

Boldness: Rotten Eggs and Bold Words
Adapted from *Hero Tales, Volume I*, by Dave and Neta Jackson

John Wesley made a difference in the world that is still felt today. He traveled all over England, Scotland, and Wales preaching the Gospel of faith. When asked where his parish was, he replied, "The world is my parish."

I dodged a rotten egg that flew by my ear and kept on preaching. "God's gift of salvation is for both the rich and poor!" Even though I was only five feet and three inches tall, I made my voice boom out over the noisy crowd that had gathered in the town square.

"Oh, yeah?" challenged a burly man in workman's clothes. "Where are we gonna get fancy Sunday-go-ta-meetin' clothes? Church is just fer the rich folks."

A chorus of angry voices shouted their agreement. Several more eggs and a rotten tomato flew in my direction. I didn't get upset, but I did think it was ironic.

First, the Church of England wouldn't let me preach in its churches because I preached salvation by faith alone rather than by church traditions and good works. So I decided to preach out in the open to people who didn't usually go to church—in a field, by a city gate, or in the town square. But when I preached to the common people, sometimes they started a riot. What they'd seen of the state religion didn't have much to do with their lives of hunger, misery, and backbreaking work.

"But that's the Good News! Christ died for all people. God loves you—"

"Loves us!" screeched an old woman. "Oh, sure He does! Maybe that's why my old man ran out on me and left me with six young'uns."

I tried to tell the people that God cared about their troubles and would give them strength in their time of need. But by now, the unruly crowd was pushing and shoving, throwing stones and swinging sticks.

Seeing that words wouldn't help, I jumped off the box I'd been standing on and marched up to the man who seemed to be the ringleader. I took the man's hand and shouted in his ear, "My good man, come with me to my rooms. We can talk there."

Surprised by my friendly touch, the man suddenly became protective. He kept the crowd away while we went inside the house where I was staying. When the man went out later, he gruffly told the rowdy people that if anyone bothered me anymore, they'd have to answer to him.

Had I threatened the man? No, I asked about the man's family and his worries and explained once again that God's gift of salvation and forgiveness was for him, too. And before I left that English town, I formed one of my "Methodist Societies" to encourage and teach people who were interested in "salvation by faith."

When it was time to move on, I got on my faithful horse, started in the direction of the next town, then opened a book to read on the way—until I got to the next town and had to face the next wild mob.

Boldness is the confidence to speak out for God, even when others do not want you to.