

## **Live Dangerously & Witness Deliberately**

One of my favorite genres to read when I need a pick-me-up or simply a kick in the pants is biographies. These accounts of men and women's lives are filled with demonstrations of great wisdom, perseverance, and valor! A few years ago I received a short biography of Alexander the Great. The biography reminded me of an illustration I heard many years ago when I was first learning how to more effectively share my faith with others. Whether historically accurate or not, the event described certainly fits with Alexander the Great's character.

The late D. James Kennedy shares the account in the following manner:

One day, Alexander held court in Nebuchadnezzar's great palace in Babylon. He sat upon the great golden throne, pronouncing sentences for the crimes charged to his soldiers. The sergeant-at-arms brought in one soldier after another and read their crimes. No one could deliver them from Alexander's severe judgments.

Finally, the sergeant-at-arms brought in a young Macedonian soldier and read aloud his crime: fleeing in the face of the enemy. This cowardice Alexander could not tolerate. But as he looked on this young soldier, Alexander's countenance changed from stern to soft. Smiling, he said to the lad, "Son, what is your name?" The boy said softly, "Alexander." The smile left the king's face. He said, "What did you say?" The young man snapped to attention. "Alexander, sir." The king turned crimson and shouted, "WHAT IS YOUR NAME?" The boy began to stammer and said, "Al . . . Alex . . . Alexander, sir." The king burst out of his chair, grabbed the young man by the tunic, stared him in the face, then threw him on the ground and said, "Soldier, change your conduct or change your name!"

If you are a follower of Jesus, you have been given a name that carries royal undertones: Christian. Your life and mine must be lived in a manner worthy of that name. It should be consistent, courageous, and complete in its witness. As Christians, we have been called to obey the Lord by living dangerously and witnessing deliberately. The early church, as described in the beginning chapters of Acts, understood this unflinchingly and lived it fearlessly. The Gospel of Jesus Christ so gripped each believer that nothing caused them to shrink from proclaiming the good news to the captive and the lost.

This is a serious commission! One that requires the surrender or, as Jesus put it, death of ourselves. As He very clearly told His disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (Lk 9:23-24).

When it comes to our witness, let us not cower or remain silent, but let us stand firm in the Lord's name, living up to our calling as Christians - disciples who know the value of the Gospel and treasure its Provider! And then, let us proclaim it boldly!

**Acts 5:29-32 (ESV)** - *"Peter and the apostles answered, '**We must obey God rather than men.** The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.'"*