

Boldness To Preach The Gospel

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Most people think that false teaching can go out easily and at once, but the apostles would not do so for one hour. We must show great boldness in exposing false teaching whenever we see its sign.

All of Jerusalem was in an uproar as the ruling body of the Jews had thought executing Jesus would put an end to the difficulty his teachings and popularity was causing among the people. Three days following the burial of Jesus, his body was missing from the tomb and all Jerusalem knew about it. An angel appeared to certain women stating, *“He is not here: for he is risen as he said. Come see the place where the Lord lay.”* (Matt. 28:6). Those doubting Jesus’ resurrection felt the brunt of Christians driving home the argument that the Lord’s death on Calvary was a sacrifice for sin. The deity of Christ consequently was confirmed when the body of Jesus was raised following the third day (Acts 2).

The Jewish court might have expected Peter, James, John, and other disciples to become intimidated by their threats. But I know that that would not be the case anymore, as their former fear would be transformed to daring boldness. Paul says, *“According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.”* (Phil. 1:20). The original language suggests, *“Dare to do, or to bear something terrible or difficult; or to bear oneself boldly, deal boldly.”* These early Christians acted boldly in all their activities to glorify Christ. The Sanhedrin Council threatened Peter and John to cease teaching in the name of Jesus Christ and their reply was, *“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”* (Acts 4:20). If we are to serve Christ today, we must do so with the same boldness that characterized the Christians of the first century.

- **We need boldness to preach to unbelievers.** I have earlier stated that the apostles were on trial before the Sanhedrin Council. The church grew very quickly to 5000 men, not including women and those young people that have reached the age of accountability. I believe that some have estimated the church to be 20000-25000 members at this time. The Sanhedrin was desperate to interrupt such rapid growth, and the two apostles were requested to give an answer to the miracles and consequent growth of the church taking place. Peter said that it was by the authority, or power, of Jesus Christ that all these things have come to pass (Acts 4:10-12). This message of “the only way” was not designed to make them popular; it would require, however, courage and boldness to be effective (Acts 4:13). One of the greatest needs of our day is to

convince people that they are lost in sin (Rom. 3:23; Ezek. 18:20). More and more the pulpit is becoming weaned from the power of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). I also believe that a dose of psychology and other theories are being offered as an alternative while the souls of men are being shortchanged of the distinctive message of Christ (John 14:6; 1 Pet. 4:11; Heb. 4:12). We must point out in a spirit of love and kindness how ugly sin is and that a day of judgment is awaiting those who reject the Gospel message (Mark 16:16; Gal. 1:8-9).

- **We need boldness to expose false teaching.** Rebuking those that are teaching error is not easy; however, Jesus did so when needed. Jesus forcefully stated to the Scribes and Pharisees, *“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”* (Matt. 15:8-9). To some of the same Jews Jesus said, *“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.”* (John 8:44). Jesus did not look the other way when he saw the arrogant Pharisees teaching the doctrines of men for the law of God. The apostles displayed great boldness when dealing with religious error. When some attempted to bind the Old Testament on those of the Christian age, Paul opposed it. *“To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”* (Gal. 2:5). We live in a day of permissiveness and religious tolerance when anything goes. Paul was certainly not of this persuasion and would not give in to religious error. *“no, not for an hour.”* Far too many would remove false teachings and sit back thinking they have finished.
- **We need boldness to preach the whole truth.** There is always the temptation to preach what people want to hear, rather than what they need to hear. Imagine your doctor saying, “all is well,” while your body is full of Malaria or some other deadly disease. We would want our physician to be forthcoming and give a full treatment and procedures that would enhance a full recovery. *“This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: which says to the seers, see not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.”* (Isa. 30:9-10). Israel rejected the prophets and repudiated “right things” while longing for that

which was deceitful. How modern the practices during Isaiah's day resemble the current situation in this century.

Let us exemplify the attitude stated by Paul, "*For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*" (Acts 20:27). It will require great courage to preach the whole truth, especially when we know that some will not always embrace it. We must preach the whole truth on the faith that saves, the one church, baptism for remission of sins, acceptable worship, instrumental music, divorce and remarriage, the use of multiple cups in the worship and those invented it, and a host of other vitally important subjects. We cannot and must not change the Gospel to fit the needs of modern man. The Hebrew writer underscored the fundamental truth, "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*" (Heb. 13:8). The proposition should follow: if Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever should we not conclude that this Word is the same yesterday, today, and forever? The attitude of every Christian should be "*speaking the truth in love.*" (Eph. 4:15). And this is our duty to make sure that it's heard worldwide.

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