

I’LL ADMIT IT IF YOU WILL. I think about golf a lot. In fact, it would be reasonable to say that I cannot help myself. It’s there in my brain and I don’t think it’s leaving any time soon.

Habits of the mind are like any other habit. They can be trained and retrained. With commitment of time and discipline, our knowledge is strengthened in any field of study. The spiritual habits of meditation and memorization prove that we can learn and secure God’s truths in our minds over and above where our sinful thoughts would wander.

But our minds can also become affixed to some fact or feeling by a powerful learning experience. For instance, a woman can hardly be expected to forget the birth of her children—the experience and its resulting memory are just too great, made so by an overwhelming combination of pain, relief, and celebration. Some too must add to this the grief of losing that child in birth or shortly after, another episode etched in one’s memory.

The disciples of Jesus saw and heard things they would never forget. Their learning experiences included the teachings of this young rabbi. But more than this, their memories were locked onto what they had seen and felt in the final weeks of Jesus’ earthly ministry: the pictures of his broken body and shed blood delivered through their last Passover meal together, the betrayal of their beloved Lord by one they’d called a partner, the beating and crucifixion of this Son of Man, but also his glorious resurrection and his ascension into heaven.

These were not quaint stories or old histories for these men. They had watched all this in person. They were witnesses to wonder.

But they were not witnesses with only their eyes. They were witnesses who also bore testimony with the words of their mouths. They couldn’t help themselves—the Greek suggests they had no option but to speak of what they’d seen.

At what do we stand amazed? Maybe it should be that these men were compelled to proclaim Jesus while we are often so very quiet in our faith. What has Jesus done for us? It’s the testimony we must offer to the world.

**Opening questions** What occupies your mind in idle moments? What has proved to be a good way for you to secure new thoughts in your brain? What’s something new you’ve been thinking about lately?

**READING** 1 John 1:1-10, Luke 19:37-40, Acts 4:1-22,

**The wonder in the words**

How does 1 John 1 remind us of what Christ has done for us and what we have to share with others? What truth in this passage most grabs your heart today?

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**But of course, we speak**

How does the account of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem remind us of the compelling nature of his role as Lord? What do you personally have to testify to about Jesus’ place in your life?

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**Speaking boldly**

Acts 4 provides the context for our devotional passage today. What motivation can we find here for our own testimony of who Jesus is in the face of opposition?

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