

To be bold for Jesus takes more than boldness

Acts 4:14-22

18 Oct 2015

Revelation 2:8-11

“...to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: ‘The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.

9 “I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich)

10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer.... [**SAYS JESUS!!**]

Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.’

What makes us admire people with this courage? With the boldness to stand before the threats of governors, before an impending torturous death, standing in the middle of an arena, hearing the roars of anger from the stadium of thousands shouting for their burnt body!!!???

Why do we find this so attractive? Why do we want to be like this?

I think we find this virtue of boldness, to not shrink back, and to speak for Christ attractive, inspirational and contagious because it is a fruit of the Spirit

IS it any wonder that Providence Reformed Baptist Church that our mission tied to 2 Tim 1:6-7

2 Timothy 1:6-7

6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,

7 for God gave us a spirit **not of fear** but of power and love and self-control.

That word **Fear** in the ESV...translated as **Timid** in NIV or **Timidity** in the NASB

In the original language; δειλία deilia, meaning cowardice....

God gave us a Spirit NOT of cowardice!!!

This is why we desire it so much...because one of the gifts of the Spirit is fearlessness, courage, boldness...

And when God is with us, in us, we have these in abundance....

Psalm 23:4

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil... **[WHY??]** for you are with me;

This is why when the Spirit of God possesses the believer, the believer will not shrink back, but will have the faith to stand firm, because God is with Him or Her.

OBSERVATIONS

My mission is to show how God, through His Son, by the power of His Spirit moves in ordinary men, and transforms them from Christ deniers into Christ proclaimers...**into bold witnesses for Jesus, AND** that through this empowerment, this means that through the boldness of men and women, The Lord will make Himself known...yes! That He will be glorified...yes!!!

BUT more so, that God is made known and glorified by the expression of His power in His witnesses!!

Observation 1.

The disciples do not rely on their own power!

They don't rely on their Own strength! Own might! But it is by the power of the Spirit that allow Peter and John to speak with boldness...Do not let pride fight you...it is God by His Spirit ONLY that makes you bold!

Acts 4:8

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders,

Luke then lays out the structure of Peter's sermons for us in the next 4 verses and then in verse 13 writes;

Acts 4:13

13 Now when they **saw the boldness of Peter and John**, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished.

If it is the filling of the Spirit that gave Peter and John boldness, we have no grounds for boasting when we proclaim the gospel of Jesus as though it is by our own power that we speak on behalf of Christ!

But also notice that the Spirit filled them to speak with boldness not about themselves... not about their political agenda or even about their favourite fishing spot...

OBSERVATION 2

They were filled with boldness to proclaim Jesus –

and not Him as a lovely man, not Him as a great teacher, or philosopher – they were emboldened to speak of the exclusivity of Jesus...to GOD!

Try and memorize this verse folks it will do your soul well in the moments when your faith falters, and your mind causes doubt... Rehearse in your minds verse 12

Acts 4:12

12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

You pray for boldness, well if God grants you this, be prepared NOT to sugarcoat the gospel. Do not touch the holy gospel of Jesus if you cannot be entrusted to keep its integrity!!

We are to **guard the good deposit that has been entrusted to us**...That is exactly what Paul said to Timothy. Guard the gospel!!

And do not be ashamed of the gospel...

Romans 1:16-17

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

OBSERVATION 3

The is clarity and simplicity of the gospel message;

The gospel was not blurred by the peripheral distractions. It was the gospel that was preached and the gospel only!!!

- Notice it doesn't say;
- He first built relationships.
- Or, slowly brought the gospel to them.
- Or, gave them 5 points on how to be a better Jew in a Roman society

OBSERVATION 4

Peter preached through the miracle to Jesus Christ...

The miracle was NOT the aim of His evangelism....The proclamation of Jesus was His purpose NOT the healing of the man. **Boldness was needed to preach NOT to heal!!**

What is being marvelled at with Peter and John is their boldness, their courage to stand before the magistrates being ordinary common fisherman, NOT that they are miracle-workers.

OBSERVATION 5

Peter was not made celebrity...nor did they pursue fame!!

Peter was persecuted for what He did and what He preached!!
The world did not love what he had to say...the authorities put him in jail!!

If we want to be a witnesses for Jesus it will cost us...In Luke 14, Jesus reminds that we must count the cost of following Him before we decide to do so...because those who follow Jesus **must be prepared to lose everything** they have to follow Him.

So when you are threatened with everything you own, including your liberty...you must be ready to stand your ground and make real sure that your feet are firmly placed on the rock of salvation.

OBSERVATION 6

And Peter and John sure were;

Peter and John were unshakable and would not stop preaching,

When the authorities threatened Peter to stop preaching in the name of Jesus, Peter had this to say...

Acts 4:19

19 “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge,

20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

This is boldness...! You can threaten us all you like but we are under a higher ruling judge than you mere men, and besides, **we cannot but speak in his name...**

OBSERVATION 7

You know why I think that hey cannot but speak in His name?

Because they smacked of Jesus...They were so in Jesus, and Jesus had so invaded their lives, that **Jesus permeated their lives...**they can't just ignore and forget the author of their salvation!!

Even the council saw this...that's what they thought about Peter and John...it was part of what astounded them...

Acts 4:13

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

How can we ever come to have any boldness as witnesses for Jesus, if we are never with Him? If we don't know Him, or we treat Him like a long-distant uncle, you will not stand your ground for your saviour!!

And notice the disciples stood their ground without retaliation ...which brings us to

OBSERVATION 8

Peter preachers and accepts the consequences...

He doesn't aim to change the establishment, he doesn't aim to conquer governments, he aims to preach the gospel!! And to preach the gospel with boldness!!

Acts 4:29

29 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to **continue to speak your word with all boldness,**
30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

Did you notice in his prayer that he says that he wants God to be God – to look at what the authorities are doing to them, for God to take appropriate action – But the disciples they’re not praying for the change of government or the empowerment to act like superheroes and right the wrongs of the world – they pray to continue **to speak the Word of God with boldness!**

That’s their desire!!

And it was just Peter and John that had this wish...

OBSERVATION 9

They gathered with their friends and discussed their tribulations...

the things happening in their lives. They gathered with the believers...how can you strengthen each other Providence if you have no idea what your brother or sister is up to? Speak to one another, love one another, be in each others lives!

But did you also notice something very peculiar about these two men? Where is John? Verse one begins with **...as THEY were speaking...when they saw the boldness of Peter AND John...Peter AND John answered them...**

Are you are lone ranger? That is not the example of the Jesus...Do you remember when Jesus sends out His 72 disciples to go and preach...do you remember His model...

Luke 10:1

1 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, **two by two**, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.

Do you think that since Peter and John were Jesus' disciples that they adopted their teachers way also? We will see further on in Acts...this parings being sent out...Barnabas and Paul...Paul and Silas...Barnabas and John...Paul and luke...

But now we see...

Acts 4:23-24

23 When they were released, **they went to their friends** and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices **together to God**

The collective of saints. What greater encouragement can you have than when you share your Christian life with other believers and rejoice in your sufferings...

Which is...

OBSERVATION 10

They rejoice TOGETHER in all things even in their tribulations...

24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices **together to God**

We should be in praise and worship always, within every trial and tribulation...and I know its difficult to do...alone...that's why we are commanded to come together for encouragement...

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.

11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

The disciples found their friends, told them what was happening...and then

OBSERVATION 11

The disciples prayed together...

But you know what...it was not just a prayer...they knew exactly who their God is....and what He is like...

- They addressed Him as ... **“Sovereign Lord”** – verse 24
- They acknowledge Him as **“Creator”** - who made heaven and earth. verse 24.
- They acknowledge Him **“Who Speaks through His people by His Spirit”** verse 25
- They acknowledge How He moves even evil for His good **you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. – verse 27-28**
- They acknowledge Him as “Healer” – you will stretch out your hand to heal. Verse 30

And this is the One whom they ask...

grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness

OBSERVATION 12

The Lord comes and answers their prayers...

Acts 4:31

31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and **continued to speak the word of God with boldness.**

CONCLUSION

Would not the greatest eternal blessing be, God granting Providence the boldness to be a witness for Jesus?

There are 12 observations and of course there are more...But let me ask you now...Do you fall short in any of these...would it be wise to

meditate and pray into all these...? You do not need to fall short in any of these to pray for them...

Because let me end by observing my last point...They prayed not for boldness as such...but to “continue” with boldness...Oh that we Providence would be bold IN Christ to pray the same.

Amen