

# Faithfulness Amid The Storm

## OUT OF THE WORD

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I was recently teaching on how the early church grew amid extreme persecution, which is a dynamic testimony of the historical truth claims for our faith in the gospels and the Christian Church. The First Century Church has so many impressive characteristics. The early apostles of Christ were constantly threatened with imprisonment, arrest, and even death. Yet in the dead face of those intense warnings, the true church prayed, “...*Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness*” (Acts 4:29). The First Century Church didn’t pray for easier persecution; they prayed for courage to speak the truth regardless of what the consequences may be. The Bible teaches us to speak with truth and love and to be the salt and the light of the world. However, the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ is not persuading the lost world that we are going to lay down and coddle the “hot button” issues but instead invade the secular culture with the message of the cross. We must “*preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God*” (1 Cor. 1:23-24). It seems what happened even in our little community the church has not prayed for boldness. Many church leaders are focused on how to regain favor with the world and have churches that are relevant, nice, and inclusive. In so doing, they are locking arms with the new sexual revolution. Many conservative Christians are wondering why we cannot change our views on homosexuality, same-sex marriage, and the entire LGBTQ issues. One girl in the youth class called it, “*just another sin*”. It is so much more than that. This movement seeks to destroy any semblance of our creational identity, the beautiful reality of being man and women created in the very image of God. The LGBTQ revolution is a satanic temptation to reject God and His creation regulations and humanity’s identity and purpose. I am telling you now, it will not lead to human happiness nor human flourishing only guilt, despair, and chaos. Anything opposed to the Holy Bible will always end in despair. Twenty-first Century Christians must be aware our little quaint community here in Pinckneyville is becoming more and more bent on secularism. A lot of your local churches may not want to offend anyone, because it may not serve the community right or enhance their image. Well, remember when the apostles were threatened with imprisonment if they spoke publicly about Jesus’ resurrection, the disciples replied, “*We must obey God, not men.*” Right here in the once traditional, morally upright community of Pinckneyville; believe it or not, your local moose lodge is proud to present Pinckneyville’s first drag show. This chocolate-covered poison is under the umbrella of raising money for “kids” so they can have nice toys for Christmas. The man who posted the Facebook post goes by the drag name *Korra DeVil*. The devil (Greek word; *diabolos*, meaning “backbiter,” i.e., an accuser, calumniator slanderer) Satan is *used* by God in this plan – as a predictable wind-up toy, playing out his evil nature. The devil loves to give kids candy and toys. The devil always targets the children. Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44) and he loves to kill children. The demons are screaming and the Twenty-first Century Church is silent on these issues. Dietrich Bonhoeffer a German minister openly expressed opposition to the policies of Adolph Hitler. His radio show was cut off and his sermons were cut off, but he never stopped calling for repentance and forgiveness found in Jesus Christ alone. He boldly preached the truth and lived through the difficult period in his nation’s history with the people. Bonhoeffer was imprisoned in April 1943 and two years later in April 1945, when the war was almost over, Hitler ordered that Bonhoeffer be hanged. I want to close with a short quote from Bonhoeffer, who

wrote, “*Silence in the face of evil is evil.*” My prayer, “Lord enable your servants to speak with truth and love your holy word with great boldness”. God has spoken, and so must we.