**A MODERN DAY EXAMPLE OF BOLDNESS**

*Great boldness creates amazing results*

**Brent Hunter, evangelist, Kirkland church of Christ**

Years ago I received an email about an amazing prayer that in my judgment is a great example of modern day boldness. . This sort of thing is very rare today in this age of “political correctness,” so I found it quite refreshing! I will share with you the bold prayer that spoke the truth in clear terms and created quite an uproar, at the end of this brief article. But first, let me make a few introductory comments as to how this relates to us today.

Sadly, we live in an age where people rarely even feel they can use the word “sin” without creating offense or being accused of being “judgmental.” According to the mainstream media, and many religious leaders today, no one “sins” any more, they just make “mistakes! ” Indeed, one of the most popular televangelists in our land, Joel Osteen, refuses to use the word sin, because he does not want to make people feel guilty. Amazing! Jesus ***said “Unless, you repent, you shall perish”(Lk 13:3).*** How can anyone ever come to repentance if they never are confronted with their sins and urged to ask God in heaven for forgiveness? How can anyone even become a Christian without obeying the command to “Repent and be baptized” (Acts 2:38). Even a casual read of the sermons in the book of Acts shows us that the early church grew, not by making up euphemisms to describe what it means to be an infidel or to commit ungodly deeds, but by plainly dealing with sins in unambiguous ways and calling people to repentance! Paul stated that a good summary of the gospel message is that all people ***“should repent, turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance” (See Acts 26:20)***!

Beloved, good preaching should be balanced. A strive for a variety of messages as I strive to preach **“the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).** Some motivational and encouraging messages are certainly in order, but a steady diet of that only is not what the Lord intends. Frankly, we have way too much soft preaching today that is designed to make people feel good, instead of calling people to righteousness! Paul told Timothy to ***“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. (2 Tim 4:2-5).*** The command here speaks to this balance I am referring to. In order to ***“convince, rebuke, and exhort”*** it requires that one at times must have the courage to speak boldly!

Peter says to Christians***: “You are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (I Peter 2:9).*** This means we are to be holy and separate***, “not conformed to this world but transformed by the renewing of our minds” (Rom 12: 1-2).***  We must not be content to just restore the external framework of Christianity, but be dedicated to restore the spirit of the New Testament church as well. A part of restoring the New Testament pattern, is restoring the zeal, the evangelistic fervor, and the boldness that characterized the early church. We must be willing to speak plainly. The aforementioned prayer identifies well the folly so prevalent today of putting a “spin” on things so as to obscure what they really are! I believe it serves as a good example of what boldness means in spiritual and moral matters. Yes, it will always create controversy, and some criticism, but it also will bring many people to the truth if done kindly and in love!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| |  | | --- | | According to my sources, the account of this prayer is not some urban legend. This event actually happened in the Kansas House in Topeka on January 23, 1996.   Joe Wright is the pastor of Central Christian Church in Wichita and was guest chaplain that day.  He prayed a prayer of repentance that was written by Bob Russell, pastor of Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky. According to an article in the Kansas City Star from January 24, 1996, his prayer stirred controversy and one member of the legislative body walked out.  Others criticized the prayer.  The controversy didn't end there.  Later that year in the Colorado House, Republican representative Mark Paschall angered lawmakers by using Joe Wright's prayer as the invocation.  Some members there also walked out in protest.   Paul Harvey aired the story and the prayer.  He got such a large response that a phone number was set up to handle the calls.  He's aired it a couple more times since.  Here is the email that I received: | |
|  |
|  |
| When Minister Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas House, everyone was expecting the usual generalities, but this is what they heard:  Heavenly Father,  We come before You today to ask Your forgiveness and seek Your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, ''Woe to those who call evil good,'' but that's exactly what we have done. We have lost our Spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values. We confess that; we have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it pluralism; We have worshipped other gods and called it multiculturalism; We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle; We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery; We have neglected the needy and called it self preservation; We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare; We have killed our unborn and called it choice; We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable; We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem; We have abused power and called it political savvy; We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition; We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression; We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment. Search us, O God, and know our hearts today; try us and see if there be some wicked way in us; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of this state and who have been ordained by You, to govern this great state of Kansas. Grant them your wisdom to rule and may their decisions direct us to the center of Your Will.  I ask in in the name of your Son, The Living Savior, Jesus Christ  The response was immediate.   In 6 short weeks, Central Christian Church, where Rev. Wright is pastor, logged more than 5,000 phone calls with only 47 of those calls responding negatively. The church is now receiving international requests for copies of this prayer from India, Africa, and Korea.    Commentator Paul Harvey aired this prayer on "The Rest of the Story" on the radio and received a larger response to this program than any other he has ever aired.  With the Lord's help, may this prayer sweep over our nation and wholeheartedly become our desire so that we again can be called one nation under God. |

Beloved, how does this prayer and this amazing response make your feel? I hope we will all do some honest soul searching and look into ways we can apply the spirit of NT boldness in our lives, to the glory of God! Indeed, may our prayer be that we have the courage and the wisdom as the apostle Paul said to “speak boldly what we ought to speak” (Eph 6:20)!