

BOLDNESS!

„Speaking boldly [courageously, fearlessly] for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders“ Acts 14:3

If we do not boldly proclaim and declare things, they will not happen. Again and again in the New Testament we read that the apostles preached the word of God with great openness, fearlessness and boldness. In Proverbs 28:1 it says: “The righteous are as bold as a lion.” The bolder we are and the more fearlessly we proclaim God’s word, the more signs and wonders we will experience. Many people do not preach certain truths because they are afraid of people, afraid of criticism, afraid nothing will happen. Fear of man will prove to be a snare, the Bible says.

The disciples did not preach to please people, they proclaimed God’s word so that people would be saved, healed and set free. The responses were generally twofold; there was persecution and there were signs and wonders. If we boldly acknowledge God and his word, including in public, God will acknowledge and endorse us. If we are publicly ashamed of Jesus and his word, we will not experience his power and glory. If we want to please people more than the Holy Spirit, he will withdraw. When was the last time you heard a prophecy or a message in tongues and an interpretation in your church? When was the last time people prayed for the sick in your church? When did you last hear a sermon about the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit? Paul says he is not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God, and that he did not only come with words but with a demonstration of the Spirit and power (1 Cor 2:4–5).

In Acts 4:29 the whole church came together and they all prayed to God – which means they probably all prayed in tongues – that God would give them great courage, fearlessness and boldness to proclaim his word and that God would stretch out his hand so that signs and wonders would happen. We then read that the apostles preached fearlessly and with great power (v. 33) and that many signs and wonders happened among the people.

In order for God to be able to do something, the apostles first had to do something, namely declare. They preached that Jesus is risen and is the same today and doing the same things as when he was still among them. They boldly proclaimed that Jesus saves, heals and baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire. They placed their hands on the sick, as Jesus had commanded them, and Jesus himself worked with them and through them. “The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people” Acts 5:12.

The word of God in our mouths works just like the staff in Moses’ hand. But first Moses had to stretch out his arm, with the staff in his hand, before a miracle happened.

He probably did not feel any power at all, but he obeyed God. We first have to speak out, preach and proclaim God’s word with our mouth so that the power of God can take effect. We have to obey first and place our hands on the sick in faith. The bolder we are, the more God backs us up.

OK, that may work in Africa, but not here in our country, someone might say. That is not true! God’s word is as effective here as it is in Africa. It just takes courage to proclaim the word of God. The body of Christ needs courage, boldness and fearlessness! We should pray for that, as that is what the church in Acts did. Paul asked the church in Ephesus to pray for him so that he would proclaim the word of God with boldness and speak with courage and fearlessness, as he should (Eph. 6:19–20). If Paul prayed for that, we should do the same. The apostles were no diplomats wanting to please everyone. Their message must have pleased God, as he confirmed it with demonstrations of the Spirit and of power. Stephen did great signs and wonders among the people. He preached so undiplomatically that there was gnashing of teeth and stones were thrown and he paid with his life. Should Stephen have preached somewhat more mildly in order to save his life? Did he have to say things like: “*You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: you always resist the Holy Spirit! ... And now you have betrayed and murdered him*”? “*When [they] heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him ... dragged him out of the city and began to stone him*” Acts 7:51–52, 54, 58.

“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” 2. Tim 3:12. Maybe there are no stones being thrown where we are, but words can also kill. If you put yourself completely on God’s side, not everyone will be your friend, but God will be on your side. The world and lukewarm Christians might criticize you. That is the price of experiencing God’s power and glory. When the apostles were threatened and told not to preach in the name of Jesus, Peter said: “*We must obey God rather than human beings!*” Acts 5:29.

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” Joshua 1:9.

A word from God through Kenneth Copeland:

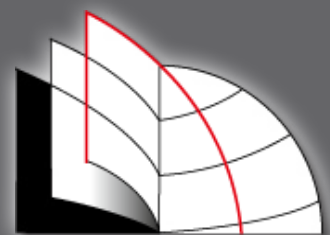
„And I require and request of you to stand and to worship me in public and worship me wherever you go. Be unashamed to praise me and I’ll be unashamed to do my signs and wonders and the miracles of God shall follow you. People shall run up to you and fall down on their knees in front of you and say ‘My God, My God, I’m convicted of my sin’ and you will bring them into the kingdom of God for the revival of the land is at hand.“

Ekkehard Hornburg

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