

3 Ways You Can Demonstrate Christ's Bold Love

My husband, Steve, sat in a room speaking to a group of pastors. When he asked these pastors how many of them had been persecuted for their faith, laughter started around the room, and every hand went up. While ministering in a part of the world where Christ is not known, for these pastors, suffering for Jesus was the norm.

The early church was no stranger to persecution either; persecution was its norm as well. Peter and John were arrested for preaching about Jesus and healing a lame man. Imagine being arrested for healing someone! Peter and John were threatened before they were released that they must stop speaking about Jesus. On their release, they went to their church community and shared with them everything God had done. Then, these early believers hit their knees and began praying (Acts 4).

What struck me about their prayer is that they did not pray for protection. Instead of praying to be kept safer, they prayed, "Now, Lord, look on their threats and grant that Your servants may speak Your word with great boldness, by stretching out Your hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be performed in the name of Your holy Son Jesus" (Acts 4:29-30).

This really hit me. If I were them, I would have hit my knees, but my prayer would have sounded something like, "Jesus, please protect me. Keep me safe. Don't let any harm come to me."

I admit it. I'm a chicken, and I don't like pain. You likely are too! We beg God to keep us safe and to work miracles on our behalf. What if we're not praying for the right thing?

What if the prayer that God loves to answer is, “Lord, make me bold to tell others about Your love. Work through me so that others will see Your power in action and be drawn to You as their Savior.”

As I’ve been thinking about all this and studying this chapter in Acts, I believe, now more than ever, Jesus is looking for people to rise up with boldness to tell others about Him. Here’s the thing: Sometimes we rise up with boldness to tell others our political views or our opinions or health issues, but when it comes to actually introducing others to Jesus and His love, we go silent. We might feel afraid of rejection from others. We might feel afraid that we’ll lose our status or position at work. We might be afraid of being politically incorrect. Whatever the reason, the one thing we need to tell others boldly about is Christ’s love!

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–Boldly offer to pray with your neighbors or friends who are hurting. I have actually never been turned down when asking others if I can pray for them. I’ve asked people on airplanes and in restaurants. The people I’ve asked, even if they don’t believe in God, are always willing to have me pray. I’ve never had anyone say, “No. don’t pray for me.” Now, that might happen someday, but so far it’s never happened. Now, don’t get the wrong idea; I need to be bolder about doing this as well. I shudder when I think of how many opportunities I’ve missed because I was too wrapped up in my own stuff to offer to pray for others. Thankfully, there is always grace.

My challenge to you is this: Offer to pray for someone this week who is not a believer. Pray. Right there. On the spot.

–Boldly identify yourself as a Jesus-follower. Now, please be sensitive. If you’ve been known to be a jerk at work, take some time to get right with the Lord before you share the news that you’re a Jesus-follower. Do it at the right time and in

the right place. A friend of mine recently was celebrated for working at her company for 30 years. At the celebration, she was able to share that she was a Jesus-follower and that it was her faith in God that had given her the wisdom to do her job well. You might not have an opportunity like that, but you might be able to slip it into the conversation at lunch, when you take a co-worker to dinner or when you're with one of the moms whose child plays with your child on a sports team.

My challenge to you is this: Ask God to open the conversation for you and ask Him to make you bold. Trust me; He loves to answer that prayer.

—Boldly offer grace to others. Jesus was most known for the grace He offered others. He had the least amount of patience with those who were critical. Follow His example, and when others mess up, offer grace. Demonstrate to them the grace you've received from Christ.

My challenge to you is this: This week, when someone messes up, instead of being critical, offer grace. When we offer others grace, we are most like Jesus. {eoa}

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