

Speaking With Boldness

Boldness

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It was either last Feast or the Feast before last when a gentleman gave me a particular instruction regarding speaking. He encouraged me that I should pray for boldness when I speak. If I remember it correctly, it was more generally for all men who speak in God's church that we all pray for boldness when we speak. And this has a good scriptural example, so please turn with me to Acts 4. We are going to look at verses 29 through 31. The speakers here are noted as the believers with whom Peter and John returned to after they were questioned by the council of priests and elders. And we are actually breaking into a prayer of these people as they lifted their voices together.

Acts 4:29-31 "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.

But what does it mean to speak with boldness and what gives us the ability to do so? Today, we are going to investigate this ability and look at some examples of boldness in the Bible to try to answer these questions.

Boldness has several definitions when you search it out online, and *Merriam-Webster* has my favorite. It defines boldness as "the quality or state of being bold." That is real helpful. Vocabulary.com breaks it down into three definitions. It describes boldness first, as the trait of being willing to undertake things that involve risk or danger. Second, it describes it as impudent aggressiveness. And third, the quality of standing out strongly and distinctly.

Now, when speaking of boldness, the Bible adds further understanding to the quality by what it relates boldness to. In Proverbs 28:1, "the righteous are as bold as a lion." The traits of the lion give us an explanation that being bold is related to fearlessness, courage, and confidence. We can see even more clarification to being bold in the word that is translated here, what it is translated from. The word is *Strong's* #982, *batach*. And according to the definition I found in my study Bible, it is, "a verb indicating to trust, to be confident. It expresses the feeling of safety and security that is felt when one can rely on someone or something else."

The word *batach* is broken into three Hebrew letters, bet, tet, and het. (Hope I did that right.) The author of the article, "What is the Original Hebrew Word Picture of *Batach*," states the following. "Picture *batach*, trust, as bet, house representing the family within, tet, basket, to contain or surround, and het, wall, unshakable and everlasting like Mount Zion." See, the author of the article had taken where these letters were used in other scriptural words, and that is how he gave that word picture there. This definition and the breakdown are very interesting considering boldness in Scripture. It differs from what we heard from the world's definitions. Those definitions did not relate boldness to trust. Well, maybe trust in oneself, but this breakdown and this definition relates trust to someone or something else. Even the lions shown in Psalm 104:21 seek their food from God.

So, who comes to mind? For someone who speaks boldly in the Bible, surely David is a prime example, especially within his speech leading up to and during the battle with Goliath. In his bold speaking in I Samuel 17, does David not have his trust in God? In his recourse to Saul, he exclaimed that the same God who delivered him from the mouth of the lion, from the bear, would also deliver him from the hand of the Philistine.

What about Elijah during the Mount Carmel victory? Before the fire came down, he stated on two occasions that it was God and His word that allowed the event to take place. And then we have Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the response to King Nebuchadnezzar. And we are going to go to this one in Daniel 3, but hold your place here in Acts because we are going to come back. So we are going to go to Daniel 3. And we are going to read verses 16 through 18.

Daniel 3:16-18 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

In these examples, the situation the individuals find themselves in is usually a perilous one. They could have easily hidden from view and not put themselves at risk in the case of David and Goliath. They could have kept silent and not pushed the issue with such aggressiveness as in the case with Elijah at Mount Carmel. They could have not stood out and instead compromised with the orders of idolatry in the case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. In their bold speaking, however, their trust was not in themselves. They all relied on and trusted in God. He was the source of their courage. It was in His ability to save that David trusted. It was in His powerful word that Elijah trusted. And it was in His sovereignty and plan that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusted.

Back in Acts 4 now. I found it interesting what the first part of the prayer was about that the people spoke of. So let us turn back there in case you were not already back. We are going to read just ahead, verses 27 and 28.

Acts 4:27-28 "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 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done."

Why do they link back to this event in their prayer for boldness? Can we find an example of speaking boldness within it? Peter and John had just came back from being arrested and questioned. And in their prayer for boldness, they think back to the time Jesus was arrested and questioned. In most of the accounts of Jesus' responses to those trying Him, He either kept silent or as it says, answered them not a word. This follows the prophecy in Isaiah 53:7 where it states, "yet He opened not His mouth." But from the responses Jesus did give, we can see great boldness, and I believe this is why it was on the minds of those who were lifting their voices in prayer.

See, similar to the other examples we saw earlier, the situation in which Jesus found Himself was extremely terrifying. He was facing those who wanted Him dead. As the prayer of those believers earlier stated, they were all gathered against Him together. What did He say to His accusers? We have our example in Matthew 26:64, and we should have time to go there. This is Jesus' response to Caiaphas putting Him under oath, asking Him if He was the Christ, the Son of God. Do you see boldness in this response?

Matthew 26:64 Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

This account is also recorded in Mark 14:62 and Luke 22:69. In His response, we have our answers for how to speak with boldness and what gives us the ability to do so. First, Jesus did not back down in providing the answer that was surely going to lead to those wanting to kill Him. Instead, He answered in truth. He expounded on this truth: that He was the Christ, the Son of God. He expounded upon it by prophesying what He will do in the future, since He is the Christ, the Son of God. With this response, He was as good as dead to them. In the account from Matthew, it shows Caiaphas tearing his clothes, and then they all agreed together that He should be put to death.

What courage this took from our Savior! He knew that those who were listening, how they would take His answer, but yet He spoke the truth anyways. Now, in His response, we also see what gave Jesus the ability to speak the truth with boldness. Just as the definition we heard earlier stated, He was without fear. He was confident and secure. He had trust that what He spoke would come to fruition. He had trust in His Father. He trusted that His Father would raise Him from the dead. He had trust because He knew the Father on a higher level than any other. His prayers to the Father are recorded multiple times leading up to this moment. And He had asked His Father for help. He knew the cup He was going to drink. He knew the pain He was going to feel. But even still, He had courage to face it because He knew His Father's will was perfect.

And if you think back to the prayer in Acts, we see this confirmed in how those who lifted their voice described the event. They exclaimed that what happened was already determined by the hand and purpose of God the Father. Jesus trusted this plan. This trust gave Him the ability to speak with boldness, and by His words, we have our perfect example of how we can also speak with boldness.

Now more than likely, you are not going to face a ten-foot giant or a horde of pagan prophets or even a fiery furnace. But there will be situations in your life that will require you to speak with boldness. Maybe it will be within requesting days off for the holy days. Maybe it will be in a situation where you are in a job interview and you really need the money and the job, yet you have to boldly proclaim you are not going to work on the Sabbath. Maybe it will occur in defending a family member or a fellow member of God's church.

See, in all of these situations that require us to speak boldly, we risk something. We may have to push the agenda, and we will most likely stand out. But when we find ourselves in a trying time, when we are facing our accusers, when we are going to speak on God's behalf, we should speak with courage, confidence, and security. We should speak the truth boldly. Like those believers in Acts 4, we should pray for this ability to do so because God will give it, as you saw, with His Holy Spirit. Like David, we should be unafraid of the risk that it will bring. Like Elijah, we should be certain that God will perform mighty works in us. And like Shadrach and Meshach and Abednego, we should have no fear of the outcome because we trust in our sovereign Creator.

In the breakdown of the word *batach* that we heard earlier, if you put it in reverse, we can see the word picturing an everlasting wall that surrounds those who are in the house. This house contains those who are of the Family of God. We are hedged about by the separating Power who is everlasting. This is where our boldness derives from. We must have a correct relationship with the Father and the Son. We must know Them and Their words to speak the truth, and we must know Them to be able to trust Them. Then we can be as bold as the Lion of Judah.