

Week 4 | Is Jesus a Lion?

Key Scripture: John 2:13-25, Acts 1:6-8

Objectives:

- Vision & purpose free others around you
- Boldness is part of all Christian lives, no matter how timid or non confrontational you may be without Jesus
- Being unhealthy hurts everyone including the lion himself

Scripture Reference:

John 2:13-25 (NLT) | 13 It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went to Jerusalem. 14 In the Temple area he saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money. 15 Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. 16 Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!" 17 Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume me." 18 But the Jewish leaders demanded, "What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it." 19 "All right," Jesus replied. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 "What!" they exclaimed. "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?" 21 But when Jesus said "this temple," he meant his own body. 22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said. 23 Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. 24 But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew human nature. 25 No one needed to tell him what mankind is really like.

Last week | Jesus was the embodiment of joy, even though we don't read scriptures talking about him laughing or cutting up. You can't have Joy without Jesus. You can't have Jesus without Joy. Jesus knew the importance of being in the moment. Otters are more capable of being in the moment than more detail oriented or driven personalities.

Our culture has made it difficult for us to find moments to sit at the feet of Jesus like Mary did, but in order to tap into true relationship/joy with Jesus, we have to make time for those moments. The Martha part of our lives struggles with our own agendas, but even though some pursuits are worthy of our time, we can't neglect the moments.

This week | Is Jesus a Lion?

Lion overview | Lions are bold, not afraid to lead or confront. Lions champion people & causes deemed worthy. Lions take risks others wouldn't dream about, why? Because lions possess visionary skill to see life's possibilities! While details aren't that important, truth is. You may find lions will die for a cause rather than give up! A lion can be a great defender & friend but with immaturity or hurt, a lion can be a liability to everyone. When vision is unfocused or the cause they are fighting is wrong, a lion can hurt the ones they are supposed to help. Have you ever seen someone injure others with the very words meant to heal and love others with? It could've been a wounded lion. This could be why Jesus is The Lion of Judah AND The Lamb of God! Jesus is all Truth & Grace. A healthy lion knows when to lead and when to let go.

Read John 2:13-25 (NLT)

Do you see Jesus as a lion here? What does the word zeal mean?

Zeal is interesting. It has positive and negative meanings. In one sense zeal is righteous indignation. On the other hand it means jealousy and envy.

Have you ever been around a jealous or envious person? How did you feel about that relationship or experience?

Unhealthy lions can do a lot of damage. This is because their vision is off. They are focused on themselves and not others. As for the animal itself, lions have no natural predators in the wild, they're often killed by other lions. Why? Territory disputes or attacking each other over a kill they all collectively made. This speaks to the unhealthy person the same. A lion can fight for the same cause as you but due to injury, attack the people who are on the same team with them. Once they are left alone, a hurt lonely lion may seek to avoid people & issues. This means they actually undermine their own calling to "lick their wounds." Is it a coincidence that a pack of lions is called a pride? This may be the largest struggle for the lion. It's tough to be vulnerable and lead with strength.

What are ways you have learned to work with unhealthy lion type people? Can you work or relate with them?

In John 2, Jesus is boldly handling business. Zeal has eaten him up. Some would call this "righteous indignation." Meaning Jesus was right in the cause and it was necessary. He must have had a purpose.

What do you think was the purpose Jesus did this? What was the point?

Jesus cleaned out the business in God's temple. Jesus boldly confronted the Jews who didn't have a heart for God rather their wallets. Jesus wanted to restore order in God's house. Jesus wanted to see the temple as the place of worship & prayer. All of these are true but one thing stands out higher.

Jesus liberated the oppressed who were kept from God.

That's right, the building was just that. The religious practices were just that. A place and activities that point to relationship with The Almighty God himself! They were necessary at the time but it was corrupted by mankind. Jesus saw common people afflicted and not able to fulfill commandments that were meant for them. It was a crooked religious system that men created. Jesus saw a people who needed freedom and he was going to set things right. The very holy place of worship was turned into a place for human profit. No wonder he was zealous!

Cleansing the temple was a type and shadow of saving our souls!

How are you & others negatively affected when you are not willing to confront wrong? How about when you choose to avoid defending ones who are helpless or in need?

Acts 1:6-8 (NLT) | 6 So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?" 7 He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere--in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Jesus asked the disciples to follow him. They did for 3 years. They thought Jesus was coming to reign on Earth as King of Israel forever at this point. Jesus had much bigger plans! He tells them that when they receive the Holy Spirit, they will receive power and be witnesses of HIM. This is still available to us today!

God himself would fill each believer with HIS Spirit. This brings spiritual life and takes care of our sin. This brings purpose and a meaning to our lives that we cannot create for ourselves. This gives a personal relationship with The Creator himself which is what God originally intended for humanity. This relationship radically changes the believer into a participant -- a Christian. A Christian has access to be bold, powerful, and demonstrate God's love to other believers and people who do not believe just the same. Lion traits trailblaze this path of boldness and unbridled love for others when expressed correctly. Not just the lion is called though. The otter, beaver, and golden retriever are all called to live a bold Christian life!

What does being bold look like to you personally?

Where does boldness come from?

Do you think boldness looks different for different personality types?

Is answering God's calling something you're uncomfortable with doing? What does that mean to you?

What is God calling you to do? (Is God calling you to love your enemy or forgive someone?

Maybe speak to someone you don't know about Jesus?)

Could being bold simply be acknowledging Jesus as God to see if it's true?

A confidence in Jesus Christ leads to a confident full life lived. For lions, confidence can seem easy. For a beaver or retriever, it can seem extreme at times. Either way, we can all find a way to see we were meant for more than to survive on this planet. How can we do that boldly with purpose?

Until next week | Find time alone with God. Look for ways to live boldly, whatever that is to you. Look to lift up and encourage someone around you who needs it. Not for anything in return, simply to help another person out.

Was Jesus a Lion?

By: April Ashley

What is boldness?

- Willingness to take risks and act innovatively; confidence or courage
- The quality of having a strong, vivid, or clear appearance.

What characteristics would you expect to see in a bold person?

- Stand out from the group
- Confident
- Courageous
- Directed
- Given the right set of circumstances, many will take action to better the world around them.

What is the opposite of boldness?

- Cowardice
- Weakness
- Fearfulness
- Timidity
- Spiritlessness
- Spinelessness

Is being bold a good thing?

- Being bold builds your confidence.
- When you set a goal and say it out loud it becomes real.

Jesus' Bold Move

Anytime God wants to initiate something new, he calls one of His own to make a bold move. You can count in it.

It was certainly bold for Abraham to leave his retirement plans in Ur and venture out into an uncharted land. It was bold for David to face off against the giant, Goliath. It was bold for Moses to return to Egypt where he was a wanted man. It was bold for Joshua to circle Jericho. It was bold for Elijah to build an altar. It was bold for Daniel to pray. It was bold for Nehemiah to initiate a building project. God always begins his new work by calling His people to make extraordinary, risk-taking, hair-raising, wisdom-defying bold moves. Without them, nothing great ever happens.

The greatest bold moves of all were reserved for Jesus. If I were to ask you, "What were Jesus' bold moves?" you would probably say something like: Leaving heaven, confronting the Pharisees, enduring the cross, maybe even the resurrection – you can't get bolder than that! Did you know, though, that

there were a series of bold moves Jesus made early in his ministry that were so critical, so strategic that if he had not taken them, the movement would have died before it had a chance to live?

John the Baptist was wildly popular. Massive crowds came from all over Israel and bordering countries to hear his hard-hitting prophetic message of repentance. John was like the Billy Graham of his day. He was a magnet to the people and a lightening rod to the religious leaders. Whether you agreed with John or not, there was no denying the fact that excitement was stirring and the people could sense it. Eighteen months earlier, John has baptized Jesus in the Jordan River declaring, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). John was soon imprisoned for publicly exposing Herod Antipas' affair. With John out of the picture, the crowds were left without a leader and the movement could have begun to dissipate. But in that moment, Jesus made a series of bold moves.

When He heard that John had been arrested, He withdrew to Galilee, leaving Nazareth, and went into Capernaum to live. This was to fulfill what was spoken thru the prophet Isaiah: Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, along with sea road, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles! The people who live in darkness have seen a great light, and for those living in the shadowland of death, light has dawned. From then on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!" As He was walking along the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea since they were fishermen. "Follow Me," He told them "and I will make you fish for people!" Matthew 4:12-19

Jesus stepped into the vacuum of leadership and made four bold moves:

1. He moved his home base of operation from Nazareth to Capernaum; a thriving city on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee.
2. He began to preach the message that John the Baptist had been preaching, namely "Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come."
3. He began to give leadership to the movement. From this point forward, John the Baptist would never again be the focal point. His work was done. Now all eyes were on Jesus.
4. Jesus started calling out men to form his leadership team. He had been grooming Peter and Andrew, James and John for this moment. Now it was their time to make a bold move of their own.

As a result of Jesus' moves, the ministry continued to grow, and the movement of God went to a whole new level. From this point forward miracles exploded, Jesus' popularity soared, and leaders multiplied. If Jesus hadn't made these moves, my guess is the movement would have smoldered, fizzled, and slowly died out.

What is Jesus saying to us?

For ministry to move forward, it requires leaders to make Spirit-directed, risk-defying, faith-emboldened bold moves. These moves create momentum, increase focus, infuse energy, establish new norms, surface new leaders, and result in growth. You are simply not going to get where you want to go apart from making some bold moves.

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Written by Craig Etheredge

Commentary on Jesus in the Temple with the Money Changers:

Jesus' anger was righteous because it was based on His love for the Father. In the moment, He did not care that His actions could get Him in trouble with the religious leaders. His example is one we should follow whenever we are forced with situations in which we have a chance to stand up for the right in the face of opposition.

What are some other examples of Jesus' boldness?

John 8:58

⁵⁸ Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I am!^[a]"

Footnotes

- a. [8:58](#) Or *before Abraham was even born, I have always been alive*; Greek reads *before Abraham was, I am*. See [Exod 3:14](#).

Luke 4:12

¹² Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the Lord your God.'^[a]"

Provoking Thought:

1. Is the Character of Boldness working in you?
2. How do I exhibit boldness in my daily life?
3. What can I do to develop a better willingness to take a calculated and wise chance?
4. What blocks boldness from working and being exhibited in me?
5. How can I make boldness function better, stronger, and faster, even in times of uncertainty and stress?