

Series Slide

In the Spring of 1939, the British government began a propaganda campaign to prepare their people for World War II.

The Government commissioned the printing of 3 posters that were designed to help the British people to endure through the difficult times of war and remain loyal to their country.

These 3 posters all looked similar, printed with a special font that would be difficult to counterfeit.

At the top of each poster, the crown of King George VI was printed as a reassuring reminder that they belonged to a kingdom with competent, powerful, and loyal leadership.

The first poster said, (show pic) <http://www.barterbooks.co.uk/catalog/images/books/courage.jpg>

“Your Courage, Your Cheerfulness, Your Resolution Will Bring Us Victory”

The Second one said, (Show pic) <http://www.barterbooks.co.uk/catalog/images/books/freedom.jpg>

“Freedom is in Peril, Defend It with All Your Might”

These two posters...(Show both posters on the same slide) were distributed across the country after the war started and appeared all over the country in train stations and shop windows.

But the 3rd poster was held back for use only in the event of a Nazi invasion. Over 2.5 million copies of that 3rd poster were printed, but they were never used, because the closest the Nazi's got was dropping bombs from airplanes.

No one really knew about the poster until one showed up in an old secondhand bookstore in Northeast England in 1996....50 years after the war was over. It was stored among some dusty old books that were bought at an auction.

The owner liked it so much she had it framed and displayed in the bookstore. Well, she wasn't the only one who liked it. People began to request to buy copies...and now, it is one of the most duplicated and iconic images of the early 21st century.

Here it is (pic)...

<http://sd.keepcalm-o-matic.co.uk/i/keep-calm-and-carry-on-8044.png>

Keep Calm and Carry On.

There are 2 questions I want you to think about regarding this iconic poster.

First, Why should this simple message be the one that was intended to inspire a country to not buckle under the weight of an evil dictator? It seems....almost...too simple.

The second, and perhaps more important question is this: Why do YOU resonate with it? Why is the simple message of "Keep Calm and Carry On" of comfort to us today?

Good Life- Transcendent Purpose...

AND Today and for the next 3 weeks I want to move away from talking about that in an individual way- and talk about our church. Our Mission. Our Message. Our Transcendent purpose together.

A couple of weeks ago, City Church turned 15 years old.

Here's a pic from that first meeting.

Today- you'll receive an annual report on your way out. Thank God for what he's done over 15 years- and in this last year.

While we have grown- both numerically and in spiritual maturity- the purpose we planted with is the one we are carrying on with.

Through tumultuous political seasons, cultural unrest, changing technology, a world wide pandemic, more tumultuous political seasons, evil and darkness- 1,853 reasons to freak out- over the last 15 years...

...City Church has and will continue to Keep Calm and Carry On.

Take a look at the vision that was in our original Church Planting prospectus that we sent to anyone interested in supporting us or joining our team.

We are ready to give our lives to see the city of Murfreesboro understand and respond to the gospel by bringing hope and transformation to many lives.

We need mature Christians to invest their lives in this city, ready to step out of their comfort zones and engage the people of the city by sharing the gospel in word and action.

Title Slide "Keep Calm & Carry On: The Bold Mission of City Church 15 years & Counting"— Acts 4:13-31

City Church has ALWAYS been about proclaiming the gospel- that though we sinned against God and deserved eternal death- Christ died in our place- and has resurrected- FORGIVING US & giving us new life with him forever.

We have stayed about the same mission we planted with 15 years ago. We have...and will continue to keep calm and carry on with that mission to make the gospel of Jesus known in this City in word and action.

But don't be mistaken. That does not, and never has, assumed a flippant or lazier-faire attitude. Keeping Calm and Carrying on is not a passive activity. It takes focus and determination. It takes boldness. Or you will sleep-walk right out of Transcendent Purpose.

This is true for our church in the 21st century- and for the church in the 1st century. Same Energy.

Let me show you

Lets go **Acts 4:13-31.**

13 When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus. 14 And since they saw the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in opposition. 15 After they ordered them to leave the Sanhedrin, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, "What should we do with these men? For an obvious sign has been done through them, clear to everyone living in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 But so that this does not spread any further among the people, let's threaten them against speaking to anyone in this name again." 18 So they called for them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

19 Peter and John answered them, "Whether it's right in the sight of God for us to listen to you rather than to God, you decide; 20 for we are unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

21 After threatening them further, they released them. They found no way to punish them because the people were all giving glory to God over what had been done. 22 For this sign of healing had been performed on a man over forty years old.

23 After they were released, they went to their own people and reported everything the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together to God and said, "Master, you are the one who made the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and everything in them. 25 You said through the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David your servant:

Why do the Gentiles rage

and the peoples plot futile things?

26 The kings of the earth take their stand

and the rulers assemble together

against the Lord and against his Messiah.

27 "For, in fact, in this city both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, assembled together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, 28 to do whatever your hand and your will had predestined to take place. 29 And now, Lord, consider their threats, and grant that your servants may speak your word with all boldness, 30 while you stretch out your hand for healing, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." 31 When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God boldly.

Transition: If you're a Christian, one of your most fundamental responsibilities in the transcendent mission you are on- is tell other people about Jesus...to invite them into this eternal family.... and for a lot of us...that can be super nerve racking and intimidating...there are 3 things I want to give you from this text today to help you speak up.

1) Keep Calm- Power is in Jesus' Name, not yours.

- One of the interesting things about this story of these British posters is that the most passive one is the one that was going to be used when the situation was the worst.
- Think about it. Take a look at the two posters that **were** released.
- **(Pic of 2 posters)**
- These are a bit more aggressive than "Keep Calm and Carry On"
- I mean, in these 2 posters...so much of whether England was going to win the war was based on the citizens' courage and resolution... look at that...defend freedom with all YOUR might.
- **(Keep Calm Poster Pic)**
- But the one that was held back for the bleakest of times was simply Keep calm and do what you are supposed to do.
- Notice at the top of all three of these posters is a crown.
- They were all reminding the citizens of Great Britain that their King was still reigning. That at the end of the day...even if Britain was occupied...even when it seemed hope was lost...the King always had the power, the authority, and a plan to win the freedom of the people.
- So their job...was to let the king do his job. **Keep Calm and Carry on.**
- Even in those first two posters- what they are being shown is they have a small responsibility that fits inside a larger transcendent purpose. The king is not asking for each individual citizen to bring a military strategy to the table for the whole country. Rather- he is calling them to play a small- and purposeful role in the bigger picture.
- Be aware- in one small courageous act under the crown- you are making a difference.
- For the first 3 chapters of Acts...its been all good times for the church.
- Jesus giving power and authority to the apostles by the Holy Spirit.
- Everyone speaking well of the church. Adding thousands at a time.
- Sick people are healed. People are giving money to take care of each others needs.

- The idea of opposition is all theoretical for the first 3 chapters.
- But then in chapter 4, Peter and John are thrown in jail for telling people that Jesus is the only way to know God.
- So take a look at what this opposition looks like.
- These religious leaders wanted to stop Peter and John from doing one thing.
- **Acts 4:17-18**
- This is incredible. In order to stop this movement of the church that was sweeping the Roman empire...and undermining the authority of the powerful...they didn't tell them "No more miracles!"
- They didn't say, "You've got to stop healing people or helping people. People are going to like you too much."
- They didn't say, "If we could just keep these Christians from serving their community...or doing nice things for their neighbors...we'd stop this movement."
- No. They said, we've got to stop them from **speaking about Jesus**.

If you were a part of that early movement. Would you be a problem for the Roman government? Or would they have NO problem with the way you live your life because you never really speak about Jesus?

- Look where all the power is. It's not in the courage or the resolution or the cheerfulness of the apostles. It's not in their incredible ability to share the gospel in a particularly winsome way.
- I mean think about. So far, the apostles basic message has been "you killed Jesus, repent and you'll be forgiven"...not exactly subtle.
- See, the power the apostles have is not in being tough...or smart...or having a great name in the community. Its quite the opposite.
- Look at **v 13**
- Its not simply the boldness or courage of Peter and John that get the attention of so many people...it's the fact that Peter and John have no perceivable reason TO BE BOLD. Uneducated, untrained men...
- The power is in their message.
- **v12**
- **That they told people there is no name under heaven by which men can be saved other than Jesus Christ.**

- ...and they recognized that they had been with Jesus. What they testified to they had experienced.

Back to 1)

- Too often we are convinced that the impact we are going to have in the world for Jesus has more to do with the **power of our name** than Jesus' name.
- We think if we could just learn a little more about world religions, or science, or apologetics...well, then we'd finally have what we need to "win souls to Jesus". But until then, I need to keep quiet and do nice things for people until they say "Please, tell me, what must I do to be saved.".
- Maybe if I could just get you to church to hear my pastor, well then you'd be convinced about Jesus.
- But if our church is going to be a part of a movement in Murfreesboro, it cannot be about getting the music, and preaching, and kids programs just right at City Church.
- We are not going to change anyone's eternity simply by serving the students and teachers at Bradley academy or Daniel McKee or taking a meal to our neighbor, or building a Habitat house
- Those actions are good...in fact we are going to do MORE of them... for the glory of God...but there is more to this boldness than just good works.
- If we do all of those things, yet never speak about Jesus...we are simply making a name for ourselves while we leave the only name that has the power to save in the back-room gathering dust.
- City Church, to see a movement in this City...it has to be about everyone...all of City Church...all of you... sharing the story of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Explaining, the very best you can, what the love of God looks like...how God wants a relationship with everyone...how he humbled himself and became not only a human, but a person who was humiliated publicly and died on a cross.
- Then how he resurrected to defeat death...and how he is calling us all to repent of our sin and follow our savior all the way to a New heavens and earth.

- If we only do good works...if we only rely on our own power to put together an attractive church...we might gather crowds...but those crowds won't be praising God...they'll be praising us....and that would be a colossal waste of time.
- I think so many of us would rather do a million things other than the simple speaking about Jesus that we are called to.
- We'd rather appear bold by wearing a t-shirt, or standing up against non-christians...
- showing off our courage...by defending our religious freedoms...
- We'd rather stand up for the freedom of our country- or the rights of a marginalized people..
- We'd rather not "keep calm and carry on" with the simple mission of sharing the name and salvation and authority and love of Jesus with another person.
- Have you ever sat down with one or two people and simply shared what you believe about Jesus?
- Jesus does not need you to defend him. He has not called you for that.
- Boldness in Christ isn't about showing off your courage or resolve...
- It's not just doing good loving things for people.
- Its following through with telling them that the source of goodness and love is only found in Jesus Christ.
- Any thing else...and we are making a name for ourselves, instead of making Jesus known.
- ...and listen...it doesn't get any easier. I still get nervous even after years of seminary training and practice.
- But I have to remember, this is not my name on the line. This is not my reputation on the line.
- When Jesus sent out his disciples to tell people that he was the Messiah, he reassured them with this **Luke 10:16**
- **"Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me."**

- In other words, don't worry when people oppose the message of the gospel. They aren't rejecting you, they are rejecting me- Jesus says.
- So Keep Calm, and Carry On with the mission I've given you to proclaim the message that will actually set people free.

In 2027- we're going to get better together as a church, in sharing the gospel. We're going to support each other and pray for one another...and ask God to do a work through us on a scale we've never seen before.

At the center of that will be whether or not you let Jesus use you...or if your fear stops you.

TRANSITION- Remember, your job is not to show how smart you are...but how good Jesus is. Your job is to let the king do his job...Keep Calm.

2) Carry On- The King has spoken to you, so now you can speak for Him.

- What exactly is it that enables this church in Acts, even after their leaders are thrown in prison...to keep calm and carry on?
- Well, let me show you practically how to find this boldness to speak about Jesus.
- In fact, this is how to have boldness in ANY situation where you face opposition or fear becomes a temptation for you.
- Look what happens when Peter and John are released from Prison.
- **V 23-24**
- They go back and tell their friends that the Chief Priests told them to stop talking about Jesus.
- And the very first thing the church does is pray.
- But what do they pray FOR?
- Safety? Traveling mercies? A new president that won't put up with persecution?
- **V 29**
- No. They prayed for boldness to KEEP SPEAKING.
- Isn't boldness what got them into this mess?
- Let me ask you. What do you pray for in the middle of suffering?

- Typically, we pray for protection. Or for God to ease the pain.
- That's not necessarily wrong. But I'm just showing you that before they prayed any of that...they prayed for boldness to keep calm and carry on with the mission of speaking the gospel of Jesus.
- City Church, what if we actually believed that people coming to know Jesus was more important than living a pain free life? What would sacrifice- what would you set aside for THAT TRANSCENDENT PURPOSE?
- Pay attention to the way they pray here.
- See, the way a Xian gets boldness is not to simply say, "God I'm afraid...supernaturally zap me with courage."
- Or "God I'm anxious, magically give me confidence."
- That is not Xian prayer. That's eastern mysticism.
- **V 24-25**
- They do 2 things here.
- One, they pray to a Sovereign God.
- Sovereign means that he possesses supreme and ultimate power.
- It means, like they affirm here...that he is the King of the universe.
- The other thing they do is quote what the sovereign king has said.
- Did you see that? They quote Psalm 2.
- See, before you can pray for boldness from the king...you have to hear what the king has said.
- You remember the British posters?
- They all had a crown printed on the top. Because if I don't know the source of an encouragement to Keep Calm and Carry on...what does it matter?
- I have to know that what is being said to me to give boldness is coming from someone who actually has power. A king that is actually in control.
- Now take a look at the Psalm he quotes- Psalm 2.
- **V 25-26**

- **Those that don't know our God rage... anything other than keep calm. They come up with silly plans that will never work against him. The kings take their stand...and the rulers assemble together. against the LORD- and HIS Messiah.**
- In fact, in this Psalm, God is telling them that in Jesus Christ, he himself was opposed by the government authorities.
- Then, AS THEY ARE PRAYING, they think this Psalm through into what they know happened to Jesus...the king.
- He suffered...he was crucified. They are not alone in their suffering!
- **Psalm 2:12b**
- **All who take refuge in him are happy**
- Now- having heard the voice of God speaking in the Scripture- look how Peter Speaks here
- **V 27-28**
- **27 "For, in fact, in this city both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, assembled together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, 28 to do whatever your hand and your will had predestined to take place.**
- Here's what they do.
- They show that even though all the earthly kings looked to be in control as Jesus was tried and convicted and hung on cross...Herod and Pontius Pilate....were just tools in the hand of a Sovereign God who all along was working his sovereign plan to overcome sin and evil.- and so...they know that no matter what these kings and governors do to them- They will also resurrect and overcome.
- Imagine this.
- What if your **first thought in a problem** was, "God, you are sovereign, and you are going to use this problem for the accomplishing of your purposes." How would that **change your perspective about suffering?**
- **How would that change your reaction when you were rejected by someone you shared Jesus with?**

Back to 2)

- Your boldness to share the gospel starts by seeing in Scripture that the sovereign King has first spoken to you.
- Then, you respond by praying that Scripture back to God.
- But there's one more step in Carrying on in boldness....and its probably gonna scare you a bit.
- **Being filled with the Spirit.**
- Look, a church that prays in response to God's word should be like the dentist after Halloween...Frequent Fillings.
- Take a look at **v 31**
- What does this mean to be filled with the spirit?
- Well, first, it doesn't mean that Peter and John and the rest of these Xians didn't already HAVE the Holy Spirit.
- After all, that is what Jesus promised they would have as soon ascended into heaven. This is not some kind of second baptism or new Xian ritual.
- These believers weren't empty before this.
- In John 16, Jesus says that his Holy Spirit will take the things you know in your head...and move them to your heart.
- In Romans chapter 8, Paul writes the Holy Spirit will testify to you that you are children of God.
- In other words, when the Holy Spirit fills you, he brings to light a particular truth that the God has already revealed in the Bible...that allows you to start this cycle all over again.
- **ILLUS:** Think of the filling of the Spirit as turning on floodlights in front of a building.
- Have you ever seen a beautiful house or old historic building lit up by floodlights at night?
- What do you say when you see that?
- You don't say, "Would you look at those floodlights?"
- No, you say, "Oh my, look at that beautiful building. Look at the architecture, the landscaping! How beautiful!"

- Likewise, when the Spirit fills you, it doesn't mean you say "Look at me...I'm filled with the Spirit. Look at these neat tricks I can do!"
- No, instead you'll say, "In the middle of the darkness of my pain, my suffering, just when...the truth the king had spoken was starting to fade...someone turned the floodlights on. And now...what this Scripture says is even more beautiful than I ever realized! Look at my savior. He's beautiful. "
- At that point...fear begins to melt away. And you realize that there is a bigger agenda at hand than you not being embarrassed in front of your friend or colleague.

Back to 2)

- Let me give you an example from my life.
- **ILLUS:** When my wife & I were in Ethiopia in 2008 adopting our son Isaac for nearly the entire time we were there, he refused to let me hold him. Every time I would pick him up he would scream...and I would cry.
- I couldn't understand why he was rejecting me. I was his Dad. I just wanted him to enjoy me...to know me...to love me and to rest in the fact I loved him.
- Then, in a moment, the Spirit filled me...and the floodlights came on.
- He highlighted Romans 8 and Galatians 4. Both passages about God's adoption of his children even when they rejected him. All of a sudden, in a moment, because of my prayer in the middle of pain...those passages flooded my mind...and I thought, "My God, I've done this to you so many times. You've simply wanted to love me...you simply wanted me to enjoy you...to rest in your arms...to know I'm safe with you...and I've screamed and cried to find my safety somewhere else...in some other foster parent...not in the God who sacrificed to make me his child."
- I knew those Scriptures before we adopted Isaac....but now, by a filling of the Spirit, God walked in the back room of the bookstore where they had been shelved as some irrelevant relics....he blew the dust off them...and posted them up in front of my eyes...with full-on floodlights.
- That's what it means to be filled with the spirit.

- And that makes it all the more important to memorize and meditate on Scripture.
- If the Holy Spirit reminds me of truth...then I've got to load my mind up with truth. I've got to be with Jesus- which means more than reading the Bible...but it doesn't mean LESS than meditating on Scripture.
- If you never give the HS ammunition...then in those moments of fear...the floodlights won't have an object to shine on.
- Likewise...this ought to push you to ask God to fill you with his Spirit more often. Like...all the time.
- Because if you have the Scripture in there, but no floodlights...it will be hard to remember what the King has said. And when it seems your life is completely out of control...or simply when you have the opportunity to share the gospel with a friend...you'll cower back in fear. But if the you are filled with the Spirit...you'll speak the word of God with boldness
- **Romans 15:4**
- **For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures**

TRANSITION: Once you know what God has said in the Scriptures...and when you are continually filled with his Spirit...you will be reminded that every ounce of suffering and opposition will be used by the Sovereign King to make himself known around the world...well... then..

3) The more life shakes, the less the church does.

- Did you notice the earthquake at the end of this passage?
- Look in **v 31**
- In the middle of this prayer meeting...as they are filled with Holy Spirit before they head out into the streets to speak the gospel of Jesus...the whole place shakes.
- Why? Is God just doing some cool trick? Just flexing his muscle?
- No. There is a much deeper message happening here.
- All throughout the Old Testament, often when God would come down to get close to people, there was an Earthquake.

- For example, When God gave the 10 commandments there was an earthquake, and fire, and lighting and smoke.
- Isaiah 6, when Isaiah sees God on a throne in the temple...the place shakes
- Judges 5, when God is said to have marched on the earth...the whole earth shook.
- Here's why.
- Because of God's weight. Or another word for that is glory.
- Think about it. Imagine you made a little castle of toothpicks...and then sat on it. I believe you'd shake that little toothpick palace down to nothing...because your weight is too much.
- But God's weight isn't measured in pounds or kilograms or tons.
- God's weight is measured in beauty. Holiness. Righteousness.
- So when an infinitely beautiful...perfectly holy God shows up in front of a dreadfully sinful and broken people...they are shaken to the dust.
- But...its not the case here.
- See when the Spirit of God fills this church...the place shakes...but they keep calm and carry on.
- They don't do what people used to do.
- They don't fall in the dust and cry out for mercy.
- They don't beg God to forgive them.
- Do you know why?
- Because they knew about 2 more important earthquakes.
- **Matt 27:50-51**
- At the end of the book of Matthew, When Jesus died on the cross... there was an Earthquake that shook the temple and split the the curtain that represented the divide between God and man.
- On the cross, the Bible says that Jesus became our sin, our ugliness, our unrighteousness...and when he died...God was shaking him instead of shaking us.
- We deserved to be shaken to death...instead, God himself in Jesus Christ was shaken for us.

- ...and once that price was paid...once that death was finished...the curtain tore from top to bottom. Man was given full access to God...without dying...without groveling...without coming undone.
- ...but then...at the end of Matthew...there is a second earthquake.
- See, they put Jesus in a tomb. Dead as doornail.
- ...and all the Roman government needed to do was keep him there.
- Easy enough. After all...most dead people are pretty stationary.
- **Matt 27:65**
- And in one of the most hilarious verses of the Bible, Pontius Pilate tells some Roman guards to make the tomb "as secure as they can"
- That's like tying down a tree with dental floss in a tornado- its futile.
- See, they knew even with all the good things Jesus had done in his life...with the following he had created...it would all die...as long as he stayed dead. Before they tried to shut the apostles up in Acts 4, the powers that be were trying to shut Jesus in...
- ...they lost both battles.
- **Matt 28:2**
- See, because there was another earthquake....
- ...and the stone rolled away from the tomb...
- ...and Jesus wasn't there anymore.
- Resurrection.
- **Pic 3 (of the 2 first posters)**
- It was the proof of the vindication...that Jesus had fought the war against sin and death....and won it for us. Jesus had receipts.
- His courage, his joy, his resolution had brought us victory.
- When we were enslaved to our own sin...when Freedom was in Peril...he defended it with all his might.
-so that now...when we are threatened...when the church experiences opposition...when life shakes....
-
- we can **keep calm and Carry on poster pic.**
- Jesus was shaken to pieces...so you could become unshakable.

- Fear?...its gone. At least when we remember what the King has said.
- Guilt and shame? Its been torn away like that curtain in the temple...
- ...and you'll know it every time you are filled with Spirit and he reminds you that because of Jesus...you are now a son or daughter of the King. A citizen of the unshakable Kingdom.
- So keep calm and carry on.
- ...go and speak the word of God with boldness.

Back to 3)

Conclusion: Let me give you two practical steps today.

- First, You've got to decide what you actually believe about Jesus.
- Do you have the kind of fearlessness...the kind of boldness that comes from the Holy Spirit reminding you what God has said about you because Jesus died in your place?
- If not...don't you think its worth having a conversation with someone about that? Think about it.
- What if you could know God so closely, so intimately, that when your life shakes... you actually become more confident...more bold... more sure of who you are and what your purpose in life is?
- All those who take Refuge in the Lord are happy.
- What if when it all fell apart you really could Keep Calm and Carry On?

Baptism Sunday Slide

Baptism Sunday OCT 18- your opportunity to make that decision public? have you hidden it? Baptism is your public declaration of what Jesus has done.

If you were on trial for following Jesus- like the apostles were- would there be enough evidence to convict you? Or would you simply appear like a really nice person? Could your neighbors and friends say "She was always talking about what Jesus did!" GET HER!

Pic of 1st City Church meeting.

Without the boldness of the people in this room...none of this would have happened. Will you be on mission with this Church- for this God that loves you and saved you?

Oasis Church-

in one year- A new church plant going out from our church to Knoxville TN- First time in 15 years.

Acts 4:31

Notice- When they prayed- the place has shaken and they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Have you prayed for the courage to share the gospel? Have you asked for the boldness to speak? Or have you just written it off to your personality...or your life position.

Altar is open. Prayer counselors ready.
Be Bold.