

May 2004: Boldness

by Aaron Greenway

“I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”

These are the words of the Apostle Paul who boldly proclaimed His faith in Christ and His Gospel. His declaration has caused me to wonder something. How is it that the Church of Jesus Christ of the 21st century has lost her boldness. Why are some believers so afraid to share with people the Good News? I am convinced it has to do with different factors.

The first question I have to ask is, “Where does boldness come from?” It comes from the Lord, yes! But how do we get it? Peter and John prayed that they would receive more boldness after having been threatened by the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:29). God told Joshua to be “courageous” (Joshua 1:9). If courage is so important, why don’t we have it? I believe there are things we can do to have boldness in our lives.

The first reason I believe that Christians are “ashamed” is because they depend too much on the approval of man. Jesus told us not to worry about what man can do to our bodies. We are not out to be accepted by people. Mel Gibson had to learn that quickly or he would never have made the “Passion” movie. People in their sinful nature are not going to accept Christ, because He is a threat to their way of life. This is why Mr. Gibson got the reaction he did. So if we cannot reach people anyway, why preach?

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Because it is “the power of God”. That is the assurance we have, that while we are not out to win fans, we know that God will bring people to Himself by His power. That is the key. As long as we have this confidence, we will be okay.

The second reason I believe that we are not bold is because our own relationship with the Lord is not what it should be. On many occasions, this has been the reason why I have closed my mouth, because that particular day I had been out of fellowship with the Lord. Being in a right relationship with God, knowing His mercy and love, being in an intimate relationship with Him is what gives us the confidence to preach the truth. And instead of getting right with the Lord so He can use us, we don't say anything. This is why Paul could be as bold as he was. In Romans 1:9 he says, “God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the Gospel of his Son, is my witness.” The work of the Spirit in our lives to draw us closer to the Lord is going to be the source of courage we need.

The last reason we keep quiet is because we are ashamed, not necessarily of the Gospel, but because we don't believe God has forgiven us of our past. Quite possibly, this has been my greatest stumbling block. The Enemy lies to us saying, “You are not worthy to serve the Lord.” It is time to send the Accuser to God. The Word of God tells us that it does not depend on our goodness, but on His. If we had to depend on our abilities, our strength, our record to give us credibility in the Kingdom, we would be in real trouble. Paul would have been as well. He murdered Christians for sport.

We don't have to be ashamed either. God can and will give us courage if we cry out for it. God is willing to strengthen us if we are willing to draw closer to Him. For us to make God real to others, He has to be real to us first. People's lives are at stake. Staying quiet will never win the lost. Faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17). How can they hear the message if we are still wrestling with whether or not we are going to tell them?