

# Called to be Bold and Courageous

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] welcome everyone and welcome this week to Dottie Dora the Explorer she's our beloved T4 campervan and apparently you have to name your campervan so Mandy came up with the red spotted theme and Dottie Dora was named she looks absolutely gorgeous now thanks to a significant makeover and Mandy's interior design but look deeper and she's had a tough life she was originally a builder's van and still carries quite a few marks of the life that she lived for many years the thing about exploring is that there is always something new ahead and Dora I guess never guessed that her life on a Scottish building site would be radically transformed in later life and that there was a whole new adventure and a new life at waiting for her Sam's reading from Acts is about a radical transformation a life and world changing moment for Peter his fellow disciples and 3 000 people that day you see they'd hidden away in fear they denied Jesus in fear for their own safety and when Jesus was arrested and then crucified and you you'd understand maybe how they had felt and yet what a change you see here is Peter courageously and boldly encouraging everyone to step out in faith and to be baptized and to follow Jesus you see in the political setting of the day it doesn't get any more radical and courageous than this God takes Peter and he puts him here in the right place at the right time with the right message maximum engagement with a group of people who were open to change and that brought about amazing transformation in the lives of so many Jesus has risen and they the disciples were filled with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit and the effect and new boldness was just amazing you see the news at the moment is full of courageous acts it's wherever you look or listen in the media everyday people like you and me courageously stepping out into settings that are brave and sacrificial and in many cases risking so much to see others saved the thing is that many people when you applaud their courageous acts they just say I was just doing my job or I knew I had to do that which is what I'm hearing from many Christians at the moment

I'm just doing what I'm called to do there is a renewed sense amongst Christians of missional courage and boldness in reaching out to people who need to be saved I remember quite a few years ago a police colleague who dived into Bridgewater docks to save a dog now if you have ever seen Bridgewater docks in those days before they dredged it and turned it into a very nice marina I can tell you you'd think twice about diving in even for a human being yet Roger did and I remember in the police canteen afterwards and it was before political correctness was born and I'll leave you to picture the banter and I'm not sure whether he even did give the dog the kiss of life but the bottom line was would you risk your life for a dog but we all knew that we if we had been there on the day we'd have all done it because when you arrive in a desperate situation people look to you for actions and for answers and my colleague Roger did exactly what we would have all done when you were in a tough place courage kicks in he wasn't prepared to walk away through his lack of courage

I'm not wishing to be too dramatic here today folks but today in our country people are drowning in fear at the moment and everything in the gospel that I read says do not be afraid Jesus says he has conquered the world we have been given the gifts we've been given the tools we've been given the courage to save this nation because the risen Christ gave those tools to us when he stepped out of a cold stone tomb and the Holy Spirit breathed life into us I think it's a moment for us all to be bold and courageous the church you and I an opportunity to be missionally courageous right now I remember Karl Martin at New One coined the term embolden my bold and encourage my courage and I sense that's a message that many of us are experiencing as we face a nation seeking new life and new hope and the church faces a new challenge as Karl was talking about boldness and change he told us a story he was driving home to Scotland on the M6 and I don't know if you know maybe it was in a T4 but the snow was coming down the blizzard was making driving almost

impossible visibility was poor and it took every ounce to keep focused on the job in hand to arrive home safely but there it was on the inside lane creeping along of all things was an ice cream van an ice cream van

I mean who wants an ice cream in the midst of winter but he sensed God saying to him that's often like the church it's a great thing and we want to share what we have but sometimes we find ourselves in the wrong place at the wrong time and frankly sometimes we just look ridiculous today I want to encourage your courage and embolden your bold because I think after many decades we the church the people of God are exactly in the right place at the right time to do the right thing and if we seek the Lord afresh in the power of his Holy Spirit with boldness and courage people will see that and experience in that and they will find in us God's love and fresh hope and new courage for today you can't walk away when you see something unfolding in front of you and God often places us in the right place at the right time to do the right thing but he will give us boldness and courage to do that perhaps at this moment your finger is hovering over the send button now to send this maybe to five people who you know who you wouldn't normally encourage them with a Christian message perhaps the phone is within easy reach to send a link or a prayer to them to speak to them you know do you see Peter and his disciples were in the right place at the right time and were courageous and the people of God grew dramatically overnight and kept growing you see the cross was a sort of reset button and maybe that's true for us the old was gone and the new was here you see we face an enemy and we are if I'm sure there's enough of us and Christians to be courageous enough to dive in when we get to Acts 12 the church is under attack

James has been beheaded Peter is imprisoned and the church what does the early church do? they are bold and courageous and they pray and by the end of the chapter Peter has been miraculously freed Herod is dead the people of God are emboldened and encouraged and the church continues growing faster than anyone could have imagined courage brings breakthrough and victory and I suppose the question is today will we dive in?

[ 8 : 51 ] I hope we will who are the five people you will contact to encourage their courage and embolden their bold with the gospel of Jesus today? those who accepted his message were baptised and about three thousand were added to that number that day I don't know when Dora will be allowed out on her next adventure but for many of us that adventure could start with the click of a button or a phone call right now or a random a courageous act of generosity can I pray with you?

can I pray with you so that we get that sense of courage and boldness to be in the right place at the right time let's pray Holy Spirit come and embolden our bold and encourage our courage in the face of this virus may we stand in faith in your promises thank you for those that have fought the fight and now stand with you and I pray in this moment while the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in us and rises up to stir up our courage and embolden our bold that we will risk everything to bring others into relationship with you so Holy Spirit come now I pray fill us afresh and heal this land in Jesus name Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen

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