<u>Serving Through Boldness</u>
Acts 6.10

<u>Intro:</u>
With the different ideas and lifestyles thrown our way as Christians, we have to be aware of the answers we must give in defense of truth, morality and the cause of Christ. With knowledge developing more and men seeming to be more intelligent and sinners growing worse and worse, the heart of the righteous has to study to answer (Pro. 15.28). How do we serve a generation that believes they are better than everyone else? How do we combat the narcissistic attitudes of our day? How do we answer the skeptic, the agnostic and the immoral of our day? The answer is simple, by being bold for the Lord and His cause. Stephen shows us how to serve through boldness.

<u>Discussion:</u>

1. **Considering *BOLDNESS* in the Scriptures!**
    a. What is it? It means to speak openly, without concealment or unclearness. Cheerful courage and fearless confidence, bluntness, assurance.
    b. When was it used in the scriptures?
        i. Jesus spoke openly (Mark 8.32).
        ii. Paul used plainness of speech (2 Cor. 3.12).
        iii. Hebrews writer gave Christians confidence of the hope to come (3.6)
        iv. Christian's are not to cast this confidence away (Heb. 10.35).
        v. In prayer, we can approach God in confidence (1 Jn. 5.14).
    c. What was the outcome of this boldness at times?
        i. Some do not respond at all favorably to boldness of speech (Jn. 7.13).
        ii. Some resorted to violence because of Jesus' boldness (Jn. 18.22).
        iii. 3000 souls obeyed the gospel because of Peter's boldness (Acts 2.29-41).
        iv. Faithful Christian's will be shameless at His coming due to boldness (1 Jn. 2.28).

2. **Counting the Reasons Stephen was Bold?**
    a. The Character of the seven chosen (Acts 6.3).
    b. Seven (7) characteristics (*etched in*) seen in Stephen (6.3-8). ***He was full…***
        i. Good reputation
        ii. The Holy Spirit (influenced by righteousness)
        iii. Of wisdom… (walked wisely)
        iv. Of faith… (trust)
        v. Approved by the Apostles (confidence in spiritual leadership from the word - Acts 2.42 "*the apostle's doctrine*")

vi. Of grace… (favor with God)
vii. Of power… (inherit worth from God)
viii. Performed miracles… (proof of validation-evidence of reality of God)

c. Stephen's boldness could not be resisted (Acts 6.9).
   i. They disputed and questioned Stephen.
   ii. Pro. 18.17 (*the first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him*). No one is above questioning in the world.
      1. We should want to be questioned.
      2. We should question our generation on why or what they're doing.
      3. Stephen was questioned in Acts 7.1, "***are these things so?***".
   iii. Our boldness and answers should always be on the basis of evidence and truth we have searched out personally.
      1. Pro. 25.2 (*it is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter*).
      2. We should want to be a people who operate on evidence/testimony and require it from those we come in contact in the world and among us (Deut. 13.14).
      3. Many cannot teach because they have not obtained the information personally (Heb. 5.12-14).
      4. We must search the word (Jn. 5.39).
d. Our moral and spiritual development should develop these principles in us.

3. Stephen's Boldness was in the Evidence Given (7.1-50).

a. Acts 7.1 (Stephen is questioned and notice the evidence)
b. Boldness is based upon evidence (persuasion) and not coercion.
   i. Begins with Abraham in Genesis 12.1-3 (1-8)
   ii. Continues with Joseph as God was with him (9-16)
   iii. He gives the evidence of Moses and God raising a prophet like him to be obeyed according to Deut. 18.15-18. (17-43)
   iv. On and on he gives evidence. Which is shown in boldness.
c. He calls them out for their lack of humility and disobedience (7.51-53).
d. Notice the response to His evidence and boldness (7.54-59).
e. Stephen was rewarded for his boldness by the standing of Jesus at God's right hand (7.55). Just knowing you are doing right should encourage you.

<u>Conclusion:</u>

Let us do our best to require evidence from those outside and among us. We actually serve one another in truth when this is required. Our world has allowed too many to operate in error,

ignorance and self imposed platitudes for too long. Let us do our due diligence and serve our generation through simply being bold enough to speak up.