

11. Developing Boldness as a Ministry Skill

In Acts 4:31, we read, “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.” In this verse, we see that the Christians were sharing the Word of God with boldness. This resulted in continuing growth in the church. What was it that made it possible for the early church to speak the Word of God with boldness? Why is it that many Christians do not have that same boldness today and how do we develop that boldness. That will be the focus of our topic today.

The example of Peter shows us both what causes Christians to be fearful and also what causes Christians to be able to share the Word of God with boldness. We will look at several key incidents in Peter’s life to understand how we develop boldness. In Mark 14:29, Peter told the Lord that he would be bold in speaking for Christ. That verse says, “But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I.”

In Luke 22:31-34, we read, “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.’ But he said to Him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.’ Then He said, ‘I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.’” At this point, Peter said he was ready to die for Christ.

The next incident we will look at happened a few hours later. John 18:10-11 says, “Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, ‘Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?’” Luke 22:54-55 tells us what happened a few minutes later, “Then took they him, and led *him*, and brought him into the high priest’s house. And Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.” During the night, Luke 22:56-61 tells us that Peter denied Christ three times. Verse 62 says, “And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.”

Peter felt like such a failure, because he had denied Christ three times, that he decided to go back to fishing. In fact, John 21:1-3 tells us that six of the other disciples also went fishing with Peter. Christ had to minister to Peter by letting him know three times that Peter could still be used by the Lord to minister to others. John 21:15-17 says, “So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Tend My sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep.’”

Then, Luke 24:45-49 gives us some key things that Christ taught the disciples in order for them to

be able to witness with boldness. Those verses say, “And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then, He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.’”

In these verses, we see several key principles that we need to develop in developing spiritual leaders if they are going to serve the Lord with boldness. To serve the Lord with boldness, Christians must:

- ◆ understand and comprehend the Scriptures
- ◆ understand the importance of the death and resurrection of Christ
- ◆ understand that their message is both repentance from sin and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ
- ◆ understand that they must depend on the Holy Spirit, rather than themselves, for power and boldness

First, developing leaders must understand and comprehend the Scriptures if they are going to serve the Lord with boldness. We saw, in an earlier topic, that Christ made sure the disciples knew what they were to say and what they were to do when He sent them out two-by-two. Luke 9:2 says, “He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” Then, Luke 9:6 tells us what happened, “So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.” In the same way, we must make certain that developing spiritual leaders understand and comprehend the Scriptures if they are going to serve the Lord with boldness.

Second, developing leaders must understand the importance of the death and resurrection of Christ if they are going to serve the Lord with boldness. Peter demonstrated that he understood the importance of the death and resurrection in Acts 4:8-10. “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.’” Peter was depending on the power of the resurrected Christ. Acts 4:13 says, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”

Third, if they are going to serve the Lord with boldness, developing leaders must understand that their message is both repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 20:20-21 says, “‘How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.’” When Christians lack boldness, they will often only share half of the message even when they share the Gospel. They will fail to include the need for repentance toward God, because they are afraid to talk about the need to turn from sin and turn back to God. Developing spiritual leaders must understand that they need to deal with sin, and the need for forgiveness, if they are going to minister to others with boldness.

Fourth, developing leaders must depend on the Holy Spirit, rather than themselves, for power and boldness if they are going to serve the Lord with boldness. In John 18:10-11, Peter was as bold as a lion when He was standing next to Christ. However, when Peter depended on himself and followed from afar off, he ended up denying Christ three times. In Acts 2:14-40, Acts 4:8-13, Acts 4:31, and many other passages, we see that, as Peter and the other disciples depended on the Holy Spirit for power and boldness, they spoke the Word of God with boldness. Acts 4:8 begins, “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them...” In Acts 4:29-31, we read that the disciples prayed for boldness. Acts 4:31b says, “...and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” In Ephesians 6:18-20, Paul says, “Pray...that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

We see that there are at least four things that we show developing leaders how to apply daily in their lives if they are going to serve the Lord with boldness:

- we show them how we have learned to depend on Christ to help us understand and comprehend the Scriptures
- we show them by our continuing emphasis on the death and resurrection of Christ, as we minister, that this must also be their emphasis if they want to serve the Lord with boldness
- we show them, as we share the Gospel with others, that we focus on both the need for repentance toward God as well as faith in our Lord Jesus Christ
- we show them, by our example, that we are depending on the Holy Spirit for power and boldness, not our own strength, to minister

The Lord will use our ministry greatly as we show others how to serve the Lord with boldness. They will learn to serve the Lord with boldness as they see that we are depending on the Holy Spirit to give us boldness in our ministry. May the Lord richly bless you as you help others develop boldness in their ministry for the Lord.