

#BringYourBible: When My Daughter Was Persecuted for Sharing Christ

"Mommy, can I take my Bible to school today?" Nine words that brought both delight and concern to my heart. Delight that my then-10-year-old darling would love Jesus enough to take Him to school with her in leather-bound form. Concern because I knew that love would breed persecution, which I wasn't sure she was yet ready to fully understand.

So I did what any good parent would do. I said, "Of course you can take your Bible to school. Remember, Jesus' words are in red." Then I prayed for the prophetic youngster and sent her off to the public school system with a homemade lunch in one hand and the Word of God in the other. Knowing I wouldn't be there to protect her—and not knowing what devil she might face when she opened the Good Book during the after-school care program—I committed her to the Lord's covering and believed for the best.

Do you know what happened? (This is the cool part.) Within 15 minutes of the school bell ringing, she had assembled a small youth group that was quite intent on hearing her declare what Jesus had to say about attitudes, money and other issues they deal with on an everyday basis. One little boy, she later told me, was even taking notes. It was a bona fide Bible study—and then it happened. One of the teenaged counselors barged in on the peaceful gathering, shrieking, "Put that book away! You might offend somebody!"

Not fazed by the unwelcome interruption, my bold young daughter continued to read. Rebellious? No, the head of the program, also a Christian, had already given her express permission to read the Bible to her curious playmates. Indeed,

it was the devil-inspired teenaged counselor who was rebelling against authority by insisting the Holy Ghost campus meeting come to an abrupt end. So my daughter continued reading ... until she had to use the restroom. When she returned, the counselor had put her Bible away. So what did my little angel do? Of course, she pulled it back out and kept right on reading. Hallelujah!

My daughter didn't truly understand what was happening, but the Spirit of God in her saw it for what it was and empowered her to speak the Word boldly. That's just what we should be doing in the face of opposition to our inclusion of Jesus in everyday public life. It seems to me that far too many people are concerned that Christians are offending co-workers, classmates and others with the gospel of the kingdom, while relatively few seem concerned about offending Christians with their secular humanism, New Age philosophies and potty mouths.

Christian living demands prayers for boldness and emboldened prayers. It demands speaking and acting boldly. Like Peter and John, people should be able to see our boldness and marvel, knowing that we have been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). They should be able to recognize the Lion of the tribe of Judah in us. If you look up variants of "bold" in your handy-dandy concordance, you will quickly discover that the use of words like "bold," "boldly" and "boldness" in the King James Version are almost always—yes, almost always—used in conjunction with on-fire believers.

Take the apostle Paul, for example. He prayed that when he opened his mouth he would speak forth *boldly* (Eph. 6:19). He preached *boldly* at Damascus in the Name of Jesus (Acts 9:27). He spoke *boldly* in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Greeks who wanted to kill him (Acts 9:28-29). He spoke *boldly* in the synagogue even though the people spoke evil about Jesus (Acts 19:8). In fact, Paul "spoke *boldly*" everywhere he went. Even when he was an ambassador in bonds he spoke *boldly* (Eph. 6:20). Do you see the pattern yet?

The righteous are as bold as a lion—and you are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Jesus expects you to be bold for Him rather than compromising with a compromised world. In fact, Jesus said, “Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in Heaven” (Matt. 10:33). But let’s take it a few steps beyond Christianity 101 and the confession of faith in the face of disbelief and get back to the subject of persecution for a moment. Don’t stop reading now or you’ll miss out on a blessing. After all, the Bible says if you are persecuted for righteousness’ sake you are blessed, right (Matt. 5:10)?

If you are going to pick up your cross and follow Jesus, you are going to find yourself pushing against a wall built by religion, humanism and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. If you are really going to make a difference in this world for Jesus rather than befriending the world, then you are going to get to experience the blessings that follow persecution. If you are going to fulfill your destiny, folks, you are going to have to share in Christ’s sufferings. I know this isn’t a pleasant thought, but if all I did were write about Christian living as a flowery bed of ease I’d have to answer to Jesus for it on the day of reckoning.

In the years ahead I believe Christians will see greater persecution, especially if we continue to allow principalities and powers to invade and occupy our land through false religions. Although I’m quite sure the suffering won’t compare to that of our brothers and sisters in many other nations who are beheaded for speaking the Word boldly, it may be unsettling for some who are accustomed to the American gospel.

So why not do as the Apostle Paul did? Why not do as the disciples in the book of Acts did? Why not begin praying for boldness so that we can confront the issues that have eroded our American values? Why not gather among our own company, lift up our voice to God with one accord, and pray to the Lord God who made heaven and Earth and the sea and all that is in

them? Why not call on God in the face of wickedness rising up and rulers gathering together against the Lord and His Christ? Why not pray that the Lord would grant us boldness that we may speak His Word and that signs and wonders may be done by the Name of His holy child Jesus (Acts 4)?

I challenge you today to begin praying for boldness. I believe then we'd see a shaking. Then we'd be overflowing with the power of the Holy Ghost. Then we would speak the Word boldly as we should. Take it from my daughter. She continued to carry her Bible in her backpack and defends her right to do so. Oh, out of the mouths of babes ...