

## Loving Boldly As Jesus Did



Gary Wilkerson March 25, 2019

When we consider our lifestyles as Jesus followers, most of ours do not fit the New Testament model. Christ sent out his twelve disciples to proclaim the good news, heal the sick, and be willing vessels to bring about his kingdom on earth (see Mark 16:15-18). Later, he sent out seventy disciples with the same instructions (see Luke 10:1-16). He told each of these groups, “Everything I have taught you to do — preach the gospel, heal the afflicted and bring about my kingdom — you are to do in my name. Now go into all the world and do as I have commanded.”

That is the New Testament model. But the gap between it and the way we live our faith is vast. At one end is God’s wonder-working power, and on the opposite end is our lifestyle. What keeps us from doing the works of Jesus? I believe it is this: we need a baptism of his love.

One barrier more than any other keeps us from loving boldly as Jesus did. This barrier is fear! When we imagine doing the works of Jesus, we are afraid of people, of what they might think, and of failing. The apostle John addresses this directly: “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love” (1 John 4:18).

Paul enumerates the gifts that come from being freed from fear: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of *power and of love and of a sound mind*” (2 Timothy 1:7). Nothing in our human ability can fill us with a spirit of power and love and a sound mind. These are gifts of God, and he gives them to all who ask. When he frees us from fear, we are able to love people with *his love* and minister to their deepest needs. His love changes everything!

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