

What Happens When You Refuse to Bow Down to a Godless, Deceptive Culture

A man was healed. A testimony was given. God was glorified.

And for their effort, Peter and John were sent to jail.

After healing a lame beggar in Acts 3, Peter and John have the opportunity to share the message of Jesus with the astonished crowd that gathered. Peter reminds the crowd of their deplorable treatment of Jesus, but then declares in verse 16 ...

“And His name, by faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. And faith which comes through Him has given him perfect health in your presence.”

Because of their declarations of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the religious leadership opted to lock Peter and John up for the night. But not before, as chapter 4, verse 4 goes on to state, many more believed, and the numbers of believers increased.

To make a long story short, the next day, Peter and John were taken before the Sanhedrin, where they proceeded to continue to proclaim the name of Jesus, going as far as to declare that Jesus is “‘the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:11-12).

Upon their release, Peter and John reported to their people (believers) what had transpired. What happened next was an impromptu prayer meeting, in which the people 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).

These verses are an oft overlooked, yet very good lesson for all of us. In the contentious social climate in which we live, this is a model prayer of boldness in the face of threats and terror, a boldness that refuses to be bullied by the arrogance of men, popular opinion and political correctness. The Greek word for *boldness* that we see here is *parresia*, which means “freedom to speak.”

Just as Peter and John testified in the face of ugly threats by religious leaders, we are to stand up in the face of a godless and deceptive culture and respond to their accusations and threats with *signs and wonders* ().

Another interesting point is the word *behold* (). This word does not mean to simply “look at,” but “*God, You look at them and fix Your gaze upon them.*” How many times have you seen a child back down from some form of folly simply because of the disapproving gaze of a parent? This is basically saying, “God, stare ’em down!”

The message of the gospel is a tough message. While, yes, it is a message of love and hope in Christ, it is also a message of self-sacrifice, self-denial and isolation (*though none go with me, still I will follow*). These days, there is no shortage of those who would try to intimidate us into silence and isolation. For Christians to speak the truth, we face the backlash of public scorn and ridicule, threats from governmental entities (such as the IRS), or threats of physical violence from groups, organizations and religions that would terrorize us.

Yet we are not to cower in the face of opposition. We are not to remain silent during such threats. Recently, I wrote a book called ***The Unraveling of America***. I didn’t write it because I

was trying to make friends. I wrote it because the truth had to be told, regardless of how hard a truth that was.

So why should any of us take such risks? Why should we declare the truth? Because we are called to be salt and light. We are called to a life of faith, for it is only by faith that we can please God (Heb. 11:6). But we can also rest assured that, when we speak the truth, and live according to God's direction, He shows up. Look at verse 31 of Acts 4: "When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness."

God is not going to leave you hanging.

In Him is truth. In Him is power. In Him there is no lack.

That is Good News for me and you! {eoa}

Ron Phillips is senior pastor of Abba's House in Chattanooga, Tenn. His weekly television and daily radio programs are broadcast worldwide.

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