

Paul's Example of Bold Witness and Joy in Christ Philippians 1:12-18

Introduction

In the Bible, God does not just give us Commands to obey. He also gives us examples of people who obey, to show us how God will also enable us to obey

Paul wants this church to grow in their unity together, and their boldness and telling people about Jesus. And in Philippians 1:12-18 Paul gives three examples to help them see how God will enable them to obey in these areas.

Paul describes how he has boldly shared the gospel (1:12-13)

Paul had been arrested, was imprisoned, and awaited a trial in which he could be condemned to death for telling people about Jesus. So what does he do well he is there? He tells people about Jesus.

Wouldn't this risk of death? Yes. So why did Paul do it? Because he cared about the eternal destiny of the soldiers, and because death would only bring him more of his all-satisfying treasure – Christ.

This is how much boldness God gave Paul, and how much he will give us

Paul describes how his example helped the Roman believers share the gospel more boldly (1: 14)

How did Paul's imprisonment stir men and women in the Roman church to share Christ more boldly? Because as they saw God's work in Paul, they would see that they no longer needed to be in bondage to fear. They saw that God could free them from this.

Paul wanted the Philippian church to see how much boldness God could give them, so they would seek this boldness from God, and step out in obedience.

Paul describes how joy in Christ helped him not take hurts personally (1:15-18)

Some of those who shared Christ did it in order to cause Paul pain and discouragement. But Paul looked to Christ, and his heart was so filled with Christ, that he was able to not take this hurt personally. He was able to love and forgive them.

The key to living in unity with others is to experience heart-felt joy in Christ.

That's what God gave to Paul, and what he can give to us.

So let's trust him, and pursue this.



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

1. When it comes to telling people about Jesus are you more on the bold side, or on the fearful side?
2. How did Paul's example of boldness while in prison affect you? Do you agree that God can give you this much boldness? Why or why not?
3. Do you *really* experience Christ as your greatest joy? Boldness starts here. This is what God will give you in order to strengthen your boldness. What can you do to experience Christ as your greatest joy?
4. How does it affect you to hear that many of the Roman believers became more bold because of Paul's example? Does their becoming more bold stirred you to become more bold? Why or why not?
5. How would you have felt if you were in prison and others were telling people about Jesus in order to make you discouraged or jealous? Do you agree that heart-felt joy in Christ can so fill you that you don't take hurts personally? Why or why not?
6. Do you agree that God is able and willing to work in your heart, as he worked in Paul's? Why or why not?
7. What is the Holy Spirit calling you to do from this passage?

