

Conversation Starter

For the week of June 1 to 7, 2008

This week's theme: Acquiring Spiritual Boldness

- Reading #1: Acts 4:23-31
- Reading #2: Acts 19:8
- Reading #3: Acts 4:13
- Reading #4: Ephesians 4:15
- Reading #5: Romans 10:14-15

In prayer, the apostles John and Peter asked God the following: *...enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out Your hand, God, to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus. (Reading #1: Acts 4:29b-30).* And how did God answer this prayer? In Acts 4:31, we find the answer: *After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. (Reading #1: Acts 4:31)* In order to speak the word of God with boldness, to tell others about Jesus with boldness, and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ with boldness we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. In other words, acquiring spiritual boldness like the apostle Paul had in the Acts 19:8 reading only comes when we are filled and empowered by God's Spirit. (See reading #2.) This is not something we can "manufacture" or make up in our own strength or according to our own human wisdom. And now a question to consider: is this spiritual boldness available only to those who have great understanding and knowledge and/or to those in prominent positions within the Church? READ Acts 4:13 (reading #3) for the answer to this question. Just like the Christians about 2000 years ago, God wants us to speak His Word boldly, yet "in love" so that many others will come to know Jesus as Lord, Saviour and Friend. (See reading #4.) As the reading from Romans 10:14-15 reminds us, God needs you to proclaim, to share, to witness, and to tell others the good news. (See reading #5.)

1. Spend a few minutes in quiet, prayerful reflection thinking about your answers to these questions: Are you bold for Jesus Christ? When opportunities to talk to non-believers about Jesus Christ come, are you afraid? Do you look for ways to avoid the topic? Do you feel unprepared? Do you say nothing because you are ashamed to be identified with Jesus? Are you excited and thankful to have these opportunities?
2. Spend some time sharing with your group your answers to the questions in #1 only if you feel comfortable doing so.
3. Being "filled with the Holy Spirit" seems to be one requirement for being able to boldly tell others about Jesus. What does it mean to be "filled with the Holy Spirit"? How does someone become "filled with the Holy Spirit"?
4. In what ways has the Holy Spirit empowered you to tell others about Jesus?
5. Why is acquiring spiritual boldness essential for being an effective witness of Jesus Christ?

Written by: The Rev. Robert Roe
Written on: Tuesday, May 21, 2008