

With All Boldness

by Carl McMurray

*... Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have **boldness** and access with confidence through our faith in him. So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory. (Ephesians 3:11b-13 ESV)*

In speaking of prayer the apostle here mentions an attitude that the Christian has a right to have, i.e. the attitude of boldness. The original word is *parresia*, (3954, Strongs Numbering System) and meant, to have the right to say anything, an openness to truth, candor. The most literal meaning of the word is “to tell all.” The word is used about 31 times in the New Testament and refers to the words of Jesus as well as to his apostles. This certainly sounds like an admirable trait to have but the other side of the coin needs to be pointed out. Taken to its absolute extreme this word takes on a negative connotation of insolence, or of being disrespectful.

The apostle is telling the Ephesians (and us) that we have the wonderful ability to approach the Creator with complete openness and honesty. There is nothing that we need to hold back from God our Father. We have the right to say anything to Him with all candor. The blessing of this openness is seen when the old Levitical system is held up alongside the new system in Christ. Under the old Law only the High Priest was allowed to approach God and he could only do so by entering the Most Holy Place once a year on the Day of Atonement. We, on the other hand, because of the blood of Christ, can approach God at any time, directly, and openly.

We should probably sound a word of caution about this time, remembering the negative expression of this word. We never have the right to approach God with the type of “boldness” that reflects insolence and disrespect. The “hey Daddy-O” type of prayer neglects the idea that although God loves us, He is still God and one of the traits of Deity is that He is worthy of worship. Worship is defined as reverence and awe directed toward another. Our God is described as awesome, terrible, and even His name is Holy and reverent. Although Paul encourages us to approach God without any inhibitions or fears, yet we need to make sure our “openness” is just that, i.e. openness and honesty, without being so bold as to be disrespectful.

When it comes to men, speak with boldness, that is, honestly with candor. When it comes to God, speak with boldness, i.e., openly sharing any issue, desire, or problem. As a child of God, because of access through the blood of Christ, that is your birthright, your privilege with your Father. 2 Timothy 1:7 reminds us that we have not been given a spirit of timidity or fear, but of power. Claim your power. Speak to God and man with boldness.