

# MINISTER'S MESSAGE

SUNDAY APRIL 21 2024

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## “The Bold and the Beautiful”

Based on Acts 4:5-12

Have you ever watched the daytime drama “The Bold and the Beautiful?” It’s the kind of show that you can turn on after lunch, and while sipping a cup of tea from your comfortable you can imagine yourself as the strong and powerful characters of the soap opera without ever having to leave your living room.

- You are the sexy and forthright entrepreneur, out to show the world your vision is just as good as everyone else’s...
- You are the handsome, daring, dashing, and slightly reckless hero who swoons the ladies by night, and saves the world by day...
- You are the stern yet compassionate matriarch of the family who won’t take ‘no’ for an answer...

In the plotline we imagine ourselves living bold lives like the actors, while in reality we may be far more meek minded and less strong willed than we would like.

This is what the lesson from Acts shows us today. Peter and John being bold in their conversation with religious

authorities and beautiful in their trust in the Holy Spirit.

- But are they reckless?
- Are they strategic?
- Or are they simply bold and beautiful for Christ?

The Jewish religious personalities had called together a meeting of the minds: an off the books gathering; nothing official of course; just some fella’s who ‘happened to bump into’ Peter and John in a less obvious corner of town away from prying eyes and listening ears.

There were enough of them, designed on purpose to intimidate Peter and John. It’s not an accident that the writer of Acts took the time to list all the important names of those present:  
*Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest’s family. (Acts 4:6)*

Once the authorities had the disciples at what they thought was a disadvantage, it didn’t take them long to demand answers about Peter healing the sick.

*“By what power or what name did you do this?” (Acts 4:7)*

“Who do you think you are? Coming into our little corner of the world where we are in charge and doing all these miracles without our permission. We are in charge here, not you. And we will be the ones healing, thank you very much! It’s time for you to back off and go back to your corner.”

And Peter replied:  
*If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. (Acts 4:9-10)*

And then, just when you think the conversation might end calmly Peter throws in at the end,

“And oh by the way, we’ve got the right way to salvation. Christ is the path to eternity. You guys are behind in the game. Open your eyes and see that the scriptures have been fulfilled. It’s time for you to go to your little corner and sort it out!”

So, here’s where we ask the question. Was Peter’s response:

- Reckless like a naïve rookie, who didn't understand the power play by the religious authorities in front of him?
- Strategic by intentionally trying to stir the pot and make the religious authorities speak into their supposed beliefs and leadership practices in the community?
- Bold: So filled with the Holy Spirit that they truly believed that in this awkward and possibly dangerous situation they would be kept safe by God if they would hold true to Him?

I am conflicted here.

- I am conflicted because I can see myself as one of the religious authorities, unimpressed with some upstart trying to tell me how to lead a congregation and what my faith really should be.
- I am conflicted because I know that I want to be that bold disciple for Christ, yet, in reality, I feel much safer on the couch sipping my tea saying "Ya, you go girl."
- I am conflicted because I know that the Christian Church needs to be bold in today's world and what I hear instead is a whimper.  
The early chapters of Acts have challenged us to be:
  - Eager to build and re-build His church
  - Awed by the God we serve And today...
  - To be bold in speaking of our Christ, the cornerstone, the shepherd, the Son of God.

But if you were raised like me, we were taught in the church to mind our manners, keep our

mouths shut, never question the preacher, snivel in the car on the way home but never in the church building, say your prayers every night and everything would be fine.

This is not a complaint about how I was raised, but just to say that these were the unspoken messages the church often taught us in years gone by.

- We have not been a denomination that has easily or quickly changed its thinking.
- We have been a denomination that is rather subdued when it comes to speaking boldly about faith or challenging social issues.
- We are often uncomfortable if we are challenged in our beliefs.
- We have been reserved when presented with new ideas, feeling the need to think carefully for a time before making decisions.

None of this sounds terribly bold.

But we are beautiful. At least we've got half the combination. We are Beautiful, faithful disciples...who need to learn how to be bold again.

So, what does 'bold' look like in a Senior congregation because it's likely that our time for dare devil stunts in the name of risen Christ have come and gone.

But being bold isn't really about age or ability. It's about planting your feet firmly on the cornerstone and taking things

one step further than you have before.

- Maybe it means bringing up something that happened at church with your friends, rather than avoiding the conversation because your friends do not believe in God.
- Maybe it means asking a member of the family to pray before enjoying the next great feast, rather than quietly praying to yourself so that there is no fussing.
- Maybe it means clarifying a Sunday Brunch invitation, to say that you would be happy to join after church is over.
- Maybe it means sending a gentle religious card to someone who needs cheering up, rather than the easy pick one that really doesn't share a meaningful word.
- Maybe it means phoning someone and saying "I prayed for you today."

Whenever we step out of the comfortable, we are being bold. Whenever we push through the expected, we are being bold. Whenever we speak the truth in an unexpected place, we are being bold.

It's about getting off the couch and setting the tea aside and saying loudly to the world, "I love the Living Christ." It's time to be bold. Bold and beautiful for Christ. Amen.