

Being Bold in the Faith

Imagine yourself sitting down for a quick lunch at a mall food court. It seems to be more crowded than usual, but it is the Christmas season. A piano player is playing a politically correct Christmas songs, Jingle Bells and Here Comes Santa Claus. No one pays attention; it is just background music playing. Then it happens. As the song finishes a person belts out the first phrase of a familiar song. A few people take notice. Then, from across the food court another person stands up, singing the second line. That couldn't be a coincidence, so a few more people start to perk up. By the time a third singer joins in, it clearly gets the attention of every diner. Obviously, this was a planned "flash mob" singing one of the most inspirational songs ever written – the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah. By the end of the song hundreds of people join in, including shoppers who were swept up in the beautiful musical expression of faith. It was spectacular!

Could you image what it would be like to be dining in the middle of all the action? A minute ago you were minding your own business, drinking a cup of coffee, eating a slice of pizza and trying to plan your Christmas shopping strategy. Then, one of the most powerful anthems surrounds you and starts your heart pumping. "King of Kings and Lord of Lords; forever and ever. Hallelujah. Hallelujah." Look at the surprised expression on the kids. They are thinking, adults don't generally step out of their comfort zone and do this. This must be something special.



Suddenly political correctness isn't important? Jingle Bells doesn't offend anyone, but it doesn't inspire either. Isn't it illegal to sing a Christian song in public? Can we get arrested for this? Do people even want to hear about Jesus Christ? They do! A You Tube internet link shows an astronomical number of "likes" to the mall food court scene. 97.6% of the people responding indicated they "liked" this performance, an overwhelming percentage considering people tend to speak up only if they have something negative to say.

Many people want the freedom to express their faith, but they are hesitant to take the first step. Some of those people joined in on the Hallelujah chorus. It became "safe" to express your faith as long as others lead the way. We don't need conditions to be perfect in order to express our faith. Is the Great Commission only to be done in the safety of our sanctuaries at church – to people who already have a faith? The intent of the Great Commission is to share God's message to others who may not have heard it before -- Like in the food court at the mall.

Look for opportunities to share your faith. Know that you are surrounded by supporters who will join in if someone takes the lead. You are not alone but you can be the person who steps up first. If someone didn't step up, the people at the mall food court would not have been inspired about the true meaning of the Christmas season. Instead, they were inspired by why we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Shopping took on a new meaning that day.

“*And He shall reign forever and ever*” are memorable words in the *Hallelujah Chorus*. As fellow Christians, we want as many people as possible to be included in His Kingdom that lasts forever. That is music to my ears. If you want to make a difference in the world, you have to speak to those who don’t – yet -- know of Christ’s love for them.

Scripture: *Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.* (Matthew 28:19)

Question: How can you be bold in expressing your faith to those who need to know of God’s love for them?

Prayer: Let us be bold, dear Lord. Take away our fears of being rejected because of our faith, and replace that fear with the satisfaction that we are encouraging others in their faith. Amen.