



## CHAPTER 2

### Time to be Bold

#### OPENING STATEMENT

Although Jesus' miracles stand alone as great examples of His power and authority, they also do much to REVEAL His HEART and PURPOSES.

- \* In each miracle / episode are LESSONS JUST BELOW THE SURFACE.
- \* Bill Johnson: "Jesus OFFENDS the MIND to REVEAL the HEART."
- *Can you think of examples of where Jesus offends people's minds to reveal their heart? Why is that so necessary? How did Jesus routinely do so?*
- \* If the heart is OPEN, He can perform SURGERY. If it's CLOSED, there's NOT MUCH He can do for (in?) us.
- *Why is an open heart so crucial? Why, if it is closed, is there not much God can do for us / in us / through us? How does He work to get our hearts open?*

#### 4 thoughts to PROVOKE our MINDS & CHALLENGE our HEARTS

##### 1. How DESPERATE are we for what God has for us OR are we happy just to SETTLE for the status quo?

- \* The four friends literally moved heaven and earth to get their FRIEND in front of that MIRACLE-WORKER.
- \* The Challenge: Are you prepared to STEP OUT of your COMFORT ZONE to get what God has for you?
- *What holds you back from what God has for you? Is it shyness, fear of people, fear of what might happen, pride? Something else?*
- *Would you describe yourself as desperate? If so, how can we help? Why is it that without desperation we tend not to respond? Is desperation our friend or enemy?*

##### 2. What MEASURES are we PREPARED to take to put ourselves in the PLACE where God can do what ONLY GOD can do?

- \* Are you prepared to SETTLE or are you willing to PURSUE the SOLUTION, when that SOLUTION is standing right there?
- What are we SETTLING for as a CHURCH?
- \* Are we lolling along with a FRACTION, when we could have it ALL?
  - \* Are we settling for COMFORT and ENTERTAINMENT, when Jesus is offering us FAITH and ADVENTURE?
  - \* Are we settling for the 'HAND LIFE'S DEALT US,' when Jesus is offering us HOPE, FREEDOM, BREAKTHROUGH?
  - \* Are we settling for DRY and BARREN, when Christ has offered us RIVERS OF LIVING WATER (Hosea 10:12).
- *If you're brutally honest, what have you 'settled' for? What have you resigned yourself to? What would you change in your life if anything was possible? What has God been trying to change but which you've been resisting?*

##### 3. How POLITE is your faith? Is faith POLITE or is it BOLD?

- \* Was Jesus POLITE? NICE? SOFT? PC?
- \* There's a difference between KIND and NICE?

→ *What's the difference between kind and nice? Was Jesus nice? Can you think of occasions when He was not what we would characterise 'nice?' Why is kind superior? Is it sometimes unkind to be nice?*

- \* Faith doesn't excuse rampant IMPOLITENESS but there's a raw BOLDNESS about it: COURAGE, RESOLUTENESS, ZEALOUSNESS.
- \* The best thing we can offer one another & the world is a RED-HOT, ON-FIRE you!
- \* We're not going to grow the church, win the lost or reform culture through CLEVER PROGRAMS, but through RED-HOT VESSELS.

→ *Is 'Britishness' a help or hindrance to our faith? What seriously bold things did Jesus do? When was the last time you did something bold? Would you describe your faith as courageous, resolute or zealous? Would you like to be able to?*

→ *I'm all for well-intentioned people well-placed words, well-run programs, but I want the world to be dazzled by our faith, hope and love. Discuss!*

##### 4. Have you become SUBSERVIENT to RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS or is your spiritual life about creating ENVIRONMENTS where God can MOVE?

- \* RELIGIOUS Jews had their metaphorical 'KNICKERS IN A TWIST' about pretty much everything. As a result, they COMPLETELY MISSED what God was doing RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEIR EYES.
- \* Is there a danger our RELIGIOSITY hinders God's work when with our WORDS we're PRAYING INTENTLY for Him to move?
- \* RELIGION = Doing things which outwardly look good out of habit → Making it all about RULES, less about PEOPLE & more about PROCESSES, TRADITION dominates & SPONTANEITY is frowned upon, LETTER is king & spirit SQUASHED.
- \* I'm all for POLITE, RESPECTABLE, ORDERLY until we start HIDING BEHIND THAT.

→ *How does religiosity impede the move of the Holy Spirit? How does it keep God from working? Can we be so busy doing all the 'right things' that we actually shut the door on the Lord and don't give Him any space?*

*What can we as a church potentially hide behind? What are you personally hiding behind? Have any of our patterns become rote and formula? Do you ever do anything in worship on auto-pilot instead of from the heart?*

→ *"Too much church takes place in the pews and not enough in the altar!" What's the message behind this statement? Is it true? What could be different?*

##### What does an environment RIPE FOR GOD TO MOVE look like?

- a) PASSIONATE PRAISE: God on the throne.
  - b) WIDE-OPEN WORSHIP: Me on my knees.
  - c) LISTENING as well as SINGING: Keeps the door open.
  - d) EXPECTANCY: Faith, boldness, passion.
  - e) Where the WORD of POWER is PREACHED.
  - f) Where the HOLY SPIRIT is welcome and His GIFTS are on offer.
  - g) Where MINISTRY is available and RESPONSE encouraged.
- *Do you agree with that list? Why are each of these important? Anything you'd like to add? What would happen if all of that was in place in our churches?*

##### RESPONSE

1. Desperate or resigned? 2. Polite or bold? 3. Religiosity or wide-open?
- *Which of these is tugging your heart? If you could change in any one, which would it be, how and why?*