The background is a composite image. On the left, the lower portion of the Colosseum is visible, showing its iconic tiered arches. On the right, a large, detailed marble bust of a man with curly hair is shown in profile. The upper half of the image features a map of the Roman Empire, with various regions labeled in Latin: DACIA, MYSIA, MARE, TRACIA, MARE, and ISADICANA. The title text is overlaid on this map section.

ROME & THE BIRTH OF CHRISTIANITY

Part 14: Introduction

In our last lecture, we began our investigation of an often-overlooked trait that God gave as a gift to the early disciples in order to impact the entire Roman Empire with the gospel of grace. At Pentecost, we notice an astounding transformation in the men who were trained as Apostles by Jesus before His death and resurrection. These same men were baptized in the Holy Spirit and began to publicly demonstrate a new-found boldness before individuals and the masses. Their frankness and openness to share the gospel was winsome and effective, and their message began to spread through the Empire. Today, we will continue our study of boldness and seek specific insights and applications that will lead us to greater courage as we minister in His name.

Parrhesia in the Life of Jesus

- When Jesus began to teach the Apostles that the Son of Man must suffer many things, be killed, and rise again, Mark tells us that “He was stating the matter **plainly** (openly)” (Mk. 8:31-32).
- John uses the word *parrhesia* more than any other N.T. writer – 9 times. Consider the following references:
- Some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, “And look, He is **speaking publicly**, and they are saying nothing to Him” (Jn. 7:26).
- “The Jews therefore gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, ‘How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us **plainly**’” (Jn. 10:24).

Parrhesia in the Life of Jesus

- “These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming, when I will speak no more to you in figurative language, but will tell you **plainly** of the Father” (Jn. 16:25)...“His disciples said, ‘Lo, now You are speaking **plainly**, and are not using a figure of speech’” (Jn. 16:29).
- “Jesus answered him (the high priest), ‘I have spoken **openly** to the world; I always taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret’” (Jn. 18:20).

Parrhesia in the Life of Jesus

- Jesus spoke openly before the watching world – publicly, not secretly in a corner. He was never intimidated by those invested with political or religious position or power.
- Jesus' teaching was not His own: "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me" (Jn. 7:16). He was sent by His Father to do His will.
- Jesus boldly spoke the truth, irrespective of the opposition from others or the consequences He might face.



Confidence in the Early Church

- Peter speaking: “Brethren, I may **confidently** say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day” (Acts 2:29).
- “Now as they observed the **confidence** of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13). Calvin: “They acknowledge that there was something more than human in their boldness.”
- “And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Thy bond-servants may speak Thy word with all **confidence**...(Acts 4:29).



Confidence in the Early Church

- “And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with **boldness**” (Acts 4:31).
- “And pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with **boldness** the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak **boldly**, as I ought to speak” (Eph. 6:19-20).
- Martyn Lloyd-Jones comments: “Pray for me, says the Apostle, that I may have power of speech and freedom of utterance when I have an opportunity of speaking.”

Dr. Simon J. Kistemaker

“The word *boldness* appears three times in this chapter (4:13,29,31) and the concept is prominent in Acts. The apostles know that they must ask God to give them courage every time they proclaim God’s Word. They realize that when it is put into effect the gift of boldness causes astonishment, strife, and division. When the Lord grants this gift to his servants, they are able to speak eloquently and effectively in a hostile situation.”



Martyn Lloyd-Jones on Ephesians 6



Martyn Lloyd-Jones
1899-1981

“By ‘boldly’ the Apostle means freely, frankly, that nothing be kept back....Pray, says Paul, that I may be delivered from qualifying the gospel, and my statement of it, by carefulness and by endless modifications dictated by concern for my own reputation or my own personal safety.”



Confidence in the Early Church

- When Peter and John were brought before Annas, Caiaphas and the entire Council, their **confidence** was observed by the religious leaders who understood that the Apostles were uneducated and untrained men. As Gerhard Kittel tells us, “their confidence, then, is not that of men whose training has given them rhetorical ability. Theirs is a different power....The Lord gives such boldness to his servants.”
- “For God has not given us a **spirit of timidity**, but of power and love and discipline” (II Tim. 1:7).
- “They spent a long time there speaking **boldly with reliance upon the Lord**, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace...” (Acts 14:3).

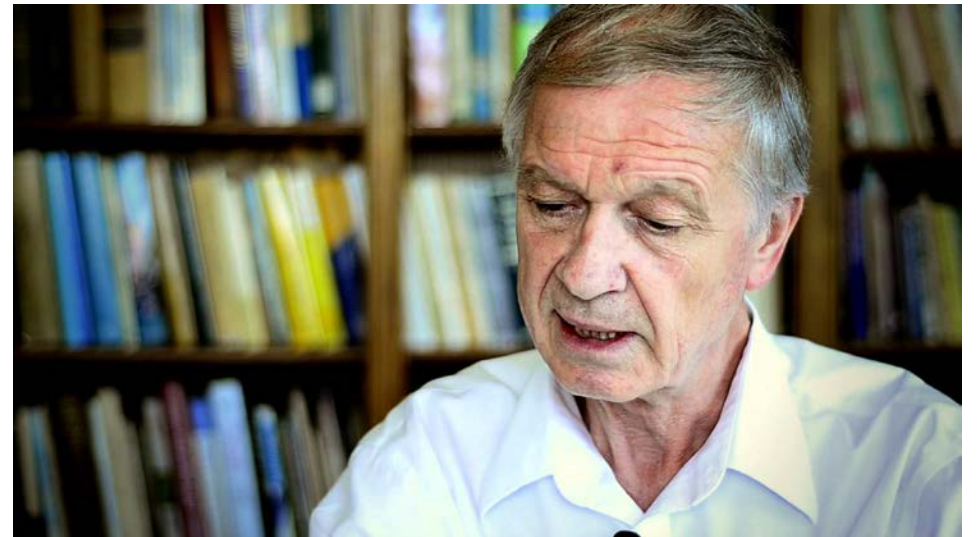


What's Behind our *Guilty Silence*

- We are afraid. “Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews” (Jn. 7:13).
- We have not learned a clear presentation of the gospel.
- We have not learned *how* to share our faith with others.
- We are naturally timid and shy about the things of God (II Tim. 1:7).
- We are living with spiritual lethargy. “We find that in the lives of far too many Christians, the excitement of the Christian walk has been dulled by everyday distractions, materialistic pursuits and unconfessed sin” (Dr. Bill Bright).
- We believe Satan’s lies (e.g., you are going to offend this person, etc.).

Why We Need Boldness

“In the world we can expect hostility and even hatred, for Jesus experienced this from some of those around him. The reason for this is that the world is a place where many do not honor God, trust in his love, or walk in his ways. The world is also a place where Satan, the evil one, is actively at work, seeking to keep people satisfied with anything but the worship of God alone.”



Jerram Barrs

1941 -

“Not Timidity or Uncertainty”

“The saving truth of Jesus Christ is a gift of God’s grace. As sinners, we can only receive it in humility. Yet Jesus declared that the gospel is a truth that sets us free. This Christ-wrought freedom for the Christian should not lead to timidity or uncertainty, but boldness to make known the only truth that will ever set anyone free.”



Dr. Douglas Groothuis
Professor of Philosophy, Denver Seminary
1957 -

The Path to Boldness

- Recognize that boldness it is not a natural human virtue or personal trait; it is the gift of God.
- Continuously and increasingly be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Acknowledge that God has not given you “a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline” (II Tim. 1:7).
- Grow in your confidence with God by coming to Him often in prayer with openness of heart and mind.
- Invite others to pray for you for increased boldness.
- Look for opportunities the Lord gives you to share your faith and trust Him to give you boldness as well as the words to say.



Wisdom from Spurgeon's *The Soul Winner*

- “Believe what you do believe, or else you will never persuade anybody else to believe it.”
- “One of the principal qualifications of a great artist’s brush must be its yielding itself up to him so that he can do what he likes with it. A harpist will love to play on one particular harp because he knows the instrument almost appears to know him. So, when God puts His hand upon the very strings of your being, and every power within you seems to respond to the movements of His hand, you are an instrument that He can use.”



Wisdom from Spurgeon's *The Soul Winner*

- “I do beseech you, brethren, speak from your hearts, or else do not speak at all. If you can be silent, be silent; but if you must speak for God, be thoroughly sincere about it.”
- “When a bush is nothing but a bush, it is soon consumed when it is set on fire; but when it is a bush that burns on and is not consumed, we may know that God is there.”
- “You are to be instruments in the hands of God; yourselves, of course, actively putting forth all your faculties and forces which the Lord has lent to you; but still never depending upon your personal power, but resting alone upon that sacred, mysterious, divine energy which worketh in us, and by us, and with us, upon the hearts and minds of men.”



Wisdom from Spurgeon's *The Soul Winner*

- “It is clear that Samson himself must be in a right condition, or he can win no victories. If the champion’s locks be shorn, the Philistines will laugh at him; if the Lord be gone from a man, he has no power left for useful service. Dear brethren, look carefully to your own condition before God. Take care of the home farm; look well to your own flocks and herds. Unless your walk be close with God, unless you dwell in that clear light which surrounds the throne of God, and which is only known to those who are in fellowship with the Eternal, you will go forth from your chamber, and hasten to your work, but nothing will come of it.”

Eusebius (AD 263 – 339)

“Thus, then, under a celestial influence and co-operation, the doctrine of the Savior, like rays of the sun, quickly irradiated the whole world. Presently, in accordance with divine prophecy, the sound of his inspired evangelists and apostles had gone throughout all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world. Throughout every city and village, like a replenished barn floor, churches were rapidly found abounding, and filled with members from every people.”

