

Selfless – Bold In Witness

When we think of making goals and plans, most of the time the plans are self-centered in nature and focus around us:

- I want to lose weight this year.
- I want to eat better this year.
- I want to get closer to the Lord this year.
- I want to save – give - more this year.

Our goals are more about us than anything else.

The mistake and tragedy of our lives as believers is that our goals are more about us than about His plans and will for our lives to glorify Him.

The mindset of many believers is to try to get God to do what they want Him to do for them rather than trying to find God's plan for their life.

- God bless me.
- God help me to make more money with a better job.
- God help me to find happiness and give me what I want.

There are some that when life doesn't deliver to them what they want; they blame God.

- I tried going to church, but I didn't get a better job.
- I tried praying and reading the Bible but I didn't get the answers I wanted.
- I tried God, but it didn't work.

People think God exists for us, when in reality we exist to serve and honor Him!

When Jesus invited people to follow Him, this is what He said: Matt. 16:24

“Whoever wants to be My disciple must **deny themselves** and take up their cross and follow Me.”

- If you are going to be a disciple of Jesus, it's less about you and more about Him.
- That goes against the thinking of today's culture of consumerism and what's in it for me attitudes.

The goal as a believer is to follow our model – Jesus Christ and to live a selfless life seeking how we can not only serve the Lord, but serve those around us.

Bold in Witness:

Jesus had invested in His disciples for three years; telling them that there would come a day when He would die for the sins of the world.

They had a very hard time understanding this because of they didn't grasp the concept of a suffering Savior-Messiah. They understood the Messiah to come as a conquering King.

Jesus went to the cross, suffered a brutal death, was buried and three days later?

What were the disciples doing?

- Do you think they were out preaching boldly – He's coming back, He told us He would return?
- **NO** – John 20:19 “Evening of the first day [Sunday]. **When the doors were locked** where the disciples were, **for fear of the Judean leaders**, Yeshua came and stood in their midst!”
- They were cowering in fear behind locked doors.
- Why? They were afraid of those who were enemies of Jesus.

Why is it that we as believers in Jesus' resurrection are not more bold in witness?

1. Afraid we don't know enough to share with people to explain the plan of salvation.
2. We don't want to offend others or be pushy with faith towards them.
3. The root of why we don't share our faith is because we're afraid:
 - Afraid we don't have all the answers.
 - Afraid we'll look silly.
 - We're behind locked doors of the church, our houses, our lives, locked in fear of what a hostile world will or can do to us if we open our mouths.

Today, I want us to see one event that transformed these fearful disciples into bold witnesses for Christ.

John 20:19 again, “The first day of the week at evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, **Jesus was standing there among them!** Peace be with you, He said.”

- His resurrected appearance changed them from being selfish, timid, afraid, self-centered believers into bold, courageous, evangelists in all that they did.
- In one moment they were hiding behind locked doors and changed to testifying boldly in the streets and everywhere they went.
- Peter, who was the biggest coward by caving into young girls identifying him as a follower of Christ, was now out preaching in front of people who had crucified Jesus: “REPENT AND BE BAPTISED FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF YOUR SINS.”
- You couldn’t shut them up now – they are arrested, put in jail and still wouldn’t stop testifying about Jesus.
- They were questioned by Annas, the High Priest, by what power and in whose authority are you speaking and doing these things? Acts 4:6-7.

Peter, who was once the greatest of the cowards, replied:

Acts 4:8-10 “Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the Man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead.”

Peter could declare this because the tomb was empty, Christ was risen, death – hell and the grave were defeated, he who was once timid in spirit is now bold to witness.

What do we learn from this?

WE SPEAK BOLDY ABOUT WHAT WE BELIEVE DEEPLY

- When you experience a great restaurant, a good pair of shoes, a powerful movie or how your team scored, – you share it
- Have you experienced Jesus’ resurrection life in your life?
- Have you encountered that He is alive and you now have resurrection life living in you?
- Christ’s life in Peter and the others consumed them, they could not stop talking about Him being alive and what difference He was making in their life.
- Acts 4:20 “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”

**If you are not speaking boldly about your faith in Jesus as Savior,
do you really believe it deeply?**

Peter says, let me tell you about the powerful name of Jesus:

Acts 4:12-13 “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved!

The members of the council were **amazed** when **they saw the boldness of Peter and John**, for they could see that they were **ordinary men** with **no special training in the Scriptures**. They also recognized them as men who had **been with Jesus**.”

HOW AMAZED ARE PEOPLE BY YOUR BOLDNESS FOR CHRIST?

On a scale of 1 to 10 – how amazed are people by your boldness?

Unmoved 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Amazed

I don't think any of us could put 10, that's Jesus and we are not Him.

- You may not be a 1 – that's nothing at all.
- If you are **7-8**, you are there, you are probably not alone right now, but have someone with you today that you invited from work, school or where you do life.
- Perhaps you talked to 3-4 people this week and you are active in making Him known to folks.
- Maybe you have a list of people you are praying for: Mom, dad, kids, relatives, friends, work associates.
- You have a heart for people and you care about their eternal destiny and welfare.

How do you know if you're low on the scale?

Maybe obvious:

- You've never invited anybody to church at all,
- You've never prayed for anyone to receive Christ.
- You've never put forth any effort to get out of your comfort zone to help anyone know Christ.

- You're not even sure if the people at work know you're a Christian because you've hidden your faith so well so you can blend in and not be singled out. Like a chameleon. A light hidden is useless.

Are people amazed by your boldness as a witness for Christ, or are they shocked by your apathy in caring for others?

Mark 8:34-38 “Jesus called the crowd, along with His disciples, and said to them, If anyone wants to follow after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and keep following Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the sake of the Gospel will save it.

For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?

For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this unfaithful and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

We are called as His disciples to be the salt and light in the world, to go and proclaim His goodness, love and mercy to the world.

How do we grow in boldness?

1. Spend more time with Jesus.

- We're praying, listening to Him, spending time in communication, reading His Word.

Acts 4:13 “They were amazed by the disciple's boldness...for they could see that they were **ordinary men** with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men **who had been with Jesus.**”

- Ordinary/unlearned = *idiotes/id-ee-o-tace* = “**idiot/ignoramus, rude/unlearned**”
- If you've ever felt like an idiot or unqualified; you are a perfect candidate for the Lord to use.
- He loves to use **ordinary** people who have been with Jesus.
- Being in regular fellowship with Jesus through His Word, Prayer, Worship qualifies and equips us to be useful for His purposes.

2. Ask God to **Make you bold.**

Acts 4:21, 24,29-31

“So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been don. So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them.

Now, Lord, look on their threats and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your Holy Servant Jesus.

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

Boldness - “Outspokenness, unreserved utterance, freedom of speech, with frankness, cheerful courage - the opposite of cowardice, timidity or fear.”

There are many in other countries that are faced with death if they share their faith in Jesus.

How would you react – would you be behind locked doors afraid you were next?

“O God, keep me safe today, protect me from harm and bad people...me, me, me,”

These disciples, under the potential threat of death, prayed for:

Acts 4:29 “Now, Lord, look on their threats and grant to Your servants that with all boldness we may speak Your word, ...

- Not: “Lord, keep us safe, or protect us, but give us boldness even though they are threatening us, make us even more bold in what we do.”

III: Story of Dean of College who resigned due to refusal to allow Chick Fil A on campus.

When we spend time with Jesus we grow in boldness & when we ask for boldness, He strengthens our faith.

We begin to realign and realize our faith and know that people will spend somewhere in eternity.

Either in the presence of God in heaven or in the horror of eternal damnation in hell.

I'm not a big fan of preaching a hell-fire and brimstone type of message; but at the same time I have to be true to Scripture by telling you there is a very real place the Bible calls hell – where Jesus Himself says there is weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, a place of torment, outer darkness, a place of damnation.

- Indescribable suffering occurring day and night forever and ever.
- Words cannot convey the horror and excruciation of hell.

The Bible says there is another place that words also cannot adequately describe the glory, the beauty, the splendor, majesty of the dwelling place of God called heaven.

1Cor. 2:9 “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him.”

Rev. 21:1-5 “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared...I heard a loud shout from the Throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among His people! He will live with them, and they will be His people. God Himself will be with them.

He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain, all these things are gone forever. And the One sitting on the throne said...It is finished! I AM the Alpha and the Omega – the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of water of life. All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.”

WE SPEAK BOLDLY ABOUT THAT WHICH WE BELIEVE DEEPLY!

A timid, fearful faith will not reach a lost, hurting, broken and dying world!

3. Ask God for the **baptism in the Holy Spirit** to give you boldness.

Acts4:31 “When they had prayed, the place where they were gathered was shaken. And **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the Word of God with boldness.**”

- The place of intimidation, fear and accusation became the place of confrontation with their accusers and they were changed into fearless representatives of the Kingdom of God.

Stop being fearful and hiding behind your doors because you may not witness correctly, or you may tell them and they reject you, what if I share and they don't want to hear it?

Question: What if you don't tell them, invite them, ask them?

There are people in your life that do not know the grace of Jesus, it is not too late for you to reach out to them and tell them. One day it will be too late!

**BE COURAGEOUS AND BOLD IN FAITH AND SPEAK IN THE NAME OF
JESUS BECAUSE WE SPEAK BOLDLY ABOUT WHAT WE BELIEVE DEEPLY**