

Series: Acts

Lesson #79

Title: Word of Confidence

Scripture: Acts 18: 9-11

Date: August 6, 2009

Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Princeton, New Jersey

Acts 18: 9: Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11: And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

THEN SPAKE THE LORD TO PAUL IN THE NIGHT BY A VISION, BE NOT AFRAID, BUT SPEAK, AND HOLD NOT THY PEACE

God's people often become afraid. If you look up this phrase "Be not afraid" you will find it is used 26 times in God's word. The phrase "Fear not" is used 63 times in God's word. Of the 89 times that these phrases are used, almost every time it is the LORD God speaking either directly, or through a messenger, to one of his fearful children.

Read a few examples: when the children of Israel came to the borders of Canaan and the LORD said,

Joshua 1: 9: Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.

When Moab and Ammon and Seir came up against Judah with a great multitude,

2 Chronicles 20: 13: 13: And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children...14: Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah,...came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation; 15: And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle *is* not yours, but God's.

The Lord says to Paul, Be not afraid.

But speak and hold not thy peace. God our Savior has sent us forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. But we are sheep well equipped by God.

2 Corinthians 10: 3: For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4: (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

If our warfare was after the flesh, if our warfare were carnal, if we wrestling against flesh and blood then we would use fleshly weapons, steel armor, a metal shield, a helmet and a forged sword. But here and now, I stand before you wrestling against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world--wicked spirits in high places--against the prince of this world, the god of this world who hath blinded the minds of them which believe not. For this war, we must have mighty weapons--weapons preeminently stronger than any carnal weapons. By the power of God our weapons are able to pull down all strongholds of Satan and the depraved natures and deceitful hearts of men. Weapons such as:

Romans 13: 12:...the armour of light. Christ Jesus the Light.

The word of truth, the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, the gospel of Christ: which is the power of God unto salvation
(2 Cor 6: 7; Ro 1: 16.)

To go into this war the believer is equipped by God with:

Ephesians 6: 13...the whole armour of God...(what is that?) 14:...your loins girt about with truth,...the breastplate of righteousness; [Paul tells us in Thessalonians he means [the breastplate of faith and love I Thess 5: 8.] 15: And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16: Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17: And take the helmet of salvation, [the hope of salvation] and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Perhaps Paul was feeling like you and I sometimes feel, like the prophet Jeremiah felt when he said:

Jeremiah 1: 6: Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I *am* a child. 7: But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I *am* a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. 8: Be not afraid of their faces: for I *am* with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. 9: Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. 10: See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

PROPOSAL: THE LORD GIVES PAUL THREE REASONS FOR CONFIDENCE TO HOLD FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE.

DIVISIONS: 1) The presence of God; 2) The protection of God 3) The purpose of God.

I. THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

Acts 18: 9: Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10: For I AM WITH THEE...

The presence of our Lord is the most blessed assurance and confidence of the believer. If you know WHOM you have believed, if you are persuaded that HE IS ABLE to keep you unto the day of salvation, then all your hope is due to the presence of the great I AM with you. The presence of our God with us is the chief concern and confidence of the believer.

Exodus 33: 12: And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. 13: Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation *is* thy people. 14: And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest. 15: And he said unto him, If thy presence go not *with me*, carry us not up hence. 16: For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? *is it* not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that *are* upon the face of the earth. 17: And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

Who is this that says he knows his servants by name and whose presence is with those who trust him?

Acts 18: 9: Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10: For I am with thee

When Moses was sent into Egypt.

Exodus 3: 13: And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? what shall I say unto them? 14: And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

The night our Lord gave himself and went to the cross.

John 18: 3: Judas then, having received a band *of men* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4: Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5: They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 6: As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

Before the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to the Father he said to his disciples:

Matthew 28: 18: And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; 20: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

This is God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the I AM, who promises Paul, I AM with you.

II. THE PROTECTION OF GOD

Acts 18: 9: Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10: For I am with thee, no man shall set on thee to hurt thee.

The I AM in whom is all our salvation is the I AM in whom is all our protection. Our Lord hedged Paul about so that no man was able to do him bodily injury. Our Lord is able to do that. This is a great comfort to us to know that wicked men can not lay a finger on us without permission from our God. As the LORD told Jeremiah

Jeremiah 15: 20: And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I *am* with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD. 21: And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.

Yet, many times Paul suffered bodily injury. In fact the Lord Jesus said to his disciples:

Matthew 10: 17...they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;...21: And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death. [This they did by divine permission to our Lord Jesus Christ. But he said] 25: It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.

In most places when our Lord speaks of men hurting us, he speaks of something far greater than mere physical, temporal hurt. Bodily injury is not the chief hurt the believer desires to be saved from.

First, the believer desires to be saved from the hurt of not speaking the truth as we ought:

Matthew 10: 19: But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 20: For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

Illustration: This was the hurt which Peter endured. But the Lord was teaching Peter and he teaches us that like all other aspects of our lives, it is by his power that we are spared from this hurt. Don't we see that in what the Lord is doing in coming to Paul and giving him this confident assurance to speak with boldness as he ought.

Secondly, the believer desires to be spared from the hurt of being separated from our Lord:

Matthew 10: 22: And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved....

For the sake of Christ Jesus who shed his blood for us, no believer shall ever suffer the hurt of being separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Why is that? After that great chapter which declares that our Lord bear the sins of all God's people, and that he made satisfaction to God by his one offering and that by his stripes ye are healed, he declares in Isaiah 54: 14:

Isaiah 54: 14: In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. 15: Behold, they shall surely gather together, *but* not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. 16: Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. 17: No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.

The same God who confirmed the testimony of Christ in you and enriches you with all gifts, also says:

I Corinthians 1: 8: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9: God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

The very God of peace shall sanctify his people wholly; your whole spirit and soul and body shall be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I Thessalonians 5: 24: Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*.

Romans 8:31: What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

This is why the Lord Jesus concludes in Matthew 10: 26:

Mathew 10: 26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. 27: What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the housetops. 28: And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

The Lord says to Paul, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: I AM WITH YOU--The presence of God is our confidence; NO MAN SHALL HURT THEE--the eternal protection of our God is our confidence; and in the face of all opposition, the purpose of God is our confidence.

III. FOR I HAVE MUCH PEOPLE IN THIS CITY (v10.)

What kind of people was this "much people" when Paul came to them?

I Corinthians 6: 9: Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10: Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11: And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

A people who appeared the vilest of the vile, the lewdest of the lewd, but Paul, "I have much people in this city" that I have purged of all their sins, that I have washed white as snow in my own life's blood.

Paul, "I have much people in this city" which I separated unto myself by my free and sovereign choice when I chose them by my grace alone in Christ before the foundation of the world, when I blessed them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. They have everlastingly existed holy and without blame before me in love. I have predestinated Aquialla and Priscilla to be driven here to provide a house for you; I have predestinated you to be here with my gospel; all because I have predestinated them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to myself. If they are going to praise the glory of my grace wherein I have made them accepted in my Beloved Son then you must preach this gospel to them.

Paul, "I have much people in this city" who I have justified. I have condemned their condemnation, taken away the strength of sin by fulfilling my law on their behalf, conquered death and made them more than conquerors in the works I worked on their behalf.

Paul, "I have a people in this city" who must hear the name of the Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed through the gospel. I have filled you with light to shine forth the light that they might behold the works that are freely theirs in my Son.

Paul, "I have much people in this city" who shall be made alive by my Holy Spirit, separated from themselves, from this world, and from Satan in newness of spiritual life. They shall be made willing to forsake all else to walk after my Son in the day of my power

Now...Paul, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace, I AM WITH YOU, NO MAN SHALL SET ON THEE TO HURT THEE, FOR I HAVE MUCH PEOPLE IN THIS CITY.

Application: Are you convinced that God is with you? Are you convinced that you are eternally protected in the Lord our Sanctuary? Are your inward parts--right now--girt about--burning with joy--overflowing with the truth of the gospel of God's salvation? Are you persuaded that your only sword is the sword of the Spirit which is God's sure word to you and this gospel we preach? Are you convinced that the gospel of the triumphant, victorious, finished work of our resurrected King and Savior is the only weapon that will cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ?

Then know you are safe behind the shield of faith, protected under the helmet of the hope of salvation. Your breast is covered in the breastplate of God's righteousness, of Christ's faithfulness and love which bought you

to himself from whom you can never be separated. According to the riches of his grace toward you, according to the good pleasure he has purposed in himself, BE NOT AFRAID, BUT SPEAK, AND HOLD NOT THY PEACE!

This is my prayer for you. And I ask you to pray for me:

Ephesians 6: 19: And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20: For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

So it was by the assurance of our Lord to Paul...

Acts 18: 11: And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.