



**The Gathering message notes**

re|ACTS - Week 7 - November 4, 2012 / Paul Jenkins

THE BIG IDEA: If you're \_\_\_\_\_, you won't be  
\_\_\_\_\_. If you're \_\_\_\_\_, it can happen \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Sometimes it's \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Other times it's \_\_\_\_\_.

3. In the best times, it's \_\_\_\_\_.

### The Take-Off

Today we're gonna tackle a pretty big chunk of the 4th chapter and end up focusing most of our time on 1 verse, but in order for us to get to it, we need to walk you through what's happening in the early church right now.

If you remember, Acts 3 included Peter picking up a crippled man, seeing him healed, and then preaching to the people who's mouths were hanging open when the crippled man started walking and jumping.

Acts 4 starts with some religious leaders interrupting the message and putting Peter and John in jail.

The result of that was an "unmanned" altar call that increased the size of the church by 2k to a 5k membership roll.

What we need to see is that the leaders were totally perplexed: they couldn't deny the miracle and they couldn't really validate the resurrection of Jesus that Peter was preaching about.

On every level, what we're preparing to talk about took place in a culture that was hostile to the church and Jesus, and their response wasn't to pray the evil men out of office

They didn't organize movements to track the morality, or lack of it, of the leaders

They tackled the issue by doing something much more lasting and much more influential than politics: they resolved to simply look like Jesus.

And that's what I want to highlight this morning: what can we learn from the way that Peter and John were "Jesus lookalikes" in the events recorded in Acts 4?

Let me give you The Big Idea about lookalikes first, and then we'll tackle 3 levels of lookalikes: **If you're fakin', you won't be mistaken. if you're not, it can happen a lot.**

Now, let's discuss three levels of lookalikes and that silly little rhyme should make a lot more sense as we go along:

First, level one...

#### 1. Sometimes it's coincidental

Who do you look like?

Have you ever been told that you look like a celebrity? Probably so.

In fact, why don't we have a bit of fun? Get in groups quickly of 4 or 5 and decide if anyone in your group has ever been accused of being a celebrity lookalike?

At various times in my life I've been told that I could pass for Jim Carrey, Jeff Foxworthy, Bill Engvall and Mark Harmon. Once I was told I looked like Bradley Cooper, but that person was blind.

Anyway, the biggest thing I want to get across to you about this type of lookalike is that it requires no effort, and doesn't even require a relationship. It's totally unintentional.

It may not even be people looking like people.

Here are a few examples: [Pics of lookalikes]

Now, think about this from a spiritual perspective: sometimes people look like Jesus, but it's purely coincidental, isn't it?

They do Christ-like things but they aren't following Christ.

So, when the Bible challenges us to be like Christ - to literally be "little Christs" (what Christian means) - it doesn't intend for us to just happen to look like him occasionally like a broken clock could still be right 2 times a day.

It may be right, but it's very much still broken.

This type of lookalike - the celebrity lookalike - is the lowest form of being identified with Jesus and it will not make a lasting impact on the lost around us.

#### 2. Other times it's intentional

So, let's take this lookalike thing just a bit deeper. Instead of it just being coincidental, sometimes it's very intentional.

You've seen this. In fact, I'm pretty sure you've mocked this!

Usually this happens when moms dress their children alike, or dating couples dress alike, or entire families dress alike.

Here are a few examples of intentional lookalikes.

Often this level happens early on in a relationship, doesn't it?

Boy meets girl, girl dresses boy in a matching outfit because she thinks it deepens the bond between them.

Mom dresses twins the same when they're little because it's cute, but it's one thing at 2 and another thing at 20.

In the spiritual sense, these are the people who believe that if they simply do what Jesus did, then that's enough.

Looking like Jesus is the same as doing like Jesus.

This resemblance to Jesus is often more external than internal, isn't it?  
It doesn't mean there's no relationship with Jesus; it can just mean that the relationship is just starting to grow.

### 3. In the best times, it's natural

But there is another level of lookalike, isn't there? Lookalikes that aren't coincidental, they aren't really even intentional, but instead are simply natural.

We've all heard people make comments about natural lookalikes, haven't we? "There's no denying he's your son!"  
"Why, she's the spitting image of her mother!"

At this level, the resemblance is much harder to quantify, because sometimes it's about the look, but many times it's about an essence.

Something about how they carry themselves, a similar tone in the voice, a tilting of the head.

Many times, this type of lookalike is the result of time around one another as much as being biologically related.

You've heard that pets and owners often resemble each other? You be the judge. [PET and OWNER PICS]

This is the lookalike that we find in the 13th verse of Acts 4.

It wasn't that Peter and John were wearing the same clothes that Jesus wore, or that the religious leaders thought that they actually physically looked like Jesus.

Nope, this was the highest level of lookalikes, and it was because of an external action driven by an internal passion that reminded them of someone else.

Verse 13 says that it was the courage of Peter and John that got their attention. A quick look at Matthew 7:29 reveals the flashback that the leaders had.

This boldness, courage, authority was the "sameness" that created the natural lookalike.

And the question has to be, "How did they achieve that?"

We know that it wasn't what they KNEW, because they were unschooled men

We know that it wasn't what they DID, because they were ordinary men

Rather, it was WHO THEY'D BEEN WITH (Jesus, v. 13) and WHO WAS IN THEM (the Holy Spirit, v. 8)

At this level, looking like Jesus is the same as being like Jesus.

### The Landing

What does this mean for us? It means that we have only one mission in this culture: look like Jesus. not because we do the things he did, but because we've been with him so much that the very essence of who he is has become ours, too.

How do we do that? Practically (and I know we all hate that because it requires more work than the easy button) it's done by spending time with him in scripture reading, in prayer, and in fellowship with others who are doing those things, too.

What impact does it have on our culture? It gives us courage to stand and speak truth whether our culture (and elected president) is for Jesus or against Jesus.

Literally, if we made sure that we spent enough time with Jesus that we naturally looked like him internally, then the results of an election would lose their importance, wouldn't they?

Not that we don't vote and don't pray. But our focus is on following the one who is higher than any elected official, and living the way he did in front of the very people who reject him will increase the influence of his church more than anything else we could do.

That, church, is the goal of the church. Not to vote for a Republican or a Democrat on one day, but for Jesus everyday. Let's pray.