

Commissioned!

Part 4: Boldness

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Full Text (for reading on your own)

Review

The Great Commission is our Christian job description - not just for leaders, but for all Christians! For some of us, the Great Commission is difficult to approach. That's OK! We need to simply work on keeping the Word. Philippians 2:13 tells us *"for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."* We simply need embrace the tension of a challenging scripture, keep the Word, and let it do the work. This is the work of God - that you believe Him (the Word) whom He sent!

In the Great Commission, we not only have sharing the gospel, but we also have picking up snakes and it not causing a problem; that's a witness! We have healing the sick, casting out demons, and speaking in new tongues; they are all witnesses to Jesus. All of that actually comes naturally to us as born again believers! When we are a new creation in Christ we realize that righteousness is not something that I have to put on it is something I have to let out. Witnessing in both word and power is actually just something you need to let out! It's in you! You have the Spirit of Witness in you and the Holy Spirit's main priority in this era is to draw the earth to Jesus! The Great Commission is not something you are trying to put on, it is something you are trying to let out by the renewing of your mind!

If you follow Jesus, He will really make you something! You follow Him and He will make you a fisher of men! It's by nature that if you are following Christ, He turns you into something! He gives you a new job description and He makes you a fisher of men. You may be starting to see that this is so natural!

There are some hinderances to following Jesus. Remember Peter thought that he was genuinely following Christ, but it turned out that he was sort of following his version of Jesus - and we can do the same in all genuineness. We can be following Jesus fully, except if it causes someone to speak badly about us, or except if it causes us to change our career path, or except if it keeps us from watching the football game this weekend. (God loves for us to watch football games, go on vacations, and have nice things ... that's not the point. He is literally extravagant. He likes to do way above just our necessities. If you seek after God, He will honor you before men. It's not one or the other. We simply want to decide that God is our delight and then He will give us all the others).

His Word is in your mouth!

Let's look at Jeremiah 1. In verse 6 we see Jeremiah say "*Ab, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.*" Jeremiah was saying "I'm not ready! I can't speak! Don't ask me to speak up, God!"

But the Lord said to Jeremiah "*Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you...*"

It continues "*Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: 'Behold, I have put My words in your mouth ...'*" God has put a word in your mouth when you became a born-again believer and the word is Jesus - and it's in word and in power! We are to speak the word to all the people he sends us to! "Go into all the earth and preach the gospel!"

Evangelism Statistics

A survey of an entire, unnamed denomination was done in the early 90's in which 99% of those surveyed (both church leaders and congregation members) all said the same thing: that they believed that it was the job of every Christian to bring the gospel to a lost world. 99 out of 100 surveyed Christians within this denomination reported believing that it was the job of EVERY Christian to bring the gospel to a lost world.

Nevertheless, another statistic reports that 95% of believers have never led anyone to the Lord. If you were at a party with 20 Christians, and you had led someone to the Lord before, you would statistically be the only one there who had!

Consider this. 99% of believers say preaching the gospel to a lost world is the job of every Christian, but only 5% have done it successfully. Why is there such a discrepancy between what believers believe and what they do?

Just believing does not equate to acting. According to these two pieces of data, there are 94% of Christians that believe something and don't do it. In other words, 6 out of 100 believers are acting according to their belief concerning witnessing. May it not be so!

Why the Discrepancy?

So, why is there such a discrepancy between what believers believe and what they do? Let's start to explore that by looking at John 7:7 "*The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.*" If someone walked up to you on the street yesterday and very quickly put a microphone in your face and asked you quickly "does the world hate Jesus?" what would you say? Would you have immediately have said "absolutely the world hates Jesus?" The world actually hates Jesus. Jesus said it.

So, why does the world hate Jesus? John 3:19-20 makes it perfectly clear *“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.”* The condemnation is not that they had sinned; the condemnation was that they were going to reject Jesus who was the propitiation of their sins. Why did they love darkness? Because they were practicing evil; they were trying to get better at doing evil deeds so they didn’t want any light to shine on them and thereby expose their deeds!

By the way, this may sound like some negative things to say, but I am not being negative. I am simply trying to explain something that it is important to understand in order to be able to actually step into the Great Commission.

Now, let’s look at 2 Peter 3:1-7 *“Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first ...”* So what did Peter want us to know first?

“... that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts” So what’s a scoffer? A scoffer is someone who want to walk according to their own lusts. And what do scoffers that want to walk according to their own lusts say? *“Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”*

Here’s a history lesson. In the early 1800’s there was a geologist names Lyell who said all geological processes that have ever happened in the earth are the exact same and happen at the same rate as the geological processes that we currently observe. He called it the principle of uniformitarianism and then Darwin based his theory of evolution off of Lyell. Lyell said no geological processes have ever happened that are not like what we are currently seeing. Now let’s look at verse 4 again: *“Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”*

“For this they willfully forget ...” They forget so willfully because they don’t want to be accountable to a Creator! *“For this they willfully forget that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.”* This is why so many people hate the Ark Encounter in Kentucky that Answers in Genesis built; because they want to willfully forget that there was a flood! All of the scientific, geological evidence that is so misinterpreted about the earth being millions of years old is based on willfully forgetting and not acknowledging that there was a massive global flood that caused stratification of rock layers, rapid fossilization, etc. They willfully forget! Why do they willfully forget? So that they are not accountable to a Creator!

In John 5:46, Jesus said *“For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me ...”* This is why the Answers in Genesis ministry is so important. Satan is trying to keep people from believing in Jesus by trying to get them to discount the creation in Genesis! Don’t concede it. Speak the truth in love.

Here’s the point: the world is against God because they want to live sinfully. Jesus said the world hates Him and then in John 17, while praying to the Father for believers (us), Jesus says *“I have given them Your word; and the world **has hated them** because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”* Jesus said that the world is going to hate us because we have His word in us!

Our battle is not against flesh and blood. Not at all! There is nothing in me that is even remotely upset at them because I WAS THEM! Our battle is against principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this age.

Let me be very plain. All this is a game of “hide the truth.” Everybody has a Daddy who made them and their Daddy has a great big house called the Earth and they are trying to throw a big drinking party while Daddy is gone! And you have One Son, Jesus, who comes back and says “that’s sin, don’t do that. Be reconciled to your Father through Me.” And they respond “Get out of here! Don’t turn the lights on in the big drinking party! Keep the lights off! Get out of here!” Remember the messengers who the Master sent to the vineyard? They got progressively beat until the Son was sent who they decided to kill. Why? They want to hide the truth and do their own thing!

Not only do they willfully forget the flood, but this is the last thing that they forget: *“But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are **reserved for fire** until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”* (2 Pe. 3:7) They forget that the water came before and they forget that fire is coming next.

We are not against them at all. They are just deceived! There is the prince of the power of the air and he is trying to cover the world with darkness so that people can be deceived, throw their big party, and not want to hear the light.

I believe this is why, in terms of the Great Commission, there is such a discrepancy between what Christians believe about the Great Commission and what they do. We don’t realize that there is actually opposition to DOING the Great Commission. There is exponentially more opposition to DOING than there is to believing the Great Commission. The enemy just wants you to nod your head during church service, but he doesn’t want you to move your feet on the pavement of the street.

Isaiah prophesied that darkness would cover the earth: *“For behold! The darkness shall cover the earth.”* (Isa. 60:2) But I am here to tell you that the darkness should not and will not cover God’s people! We are to be lamps on stands, salt on food, and a bright shining light! Arise and shine for your light has come!

Atmospheric Pressure

In Jn. 12:42-43 we read “Nevertheless even among the rulers many **believed** in Him, but because of the Pharisees they **did not confess** Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” Many believers believe, but never confess. There’s a difference. The enemy can get you to just not your head and not open your mouth, that’s a big victory for him.

Imagine you have a tea kettle, filled with water and you put it on the stove. As stove heats up, the water molecules in the tea kettle start to heat up as well. As the water molecules heat up they actually move faster and faster at a molecular level and begin to generate a pressure just above the surface of the water called vapor pressure.

At the same time that the water molecules are heating up and generating increasing vapor pressure, there is another force at play - atmospheric pressure. Atmospheric pressure is the weight of the air of the world using down on all places. The atmospheric pressure (a 6 or 7 mile high column of air) is pushing down not the water molecules in that tea kettle that are trying to boil. The vapor pressure of the water is pushing against the atmospheric pressure of the air. The water has an internal vapor pressure that is wanting to get them to “go out” and there is concurrently an atmospheric pressure that is pushing against it.

Boiling happens when the vapor pressure of the liquid becomes greater than the atmospheric pressure around it, and the water starts to boil over. The steam goes bursting out of the tea kettle which is now screaming!

Many believers believe, but never confess.

There is actually atmospheric spiritual pressure over the earth. The prince of the power of the air. That pressure is greater in some places than in others. The testimony of Jesus, your confession of Christ (in word and in power) will issue forth out of you when your internal pressure for Christ is greater than the atmospheric pressure against Him! Your passion for Jesus, if greater than the atmospheric pressure against Him (in a certain environment) will boil over and come out in the form of words or prayer or worship, etc.

So, if you want to know why you feel bold for Christ in certain circumstances, but not others, know that it has to do with the atmospheric pressure in those circumstances. For instance, if you come to a church where all the members believe in Jesus, and they are here to praise God and hear the Word of God, the atmospheric pressure against Christ in that environment is VERY low! It doesn’t take a lot of internal pressure for Christ for you to get to the point that you are praising God in this environment!

However, if you meet someone at a store who you know needs ministers and you find yourself thinking “should I or shouldn’t I talk with them / pray for them?” If you find tension to be a

witness for Christ at the store, you are experiencing a different spiritual atmosphere! It is not a church. You are not surrounded by believers. The person you are ministering to may not be a believer either. The “atmospheric pressure” is possibly even higher in your place of work because now it is like a store, but since you work with these people daily it takes more courage to step out in word or deed because you are going to have to live with the results of it.

Jesus stood out preaching the Kingdom in the face of tremendous spiritual opposition! On His left likely stood the group of guys who figured the best thing to do was to “stone Him right now.” On His right He has the guys who think “it’s best to take Him to court so let’s trip Him up in what He says.” In front of Him He has a couple of people who are believing the testimony and a lot of people who are not believing. High atmospheric pressure! Add to that the devil, who was probably seeking to disrupt Jesus consistently! Darkness covers the earth. Powers. Principalities. The spiritual forces over the present age. It’s not about people. It’s about the spiritual environment.

Todd White recently was filmed ministering to an angry Roman mob. He walked through the crowd - in the opposite direction they were walking. He went through the crowd, laying hands on people, blessing them, and finding people to pray for. He eventually gets the megaphone that the mob organizer is using and begins to shout “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!” Some of the crowd joins in! What a scene!

Why is Todd White able to do that? You may think “if only I could have boldness like that!” Boldness is not a personality trait. This is what you have to get! Any font can be made bold. Likewise, every believer can be made bold. Boldness is not a personality trait.

That Roman mob environment would have been very high atmospheric pressure, but Todd White still “boiled over” for Jesus. Why? His passion for Jesus was greater than the atmospheric pressure that was set against Him proclaiming the name of Christ. His internal passion, the “boiling of the water molecules” in his heart was greater than atmospheric pressure against the confession of Christ (in word and deed).

You may notice that you are comfortable sharing Christ at church, or at home, or at house church, but you are not comfortable at the store. That’s where your vapor pressure is at. You are good-to-go as a witness to Christ at atmospheric pressures of 1 and 2, but at a pressure of 4 you don’t know if you can be a witness there. It’s not that you are not bold; you just need more internal vapor pressure!

Some believers never experience any push-back in their lives because they are only going with the grain or with the flow of the world. Think about what the world says about Jesus. Do we want to be with the grain with the world? In other words, God wants you to stand out! “Arise, shine, your light has come!” God wants you the gentiles to come running to you. He wants you to be so wildly helpful to the world that they come running to you and your light! The greater the darkness over the earth, the more attractive our light can be! God wants even the kings to come running to us - not

just the people of little influence, but also the people of big influence to come running to believers! He wants us to be gorgeous as the body of Christ.

You cannot walk in your destiny as it relates to the Great Commission and be un-noticed. You cannot be an invisible believer. Some of us shine in our prayer closets but hide our light in public. We don't want to do that.

Acts 4:13

In Acts 3, Peter and John see a lame man at the Gate Beautiful. The lame man says “alms for the poor?” They say “silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise and walk!” The previously lame man walks! Peter and John then proceed to preach in Solomon's Portico and 5,000 people are saved probably at least partly as a result of that testimony. Of course the Jewish leaders did not like that Peter and John were preaching in the name of Jesus with such great effect, so they arrest them.

While they are “on trial” we read this in Acts 4:13 “*Now when they saw the **boldness** of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” We absolutely want to get theology right, but it cannot replace passion. You can know everything, but if you are not passionate for Jesus, you will do nothing. Think about a marriage. Passion is so important in a marriage. A marriage is not just principle. Passionate love will cause you to do what principle will never motivate you too.*

There's a missing ingredient! How can you have 99% believe something that only 5% accomplish? It's not just about knowing. James 2 tells us that the demons believe in God and shudder, but faith acts! Faith without works is dead. We need to believe to the point of action!

Loaves at Midnight

Let's look at Luke 11:5-8. This is a story about trying to get loaves of bread at midnight. “*And He said to them, ‘Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and he will answer from within and say, ‘Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you’? I say to you, though **he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend**, yet **because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.**’*”

Note that this parable is talking about us coming to God! In this scenario Jesus says “though God will not answer the prayer because the man is His friend, yet because of the man's persistence and boldness and he would not stop knocking, God will rise and give the man as many loaves as he needs!” You can get from boldness with God, some things that you do not yet have with Him by friendship.

There are some people that have a beautiful relationship with God in their prayer closet, but do not have great faith - do not have boldness. There are other believer that might make your cringe sometimes with what they say or do or how they do it, but they have great faith and they see great results. The loaves of bread keep coming in at midnight for them so that they can give them to their friends that have come to visit and need to eat God's bread.

We need to take a lesson from those of great faith! We tend to think theology, theology, theology. But why were Peter and John so bold for the gospel? 5,000 saved! It wasn't because of their great training in the Word; it was because they had been with Jesus! They had a passion for Jesus! Note that when Peter preached to the 3,000 on the day of Pentecost and to the 5,000 at Solomon's Portico he still was not sure if Gentiles were allowed to receive salvation and if all Christians needed to be physically circumcised! Think of it! Paul later had to oppose Peter to his face for his theology errors! Yet, God used Peter to lead 8,000 of the first believers the world has ever known to salvation in the name of Jesus!

Here in this "midnight loaves" parable, why did the neighbor get the bread? It wasn't because of great friendship with God! Although they were friends, he was given the bread based on his persistence and boldness - not their friendship!

We need to have a value for boldness. We need to have a value for acting! I have given you so much on the Great Commission, but at the end of the day, are you going to do it!?

99%. 5%. Who's going to act? We need to look at people of great faith and not disdain the fact that their theology may have some gaps or they may not have as deep of a relationship with God as you have, but be challenged by them that at least they are acting on it!

No one at Agathos Church has a limiting factor (as it relates to the Great Commission) of knowledge of the Word. There was a young man who was saved at a Reinhard Bonnke crusade in Africa who ran home to his village and within 24 hours he had raise multiple people from the dead. Knowledge is not what is holding me or us back! We want to get theology right! Act, act, act, act, act! It's the boldness that catalyzes it! We have to step out; we have to do the work! Blessed are those who DO the Word!

Now, boldness is not brashness. Boldness is when you stand out from your surroundings. Think of bold letters. They stand out from their surroundings. Boldness is when you boil over - when you have more love for Jesus effervescing out of your heart than there is atmospheric pressure pushing against it.

Over time, I have noticed in my own life that there are certain circumstances in which I never would bring up Jesus where now it doesn't even occur to me that I am bringing Him up! I do not have to hide who I am in Christ because they might not like it! It's a process :)

How can you increase your boldness?

Every font can be made bold and so can every believer! So, how can you increase your boldness? Remember our analogy? Vapor pressure and atmospheric pressure. So how can you boil over more easily? Be bold in your surroundings more easily? You have two options: (1) increase the vapor pressure or (2) decrease the atmospheric pressure.

How do you increase the vapor pressure? There are two ways. The first way is through being with Jesus in prayer. Remember Acts 4:13? What did they notice about Peter and John? They were so bold and they realized that they had been with Jesus! When you are with Jesus it makes you bold!

I have a friend from grade school that we get to spend time with in the summer because we go to the same pool. We had them over for dinner one night and my friend from grade school says “I don’t mean to be offensive, but Peter is totally different than he was in grade school. His confidence is totally different!” When you are with Jesus, it changes you! He makes you confident and bold.

Edwin Louis Cole said “prayer in private results in boldness in public.” When you spend time in the presence of God, one of things He does is assure you of your identity in Him. Just that fact that you are before Him and He is talking with you assures you of your identity as a son or daughter of God -that you are righteous before Him. As you increasingly realize how righteous you are before Him, the Proverb becomes true of you that the “righteous are as bold as a lion!” When you don’t think that you are righteous, you flee even though no one is pursuing, but when you know that you are righteous, you are as bold as a lion!

Jesus said in Jn. 15:27 “*“And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me.”*” It’s by prayer, time with Jesus! Not just prayer. Communion with Jesus. Communion with the Father. If you are struggling to get to that intimate place in prayer, don’t be afraid to be purposefully quiet before God. Don’t be afraid to emphasize worshiping before God. Don’t be afraid to talk with God about a specific scripture so it gives you a topic of conversation. Sometimes we stagnate in prayer because we think prayer is only about petitioning the Father and we don’t have a lot of petitions. Or perhaps you have the same petition you keep swinging in the air at God. Don’t hold God hostage on one petition. Ask God. Thank Him that He has heard you. Move on from that one and continue your relationship with Him!

The second way you can increase your “vapor pressure” for boldness is to meditate on the Word of God. DL Moody said *“Find a man meditating on the Word of God ... you will find a man who is bold and successful.”* In John 14:24 and 15:9-10 we see a positive feedback loop about being in the Word. We see that you have to actually have love for Jesus in order to keep His word. But, when you keep His word, it gives you love for Jesus! So how do you get started in that positive feedback loop?

The answer is that you get in the Word and it will give you more love for Jesus, which will make it easier to be in the Word, which will give you more love for Jesus, which will make it easier to be in the Word, which will give you more love for Jesus.

There is such a thing as “Word debt.” I’ve been there before and it is the opposite of the feedback loop shown in John 14 and 15. When you are not in the Word very much, it makes life hard which means you don’t have time to be in the Word, which means that you are not in the Word as much, which makes life harder - so you need to break through into the positive feedback loop!

It is just like getting out of financial debt. You need to stop spending all of your time. When you need to get out of financial debt, you stop spending all of your money and you try to find \$10 / month with which you can start paying down your debt. That’s what you need to do with the Word! If you are in Word debt on any level, you need to cut something out. Cut out a meal if you need to! Find 10 or 20 minutes and get in the Word for that much. God is going to then give you divine ideas that make you day go better and you are going to have more time. Then reinvest that time in the Word!

I once met a believer who owns many, many, many rental properties across the nation. He told me that people have been telling him for decades that he is going to lose his business and ruin his family because all he does is read the Bible! He told me that when business gets tougher, he reads the Word more! Ideas come to him while he is reading the Word! Even just meeting him for less than an hour I watched him boldly and lovingly go out of his way to witness to a young lady. He was bold! Why? He was in the Word!

Being in the Word increases that personal vapor pressure. Your love for the Lord, your passion for the Lord, stirs up and stirs up and stirs up. You will be able to be a witness in, carry out the Great Commission in, and naturally overflow in more and more challenging situations. Any one of us will be able to be the ones that walk counter-culturally through the mob. Declaring Jesus, laying our hands on people, and praying for them in Jesus’ name.

In addition to being able to increase our “vapor pressure” for boldness, we can also decrease the atmospheric pressure. You can pray. Remember Isaiah 60:2? It says *“Behold! Darkness shall cover the earth.”* The next part of that verse is very interesting. It says *“and deep darkness shall cover the people.”* You may think to yourself “if darkness is covering the earth, why would the people on the earth be under deep darkness? Wouldn’t they just be under darkness like the oak tree next door?” How are the people under deep darkness? Because they have been magnifying the darkness in their mind!

We needed to see that there is an opposition to you acting on the Great Commission. Expect it. NBA basketball players know that it is harder to hit a 3-point shot in a game than it is in practice. We need to be aware that there is going to be “atmospheric pressure” set against us acting on the Great Commission. That said, once you are “taking the court” don’t emphasize how good the defense is in

your mind! Don't think to yourself "I wonder what this person is going to say. Oh, I'm sure they are against the gospel ..." Don't do that!

There is going to be some darkness, some atmospheric pressure, don't magnify it in your mind! You just focus on the love of God and you will start to witness for Him. At first, some people may be surprised that you are witnessing to them, but then they are thanking you that you ministered to them and are so glad you brought Jesus up!

Of course, you can pray to decrease the darkness of an environment. For instance, if you are going to go witness at a mall, you can command any hindering spirits to be removed from that atmosphere, you can release the ministering spirits of God into that space, and you can ask the Lord that you could be the fragrance of Heaven in that space that people would be drawn to Christ in you!

But even after you pray, there is still going to be some amount of atmospheric pressure from the prince of the power of the air in that environment. But don't emphasize that in your thinking. Just let the love of God flow right out of you.

Homework Assignment: Prepare your personal testimony (5 minutes) to share in small groups at church in the park.

Text Summary (for reading as a group)

The Lord said to Jeremiah, *"Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you..."* When you became a born-again believer God put a word in your mouth and — and power — is Jesus! We are to speak the word to all the people He sends us to! "Go into all the earth and preach the gospel!"

A survey of an entire, unnamed denomination was done in the early 90's in which 99% of those surveyed said the same thing: they believed that it was the job of EVERY Christian to bring the gospel to a lost world. Nevertheless, another statistic reports that 95% of believers have never led

anyone to the Lord. Consider this: 99% of believers say preaching the gospel to a lost world is the job of every Christian, but only 5% have done it successfully. According to these two pieces of data, there are 94% of Christians that believe something and don't do it. In other words, 6 out of 100 believers are acting according to their belief concerning witnessing. Why is there such a discrepancy between what believers believe and what they do?

In John 7:7, Jesus Himself said *"The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil."* The world actually hates Jesus. Why does the world hate Jesus? John 3:19-20 makes it perfectly clear *"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."* The world is against God because they want to live sinfully. Jesus said the world hates Him and then in John 17, while praying to the Father for believers (us), Jesus says *"I have given them Your word; and the world **has hated them** because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."* Jesus said that the world is going to hate us because we have His word in us!

But, our battle is not against flesh and blood. Not at all! There should be nothing in us that is even remotely upset at them because WE WERE THEM! Our battle is against principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this age, and they are trying their best to play a game of "hide the truth." Remember the messengers who the Master sent to the vineyard? They got progressively beat until the Son was sent, who they then decided to kill. Why? They wanted to hide the truth and do their own thing! They were just deceived! There is the prince of the power of the air and he is trying to cover the world with darkness so that people can be deceived, throw their big party and not want to see the light.

This is why there is such a discrepancy between what Christians believe about the Great Commission and what they do. We don't realize that there is actually opposition to DOING the Great Commission. There is exponentially more opposition to DOING than there is to believing the Great Commission. The enemy just wants you to nod your head during church service, but he doesn't want you to move your feet on the pavement of the street. *The darkness shall cover the earth.*" (Isa. 60:2) But that darkness will not cover God's people! We are to be lamps on stands, salt on food, and a bright shining light! Arise and shine for your light has come!

In Jn. 12:42-43 we read, *"Nevertheless even among the rulers many **believed** in Him, but because of the Pharisees they **did not confess** Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."* Many believers believe, but never confess. There's a difference.

Imagine you have a tea kettle, filled with water and you put it on the stove. Boiling happens when the vapor pressure of the water becomes greater than the atmospheric pressure around it. At that point, the water starts to boil over and the steam goes bursting out of the tea kettle which is now screaming!

Many believers believe, but never confess. Why? We need to realize that there is actually atmospheric, spiritual pressure over the earth. He is called the prince of the power of the air. That pressure is greater in some places than in others. The testimony of Jesus, your confession of Christ (in word and in power) will issue forth out of you when your internal pressure for Christ is greater than the atmospheric pressure against Him! This is why you feel bold for Christ in certain circumstances, but not others. For instance, if you come to a church where all the members believe in Jesus, and they are here to praise God and hear the Word of God, the atmospheric pressure against Christ in that environment is VERY low! It doesn't take a lot of internal pressure from Christ for you to get to the point that you are praising God in this environment!

However, the "atmospheric pressure" is possibly higher in your place of work than at church. Jesus stood out preaching the Kingdom in the face of tremendous spiritual opposition! Todd White recently was filmed ministering to an angry Roman mob. Why is Todd White able to do that? You may think, "If only I could have boldness like that!" Boldness is not a personality trait. This is what you must understand! Any font can be made bold. Likewise, every believer can be made bold. That Roman mob environment would have been very high atmospheric pressure, but Todd White still "boiled over" for Jesus. Why? His passion for Jesus was greater than the atmospheric pressure that was set against Him proclaiming the name of Christ. His internal passion, the "boiling of the water molecules" in his heart was greater than the atmospheric pressure against the confession of Christ (in word and deed).

You may notice that you are comfortable sharing Christ at church, or at home, or at house church, but you are not comfortable at the store. That's where your vapor pressure is at. It's not that you are not bold; you just need more internal vapor pressure!

*"Now when they saw the **boldness** of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13)* We absolutely want to get theology right, but theology cannot replace passion. You can know everything, but if you are not passionate for Jesus, you will do nothing. Think about a marriage. Passion is so important in a marriage. A marriage is not just principle. Passionate love will cause you to do what principle will never motivate you too. Believing is not enough — we must believe to the point of action!

In Luke 11:8 we see Jesus' commentary about getting loaves of bread at midnight. *"I say to you, though **he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.**"* You can get from boldness with God some things that you do not yet have with Him by friendship. There are some people that have a beautiful relationship with God in their prayer closet, but do not have great faith — they do not have boldness. There are other believers who might make you cringe sometimes with what they say or do or how they do it, but they have great faith and they see great results. We need to take a lesson from those of great faith!

We tend to think theology, theology, theology. But why were Peter and John so bold for the gospel? 5,000 saved! It wasn't because of their great training in the Word; it was because they had been with Jesus! They had a passion for Jesus! Note that when Peter preached to the 3,000 on the day of Pentecost and to the 5,000 at Solomon's Portico he still was not sure if Gentiles were allowed to receive salvation and if all Christians needed to be physically circumcised! Think of it!

We need to have a value for boldness. We need to have a value for action! We've been studying the Great Commission, but at the end of the day, are you going to do it?!? Are you part of the 99% or the 5%? Who's going to act? No one at Agathos Church has a limiting factor of knowledge of the Word as it relates to the Great Commission. We just have to step out — we have to do the work! Blessed are those who DO the Word!

Now, boldness is not brashness. Boldness is when you stand out from your surroundings. Think of bold letters. They stand out from their surroundings. Boldness is when you boil over - when you have more love for Jesus effervescing out of your heart than there is atmospheric pressure pushing against it.

Every font can be made bold and so can every believer! So, how can you increase your boldness? The first way is through being with Jesus in prayer. Peter and John were so bold because they had been with Jesus! Edwin Louis Cole said, "Prayer in private results in boldness in public." When you spend time in the presence of God, one of things He does is assure you of your identity in Him. Just the fact that you are before Him and He is talking with you assures you of your identity as a son or daughter of God -that you are righteous before Him. As you increasingly realize how righteous you are before Him, the Proverb becomes true of you that says, "the righteous are as bold as a lion!" When you don't think you are righteous, you flee even though no one is pursuing. When you know that you are righteous, you are as bold as a lion! Jesus said in Jn. 15:27, "*And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me.*"

The second way you can increase your "vapor pressure" for boldness is to meditate on the Word of God. DL Moody said, "*Find a man meditating on the Word of God ... you will find a man who is bold and successful.*" In John 14:24 and 15:9-10 we see a positive feedback loop about being in the Word. We see that you have to actually have love for Jesus in order to keep His word. But, when you keep His word, it gives you love for Jesus! So how do you get started in that positive feedback loop?

The answer is that you get in the Word and it will give you more love for Jesus, which will in turn make it easier to be in the Word ... There is such a thing as "Word debt." Getting out of "Word debt" is just like getting out of financial debt. You need to stop spending all of your time. When you need to get out of financial debt, you stop spending all of your money and you try to find money each month to start paying down your debt. That's what you need to do with the Word! If you are in Word debt on any level — you need to cut something out. Find 10 or 20 minutes and get in the

Word. God will then give you divine ideas that make your day go better and you are going to have more time. Then, reinvest that time in the Word!

In addition to being able to increase our “vapor pressure” for boldness, we can also decrease the atmospheric pressure. You can pray to decrease the darkness of an environment. For instance, if you are going to go witness at a mall, you can command any hindering spirits to be removed from that atmosphere, but even after you pray, there may still be some amount of atmospheric pressure. That’s fine, simply don’t emphasize that in your thinking, which would magnify the darkness in your own mind. Just let the love of God flow right out of you!

Homework Assignment: Prepare your personal testimony (5 minutes) to share in small groups at church in the park.

Points to Ponder . . .

- Describe the “atmospheric pressure” against the Great Commission.
- What makes some bold enough to not just believe, but also confess?
- Why are certain circumstances harder to witness (in word and power) in?
- How can you increase your capacity to witness in more difficult circumstances?
- How can you get out of “Word debt”?