

Articles and Sermons :: SPEAKING THE WORD WITH BOLDNESS by Jim Cymbala**SPEAKING THE WORD WITH BOLDNESS by Jim Cymbala - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/10/11 10:25**

What kind of things matter in a book-of-Acts church? The apostles' prayer gives us one of the clear benchmarks: "Enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness" (Acts 4:29).

There is no such thing as "taught boldness." Boldness can be imparted only by the Holy Spirit; you cannot get it through a seminar. Second Timothy 1:7 says, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and of self-discipline."

New Testament preachers were boldly confrontational, trusting that the Holy Spirit would produce the conviction necessary for conversion. They were not afraid.

Listen to Peter on the Day of Pentecost: "You, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross" (Acts 2:23). This was the last thing the crowd wanted to hear. If David Letterman had a Top Ten list of things not to say to a Jewish audience, number one would be "Guess what" with your own hands you just killed the Messiah, the one Israel has been expecting for centuries.

But Peter's boldness did not drive the people away. Instead, it stabbed their consciences. By the end of the day a huge group had repented of their sin and been converted.

In the next chapter, Peter was just as straightforward with the crowd that gathered after the healing of the cripple: "You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life. . . . Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord" (Acts 3:14-15, 19).

When Paul preached in Ephesus some years later, his confrontation with pagan idolatry was so direct that a riot broke out. "They were furious and began shouting: 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!' Soon the whole city was in an uproar" (Acts 19:28-29). This doesn't sound very market-sensitive or user-friendly to me.

A strong church was established nonetheless. The apostles realized that without a bold, aggressive attitude in proclaiming God's Word, they would not build the church that Jesus intended. Any church in any city of the world must come to the same conclusion.