

BOLDNESS IN THE LAST DAYS

Carter Conlon

For Jerusalem stumbled, and Judah is fallen, because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord" (Isaiah 3:8). Here we see a society turning against God in its speech and the arrogance of its heart—unaware that their actions are bringing about their own destruction. They boldly believe that although they say things that are against the revealed Word of God, somehow they will suffer no consequences.

But their tongue and their doings are against the Lord to provoke the eyes of His glory. *"The look on their countenance witnesses against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom"* (Isaiah 3:9). In other words, they have been involved in sin that the Bible calls evil, and not only do they boast of it, they parade it in the streets as Sodom once did. *"Woe to their soul! For they have brought evil upon themselves"* (v. 9). In the last days, sinners are going to become exceedingly bold in their sinning. They are going to stand against the ways and the Word of God, declaring their sin publicly. They will stand against everything good, godly, and holy, doing it as if they were standing on the side of virtue and truth. However, we read in Proverbs, "Even though hand joined in hand, hell has opened wide its mouth to receive them" (see Proverbs 11:21). There is only one righteousness—only one way to eternal life—and there is only one name given unto men whereby we might be saved.

IN THE LAST DAYS, SINNERS ARE GOING TO BECOME EXCEEDINGLY BOLD IN THEIR SINNING.

A False Boldness

In the book of Timothy, Paul talks about the perilousness of the last days. He talks about men being lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy. In other words, they are standing boldly with a false assurance in all that God's Word warns them against. They are unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power, always learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (see 2 Timothy 3:1–7).

In verse eight, Paul warned Timothy of two sorcerers with a faux spirituality. They were drawn to power; desiring admiration from the people. So when a man showed up with his brother to bring the people to freedom, they resisted it. In other words, they resisted the true gospel of Jesus Christ. They propagated another gospel that was full of a form of godliness but denied the real purpose and power of God. Of course, that purpose is to bring men, women, and children out of the darkness of sin and into eternal life through Jesus Christ.

IT IS TIME FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD TO BECOME EVEN BOLDER.

You and I are living in an era when that boldness is once again on full display. The ungodly flaunt their sin as Sodom; they call evil good and good evil. The vitriol against God's people is getting more severe all the time. We know historically that it can lead to extreme difficulty for many of the people of God who want to stand up and live for truth. Those who choose not to go along with this evil agenda will be called dividers and haters, ultimately deemed unworthy of being part of this new world order.

Holy Boldness

However, another group of people will have a different type of boldness in the last days. Yes, we know the wicked are bold, but I want to remind you that it is time for the people of God to become even bolder. It cannot be just evil that is parading in the streets—there must be people through whom the glory of God is made known in the earth once again. There must be people who know the power of God and can speak to this generation, "Let me tell you what God has done for me!" There must be people who refuse to cower under the voices of those who are parading their sins.

Consider when Stephen stood and gave defense for what he believed. The Bible says, "Even the sinners there beheld his face as if he looked like an angel. The glory of God was upon him" (see Acts 6:15). A young man there named Saul was holding the coats of those who were about to kill Stephen. I imagine that

was the moment where the goads, or conscience, of God began to touch him, for later, on the Damascus Road, the Lord said to him, "It is hard for you to push against these goads of God that are trying to move you in a different direction" (see Acts 9:5). I believe that seeing the countenance of Stephen was the first pang of conscience in this enraged lunatic who was out to kill everyone who did not share his worldview.

It says in the book of Hebrews, "*Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*" (Hebrews 4:14–16). In this last hour I see the addicted, the afflicted, the marginalized, the depressed—the nothings of this society—suddenly rising up and boldly approaching the throne of grace. Not groveling, not coming in with their heads hanging down in shame but coming to the throne of grace as invited sons and daughters of God. That is where the boldness comes from—remembering that we are called children of God.

We come to the throne of grace with confidence in our hearts that we are coming to a God who desires to bless, enable, and empower us. As the Lord once said through the prophet Isaiah, "*Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price*" (Isaiah 55:1). In other words, "Stop trying to procure your strength and your future. Come to Me, and I will give you everything you need to live for Me and represent Me in this generation. Come boldly!"

I want to especially challenge those of you who have been living for God for a long time. This is not just an invitation for the marginalized and the addicted. It would be a fallacy to say that we have already come as far as we can go. You see, there is no limit to what God can do through our lives. The only limit is the one we choose to place on Him. Part of the boldness includes saying, "God, You said that the latter part of our lives would be greater than the former. You showed us in Your Word that whatever we ask for, believing, we shall receive. You did not put an age limit on moving mountains and seeing them cast into the sea. When You told us we could tread on serpents and scorpions and have all power over the enemy—assuring us that nothing would by any means hurt us—there was no

little asterisk at the bottom of the page specifying, "I am only speaking to people between the ages of 18 and 49." No! You said, "Whosoever will!"

Speaking the Word with Boldness

In the book of Acts, when threats were being made against the early Church, they got together and began to pray, "*Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus*" (Acts 4:29–30). The Scripture says that when they prayed, the place where they were gathered was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak the word of God with boldness.

THAT IS CALLED SPEAKING THE WORD OF GOD WITH BOLDNESS—MAKING AN OPEN DECLARATION OF WHO GOD IS AND WHAT GOD DOES.

This does not mean they spoke with arrogance or were being argumentative. It means they spoke the Word with confidence. It would be the same as Christians today confidently telling others, "Jesus will set you free if you will turn to Him. He will save you and give you His Holy Spirit. He will transform your life and you will become a new creation. Your life will have meaning and value and purpose far beyond anything you ever could have imagined!" That is called speaking the Word of God with boldness—making an open declaration of who God is and what God does.

I remember a time years ago driving my middle son home from a hockey game. We had a couple of other players in the car with us. Now in those days, we had a small church, a small salary, a small car. It was a miracle we could fit all these guys in the car.

On the way home, we stopped at a hamburger place. We were in line, and everybody was counting their pennies. I was at the back of the line, and my son

Jared, who was at the front, suddenly turned around to his friends and announced, "Put your money away, guys. My dad will pay!"

Now, that was bold! That was confidence. Of course, I wish he had talked to me about it before he said it; nevertheless, I did not care if I had to spend the next week's gas money. It did not matter where I had to find the money or what budget it was going to be taken from. I would not dream of embarrassing my son in front of his friends.

How much more will God fulfill what we speak of Him in confidence! We can boldly stand and tell people that if they are willing, Jesus will save them. Jesus will change them and give them a reason to live. With boldness, we can warn even the most profound sinner that there is room in heaven, there is room at the cross, there is mercy with God. There can be a reason and a purpose to live!

I want to challenge you to be bold in this generation. Be bold with God. Come into His presence with confidence. Come, knowing that we have a High Priest who is touched with our weaknesses. He struggled with the things we struggle with; He was tried with them, yet He was without sin. And now He invites us to come in with confidence: "Come to Me and I will help you. Come to Me, you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Come learn from Me. I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls" (see Matthew 11:28–29). Come and find healing for your mind, your body, your marriage, your children, your family. And not only that, come receive the strength to be everything that God has called you to be!

Carter Conlon
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