

# The Brown Street Beacon

*"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,*

*holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)*



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## Boldness

**A**re you a bold Christian? Do you have the courage to stand up for Jesus in the midst of those who care little about spiritual matters? Are you brave enough to tell the lost of their terrible condition, or to hold up the moral standard of our Lord when you are around the ungodly of our society? Boldness is what it takes in order to truly be a good Christian and a faithful child of God.

In the first chapter of 2 Peter, Peter tells us that we can be partakers of the divine nature (ver. 4). But in order to do that, we are told that we must escape the corruption that is in the world through lust and add certain qualities and characteristics to our faith. One thing that Peter says we must add to our faith is *virtue* (ver. 5). The Greek word for virtue has two basic ideas. The first idea is that of excellence of any kind, and so the A.S.V. translated the term "*moral excellence.*" That is certainly an adequate translation of the Greek word, but the problem with it is that it makes it a general term which would encompass the rest of the things that Peter says we must add to our faith. In classical Greek, the term referred to "*manliness, courage, and fortitude.*" This is generally understood to be the meaning here. What good is a faith for which we are not courageous enough to defend? We must not only believe, but we must have the boldness to live by our beliefs, and we must have the courage to disseminate its tenets to an unbelieving society. In Acts 4 we find out why Peter was qualified to talk about virtue. In Jerusalem Peter and the other apostles went about preaching the resurrection of Christ. That grieved the Jewish leaders who hated Jesus, so they threw the apostles in jail. The next day they brought forth Peter and John and set them in the midst of the high priest and his kindred, and asked them how it was that they healed the impotent man. (The previous day Peter and John healed a man who was born crippled.) Peter responded by telling them the last thing they wanted to hear: "*Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole*" (Acts 4:10). He further told them that salvation could only be secured by this same Jesus (ver. 12). Surely the leaders of Israel did not like what they heard. They crucified Jesus to get rid of Him, and yet through the apostles, His name lives on. One thing, however, was evident to them, that is, the boldness of Peter and John. Notice what we read in verse 13.

*"Now when they saw the **boldness** of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled..."*

Peter and John could have forsaken Jesus as they stood in the midst of enemies. They could have retracted all that they had preached about Jesus and His resurrection. But they had too much courage to do that. They knew the truth about the Lord and they had the courage to proclaim it.

Paul was a man with virtue. He bravely preached the gospel and lived the life of a Christian during his pilgrimage on earth. His work at Corinth is an example of this. Corinth was a city filled with immorality and idolatry. When Paul went to preach Christ to the inhabitants of this ungodly city, he went all alone. In 1 Corinthians 2:3 he tells the Corinthians that he was with them *“in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.”* Still, Paul had the courage to preach the gospel to them, and as a result a local church was established at Corinth. Souls were saved because of the boldness of Paul.

The example of Paul reminds us that boldness does not mean the absence of fear. Paul was afraid, but he did not let his fear stop him from performing his duty as an apostle of Christ and as a Christian. Actually, it doesn't take too much boldness to do something we are not afraid to do. True courage is demonstrated when we are filled with a certain amount of fear and nervousness in regard to a certain endeavor, yet we do it anyway. This was the case with Paul. What about us? Are you afraid at times to preach the gospel? You shouldn't be ashamed if the answer is yes. The important question is will you preach the gospel in those situations? If so, you have boldness. When someone gossips in your presence, are you a little reluctant to tell them to stop, afraid that they might think poorly of you, or say something nasty to you? Well that's probably normal. The question is will you tell that person to stop gossiping in spite of your fear? If so, that's boldness. Paul was able to overcome his fear and do what was right. That is what it is going to take for us to be the kind of Christians that Jesus wants us to be.

Just what is it that produces boldness in us anyway? One thing that leads to boldness is conviction. Peter and John stood up in the midst of enemies and preached Christ because they had great faith. Their conviction compelled them to do so. Once when Jesus asked the apostles if they would leave him, Peter said, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God”* (John 6:68-69). Paul, too, stood his ground for Christ and preached the gospel because of his conviction (2 Corinthians 4:13). What level of conviction do you have? Do you truly believe in Jesus and His gospel? If so, it will be revealed by your boldness.

*Don*