

Eph.6:18-20 “Freedom of Speech”

For the Children: Sometimes other people try to stop us from speaking. They speak over the top of us, or even threaten us. But sometimes we stop ourselves, especially if we feel that we might end up looking silly, or have everyone laughing at us – or getting angry with us. That is also why we sometimes fail to speak up to tell others about the Lord Jesus. It is therefore important to ask the Lord to give us courage in order that we may tell others what He wants them to hear from us. We should want to do that because we love the Lord and we are thankful that He has given us such a great, saving message to spread around! **Questions:** What kind of “freedom of speech” should God’s children want to have? Why is it important to see ourselves as the Lord’s “ambassadors”? How can being in chains help the cause of the Gospel?

Introduction:

First Point: Prayer for Boldness

- 1) Utterance with Boldness: The apostle asks the Ephesians to pray for him for “utterance with boldness” – for the right words, in the right manner, with freedom, openness, and courage. For fear often leads to compromise. This is not to exercise some democratic right of free speech; rather, it is to say what the *Lord* wants said, according to His rights. *He* wants the mystery of the Gospel proclaimed.
- 2) A Necessity: Such speech is a necessity, an “ought” (v.20). God planned it, commands it and deserves it. It is the Church’s Great Commission. However, it is more than our duty to speak in this way: it ought to be our desire, from love of God, gratitude and love of neighbour. This is very different than an argument from democratic rights.
- 3) A Remedy for Fear: Boldness helps us to overcome our fear to proclaim the truth – especially in times of persecution. Even the apostle Paul had the humility to see his need for God to give him boldness. In view of our weakness, it is important that we ask the Lord for boldness, both for ourselves and our brethren.

Second Point: Chains for Boldness

- 1) The Apostle’s Chains: As Acts 28:20 mentions, Paul was literally chained (to the soldiers who guarded him) while under house arrest in Rome.
- 2) An Ambassador in Chains: Paul also saw himself as an ambassador of the Lord – an official representative, there to convey the wishes of His King – not his own opinions or for his own interests. It is essential that we view ourselves in this way when we engage in evangelism – also when facing hostility. That is what motivates us and gives us courage.
- 3) Chains for the Sake of the Gospel: The Lord had willed that Paul go to Rome in chains in order that he might speak boldly to the large numbers who came to hear him. The chains actually furthered the cause of the Gospel. Sometimes we don’t find our courage until we are in “chains.”

Conclusion:

