

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Minot, ND
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The Acts of the Apostles

The Ministry of the Gospel in a Messy Church & Conflictive World

Acts 4:23-31

After the Religious Leaders' confrontation, Peter and John went to their friends and reported what had happened. Together with their friends, they prayed together. As they prayed, they prayed that God would look upon them. However, take note of what they 'did not' pray. They did not ask God to punish the Religious Leaders. They did not ask God to erase the threats of the Religious Leaders either. They did not even ask for protection against the threats. All they prayed for was for God to look over them and to give them the gift of – boldness! Indeed, their reaction to the Religious Leaders' command to “not speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus” is to pray for boldness in speaking and teaching in the name of Jesus.

Now, keep in mind that boldness is not arrogance. To be bold is also not to be rude or to be a jerk. Boldness is not spitting in someone's face. Boldness is not being radical. Boldness is not being all worked up in a triggered frenzy – having anger or tears or drama. NO! Too often, Christians go the way of boldness but

do so in the way of being arrogant jerks or emotionally unhinged psychopaths!

So, what is this boldness that the Christians pray for? The boldness that the Christians pray for is to speak frankly, freely, confidently, and plainly with assurance and cheer. Also, it is important to take note that they pray for boldness to speak what? They pray for boldness not to speak politics, opinions, or cultural ideas but the Word of God.

There is more to consider, too; their prayer for boldness is coming from a context where they consider themselves 'slaves/servants' of God. As *δουλοῖς* they bow in humility before God and beg for boldness not to enforce their will but to simply 'speak' God's Word.

Perhaps we can learn a lot from these early Christians – who did not see themselves as anything more than mere slaves/servants of God. And as far as their 'strategy'? They prayed for simple boldness in speaking the Word. May we be faithful, yet bold, slaves of the Lord!