

Facing the Pressure of Fear



Jim Cymbala June 9, 2018

Downtown Brooklyn isn't the only place resistant to the gospel. As Christians, we can find hostility wherever we go. That opposition can cause us to become fearful and timid. We're afraid that if we stand for Christ, we might not fit in with our family, friends, or coworkers. That's why Scripture warns us about the importance of public confession of our faith in Christ.

"Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26). What a sobering thought that Jesus might be *ashamed* of some of us when he returns to earth.

This need for boldness applies even to kids who grow up in a Christian home. They can talk about spiritual things without experiencing much resistance. But things change when they reach high school and later go off to college. Suddenly they find that if they talk about God the Creator, or worse, Jesus dying for the sins of the world, they're labeled. Professors call them ignorant; students brand them as intolerant, so some keep quiet, fearing the rejection of their peers.

When Christian students leave school and enter the workforce, they find a similar hostility. Now they learn that mentioning Jesus at work may cause them to lose career opportunities and some gradually become closet Christians.

We live in a hostile spiritual environment, and we don't have to be young to face the pressure of giving in to fear or timidity. It's true for ministers as well as for people in the pew. That's why this promise from the Bible is so important for us: "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power" (2 Timothy 1:7). Through the Holy Spirit, God has promised to give us courage, and even boldness, to swim against the current and to speak for Christ even though we might be mocked.

Jim Cymbala began the Brooklyn Tabernacle with less than twenty members in a small, rundown building in a difficult part of the city. A native of Brooklyn, he is a longtime friend of both David and Gary Wilkerson.

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