

Lift Up Your Voice With Strength

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon encourages believers to boldly proclaim the message of Jesus without fear, as empowered witnesses of God's truth.

Scripture: Acts 4:29

Topics: "Bold Evangelism", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the need for believers to boldly proclaim the message of God without fear, just like the prophets of old. He emphasizes the importance of speaking the word of God clearly and boldly, trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit to confirm the truth to those who are listening. The sermon highlights the call to get on top of situations, lift up our voices with strength, and point people not to ourselves but to Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Transcript

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Isaiah 40:9 A few weeks ago at Pine Hills Camp at the Men's Retreat, Haman Cross of the Afro-American Mission who was our speaker, was talking with a handful of us at the end of the day. He shook his head and he said, "I keep praying that God will give me more power to say what has to be said.

I need more power!" Here was a man who had just fed us with living bread, a rich message who had spoken to us with great power. A man who is involved in a work that's faithful and solid and which I believe is going to be standing long after many of the flashier, better known ministries have been burned up by the fire of judgment. A servant of God who's crying out for a more effective message for more power. We stand back and look at this man, Haman Cross, and we say, "I wish I could talk the way this man does.

I wish I had the liberty to say it the way this man says it." And yet Haman is right about himself and about us. He feels it and we feel it.... this need for a word from God on our lips that is undistorted by us.... that isn't twisted by our egos or our fears ---and that cuts right through and causes the walls of Jericho to fall. We don't need more electronics, more printing presses to multiply our words, we have too many words already, we talk much too much. What we need is a word from God which is so clearly from God that this one person to whom we speak is touched by the Spirit, by the life of God himself.

Jesus sat on the edge of the well and spoke to one woman. And the words he spoke to this woman were so clearly from the Father, that in a very short time her life was shaken, healed and transformed. And now she goes and gets the whole village and brings it to the door of the kingdom of heaven. That's the kind of word we need. It's a beautiful thing to come together like this and draw near to each other and lay aside our resentments and gather at the Lord's table and enter into his presence in the unity of the Spirit.

Yet who of us hasn't felt Haman Cross' frustration. "Lord, I've seen your glory. I've felt the touch of your hand. I've tasted your peace. Yet when I try to speak of you to that wounded bitter world, the words stick in my throat. They come out weak, flat. I need a living word from you, O God!" And the answer comes back from the Lord to each of us: "I've already given you a message that is very, very powerful. That message is on your lips and it's in your heart. I've given you a message that's so good-it will melt people's hearts ... it will create hope in them, give them a fresh start, set them free from their chains.

I've given you the message, all you have to do is get up on top of things and speak it, without fear. If you will do that, people will be drawn, heaven will respond, and earth and hell will tremble with the word that I've given you." Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" "Look at what I've given you," says the Lord.

"I anointed you as a herald of good tidings. Now you need to do three things: 1. Get up to a high mountain, get on top of things. 2. Lift up your voice with strength, without fear. 3. Say to the cities of Judah, that is to the whole world; "Look at your God. Behold your God!" First, Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings.... You have a message, get up on a mountain with it ... get on top of things. The message of the Kingdom of God cannot be proclaimed from behind a bush or hiding under the bed.

We have to come out in the open, get up on top of things. Yes, we need to be; - humble, - poor in spirit, broken in spirit, - meek, - but never timid! Humble, but not timid. Get up on that mountain, get on top of things; which is the same as to say, "be bold." "And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, while thou stretchest out thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of thy holy servant Jesus."

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness. Acts 4:29-31 And you can be sure they kept on speaking the word of God with boldness when they got outside the building. "Lord, look upon their threats, and grant us to get on top of those threats." And the Spirit fell. And by the power of the Spirit they got up on the mountain ... they got up on top of things.

When John Wesley would preach out in the open, as he did most of the time, he would always look for a mound, for some rise in the ground, some higher place. Sometimes he'd get up on a chair, sometimes he would stand on a table so he could be seen and heard. He got up on top of the situation. So you have a message. And that message cannot be proclaimed from behind a bush or mumbling under the bed. Get up on the mountain and shout it! Second, Lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem.

Lift it up, don't be afraid speak up. And somebody says, "But if I speak up at the wrong time and get too loud, somebody's going to get mad." That's true. But why is it that we're afraid that somebody might be offended? Listen to Jesus. "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master; it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household."

Matthew 10:24-25 "But I don't want people to think I'm crazy." - They thought he was crazy. "I don't want people mad at me." - They were mad at him. "So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops." Matthew 10:26-27 We need to defy our fears and speak up! The Spirit will tell us when....if we will but give him our fears --- and obey.

"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 10:28-33 So when the opportunities come, and they always do, to speak about Jesus, do we speak clearly or do we pussyfoot? Many times there is a note of apology in our voice. And it causes our word to come out weak and timid and hesitant. Are we ashamed of Jesus? Do we have to apologize because we're following him? Do we become embarrassed when people who may be our close friends and relatives find out that we're really serious? Lift up your voice with strength! Lift it up!....

Don't be afraid! What a liberating thing it is when we finally come out of hiding and take a stand. "This is what I'm living for: the Kingdom of God. This is who I follow: Jesus."now everybody knows God knows Satan knows.... our relatives know the world knows. Finally,say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Look at him! There he is! We're not pointing to our own experiences, we're pointing to the One who is now on the throne and is now on his way toward us for a time of judgment.

"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world....."behold him while you have a chance. "Look to him and be saved ... all the ends of the earth." We're not pointing people to our church, our favorite doctrine, our own spiritual experiences which we want them to have. We're pointing people to Jesus. Let the experiences that they have be different from ours. We're just bearing witness to him. "Come and see him. Come and listen to him. Come and see a man who told me all I ever did.

Is not this the Messiah? We've found the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth." "Nazareth? Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Detroit? You mean Jesus is still around Detroit?" Newark? Are you kidding? "Come and see" And our only function is to be witnesses, that's all. We're the real J.W.s. We're the Jesus Witnesses. And when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority.

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and: to the end of the earth." Acts 1:6-8 We have received power. The Holy Spirit has come and we are his witnesses. And the one purpose of our life on this earth is to point to him..... - to proclaim to our neighbors, our relatives, our friends, our enemies, and the strangers we meet along the way that Jesus is Lord. We don't have to prove anything ...

God does the proving. We don't have to manipulate people, we can't engineer them into the Kingdom of God, that's not our job. Our job is to speak it ... speak it clearly and boldly. If we will do that he promises that he will confirm the truth of what we say to anybody who's honestly listening. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good

tidings, lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"

That powerful message we all long for is already near us...it's on our lips and it's in our hearts. All we have to do is get up on that high mountain, get on top of the situation. Speak it clearly..... proclaim Jesus without shame---and the walls of Jericho will fall---and the gates of death will yield to the power of the word of the Lord coming from our mouths.

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