

Devotional

Boldness in Action

August 9, 2020

Monday

Read Acts 4:23-31

Before you heard the sermon how would you characterize boldness? Is boldness only something that some people possess? I think we most commonly associate boldness with heroes or heroic acts. A common theme of heroes in literature and comic books is how the hero becomes bold enough to act heroically in the face of great danger. Heroes in real life are also described as bold – they took bold action to save the day.

I think the definition we gave to boldness in Acts 4:23-31 opens up boldness for everyone. Each person in the infant Church in Jerusalem was not praying to be like Spider-Man or Wonder Woman. They were praying for the courage to speak clearly and forthrightly the truth of Jesus Christ. That means they could use who they already were to do the ministry that they felt called to do... they didn't have to suddenly become someone else.

Perhaps having the courage to speak clearly and forthrightly the truth of Jesus does seem like a heroic act to you. That's ok. There are situations in your life where you are not afraid to speak your mind. Notice those times when you speak clearly and forthrightly. What is the difference between those situations and speaking for Jesus? As you notice those times, what is one thing you can do to speak more clearly for Jesus?

Tuesday

Read Psalm 2

In Acts 4, the community cites Psalm 2 in their prayer as they identify the enemies of God and wonder why people would be set against God's Anointed, Jesus Christ. Their enemies are not abstract cultural forces or people far away that they will never meet. Their enemies are people in power in their city. The infant Church does not pray against these enemies.

Here, this group, in the face of immediate danger, does not pray against anyone. They leave to God the judgment of their opponents and their actions. They do not pray for their opponents to be crushed. They also do not pray to be spared or avoid persecution. You'd think not suffering would be a major priority. For them in this moment that is not a primary concern. What are your primary concerns when you pray?

Wednesday

Look at some of or all the passages below

Parrasia is used to describe the speech of Jesus and the disciples several times. Jesus announces his passion "openly" to his disciples (Mark 8:32); "He said to them clearly (without ambiguity)" (John 11:14); "If you are the Christ, tell us frankly" (John 10:24); "The hour is coming when I will not speak to you in parables, but I will speak to you of the Father in full clarity" (John 16:25, 29). The nuances of "publicness, freedom," and even "boldness" are clear: "See, he speaks freely and no one says anything to him" (John 7:26; cf. 7:13).

Summing up his ministry, Jesus testifies to his divine authenticity on the basis of the fact that his testimony has been fulfilled with *παρρησία* (parrasia): "I have spoken to the world publicly (openly). I always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where the Jews meet; I have said nothing in secret" (John 18:20). And now we see in the Book of Acts that speaking the word of God with boldness is a virtue for the community.

Thursday

Read Acts 4:23-31 and Acts 5:12-16

In their prayer, they join their request to speak with all boldness with doing so while God stretches out His hand to heal and as signs and wonders are performed through the name of Jesus. We see immediate results as more and more believers are added to the community and their reputation becomes such that people carry the sick out into the streets so that Peter's shadow might fall upon them as he passes by because they perceive that his mere presence would heal. And Acts 5:16 says that their faith is rewarded for all who were sick or tormented are cured. Their bold message penetrated thousands of hearts in Jerusalem and the surrounding towns.

God has given you and will give you the *παρρησία* (parrasia) to speak the wonderful truth of Jesus whether you are outgoing and have never met a stranger or are meek and mild. To speak with *παρρησία* (parrasia) is not to become the center of attention but to speak in such a way that Jesus is the center of attention for Jesus is the central truth of the world. Go to God in prayer and be a person who is willing to follow Jesus with boldness.

Friday

Please read Acts 4:23-31 and 5:12-16 in preparation for Sunday worship.