

Acts week 12

In the boldness of faith

23 And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 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, 25 who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? 26 The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.' Psalms 2:1-2;

When I read these verses I could picture Satan walking back and forth in the crowd as he was portrayed in the passion. Gleeful at the scourging of Jesus, and ever more so at the crucifixion.

We left off last time with John and Peter being taken in front of the rulers, elders, and teachers being ordered to not preach Jesus' name any more. **Back to Verse 21; 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 done.**

Aren't large groups with one mind sometimes awesome? We are talking here about people spiritually connecting, fellowship. You can walk into a room sometimes and feel a bit out of place but then Jesus' name comes up or God is mentioned and you feel a sigh of relief, like I can talk their language. I deeply appreciate clean language and no falsities, no hidden agendas, no I'm better than all of you here type attitudes, but Christians talking about the things God is doing either in their lives or their ministries. Sharing the hope.

Verses 27-30; 27 "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. 29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak word, Your 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

The leaders made their threats while they had John and Peter separated from the crowd. The crowd was of one mind, so much so the rulers were afraid of them. When it comes from the side of evil, as we are seeing in regard to the lack of boldness of the religious leaders there is a fear. It seems much like a pack of wild dogs, one or two may be too frightened to attack, but put a pack together and now they are bold, but here the believers outnumbered the leaders with numbers too large to shout down, they had hoped the apostles would not return to preach in the open again and if they did not then there was a hope that everyone would forget and things would return to the corruption and normalcy it had been. It's still the same in politics today. There are those who when they have the camera or the mic. and a few cronies around they talk

up a big story, even lie, because those around them are coaxing them on, they find strength in those who buy into the lie. So they get away with just about everything they seek to do or say, it fits the narrative. Grace was not the narrative with the leaders, and actually, practicing the law was not either, establishing rules and control was the desire. Not much has changed.

However, here in our verse it is not that way with the people, those who are sharing the truth seek not to retaliate or harm but share in all sincerity and boldness the truth of Jesus. If they could win over the hearts of those set on destroying them that would be the greater gain, and for this reason Peter and John do not surrender nor quit. Picture yourself walking into a dark cave with no weapon, you know there is a bear or a lion in the cave, but you continue to walk forward with a boldness as though you cannot be injured or killed, that's Peter and John. The numbers of believers sent the leaders into a panic and gave them fear.

Boldness lived out.

How could John and Peter be so bold and just speak out what could have seen them put to death?

Mark 13:11; “But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.

John 21:12-19; 12 But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls.

Faith, the open window

Daniel 6:7; “All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.

Daniel 6:10; Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

Daniel could have very simply closed his windows and pulled the drapes but he chose not to, he put his life into the hands of God and trusted Him to protect him. So, Daniel gets reported to the

king by those who seek to destroy him. Daniel gets thrown into the lion's den and King Darius, not wanting anything to happen to Daniel, went home that night and fasted and prayed for Daniel's safety. In the morning he went straight to the lion's den and called out to **Daniel, 6:20-21, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever!**

"Daniel was cast into "the den of lions" (Dan 6:16,17). Some recent discoveries among the ruins of Babylon have brought to light the fact that the practice of punishing offenders against the law by throwing them into a den of lions was common."¹

This faith showed to those who were powerful and thought themselves to be above all others surrendered to the idea of God almighty being able to control situations. We find it here with Darius and then with Nebuchadnezzar. Sometimes the faith of others in many different situations demonstrates God's power and renders a faith stronger than the terrors of this world.

Psalms 1:1-2; Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

Joshua 1:8; "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

It seems so simple when we read it on a page as we do now. Just Believe. Yet there has been a stumbling block put before us, we call it sin, and it lays half hidden in the open field where on the other side of the field is an orchard full of fruit and shade. Oh, if we could only be there, but the path is a difficult way and the stumbling block will trick us up, we must not look down, searching for that which brings demise, but instead look up for the guidance of Him who makes way the path that leads to righteousness.

31 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.

The prayer of verse 29 was answered, **"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak word,"**

Where do you think our society's boldness stands today? I have found many to believe and trust and know God, but are timid about speaking up and out. I use the word timid because I cannot really say too fearful or weak, I truly believe many want to speak up but have been conditioned in our society to fear ridicule and harm. I ask of you, when you are out looking for ways to open the conversation, try this, "The other day as I was reading my bible," or "the other night at bible study somebody said," and here you can tell a story of how what you read gave you the words you would use later. The scripture somehow matched your needs. **and they spoke the word of**

¹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/Dictionary/viewTopic.cfm?topic=ET0001015,IT0002640,VT0000708>

God with boldness. There are many out there waiting on someone else to open the conversation, seeking to meet and hear others opinions and blessings, fellowshiping in public.

Sharing in All Things

32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. 33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. 34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

36 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

The collection of money and selling of items and land was not mandatory but it was done so in faith for the needs of the early church. William McDonald in your Believers Bible Commentary states this was not “Christian Communism,” these people were not forced or tricked, they realized how powerful God was having seen the miracles and heard the word they anxiously wanted to be a part of the new Church.

The identification of Barnabas is interesting as being noted as a Levite because the Levites usually owned no land, but here he clearly had land of which he sold and turned over the money.

“Do not pray for easy lives,” wrote Phillips Brooks. “Pray to be stronger men and women. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks.” That is the way the early Christians prayed, and that is the way God’s people should pray today.”²

Again, we are reminded of Augustine’s wise words, “Pray as though everything depends on God, and work as though everything depended on you.”³

² Wiersbe, Warren W.. Be Dynamic (Acts 1-12): Experience the Power of God's People (The BE Series Commentary) (p. 68). David C Cook. Kindle Edition.

³ Wiersbe, Warren W.. Be Dynamic (Acts 1-12): Experience the Power of God's People (The BE Series Commentary) (p. 69). David C Cook. Kindle Edition.