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Sermon Notes

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**Boldness & Faithfulness in the Gospel, pt. 9:  
Delivered From the Lion's Mouth  
2 Timothy 4:9-22**

The Story of Boniface

Come with me this morning to a small clearing in the woods of Geismar in Hesse, in what is now called Germany. The year is 723 A.D., and a crowd has gathered around a majestic oak tree. According to the local religion, this oak was sacred, and inhabited with secret powers by the thunder god, Thor. Into the midst of this crowd strode a man named Boniface, a missionary from England. He was carrying an axe. To the horror of these hostile pagans, Boniface picked up the axe and began to chop at the trunk of this giant oak tree. He meant to chop it down and thus destroy the power of pagan myths over these ancient Germans. Now any of you who have chopped wood with an axe knows how long it would take for a single man to chop down a huge oak tree. The crowd undoubtedly gasped with shock or cried with outrage at every stroke, but Boniface continued his work. Suddenly a mighty wind blasted through the forest and blew down the oak tree, that sacred oak dedicated to the power of Thor. As the tree crashed to the ground, it broke into four pieces. The people gasped and were amazed at the power of Boniface's God. He stood up and preached to them the gospel of Jesus Christ and built a church out of the wood from the tree. The gospel spread through that area of Germany, and many people believed in the name of Jesus Christ. What started this revival was the BOLDNESS of one man.

***Proverbs 28:1 “The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion.”***

I. America’s greatest need: Bold Christians, not Embarrassed Believers

II. The Human Side of a Great Apostle

A. Dealing with people

1. Demas: Betrayal and Desertion
2. Crescens, Titus, Tychicus: Loneliness
3. Mark: Conflicts
4. Alexander: Persecution
5. “No one...”: Fear and Desertion

B. Physical trials

1. Coldness
2. Boredom
3. Anxiety
  - a. future of the churches
  - b. a sick friend

C. Personal Weakness

A. Dealing with people

1. The call for Timothy... loneliness

***vs. 9 “Do your best to come to me quickly.”***

**vs. 21 “Do your best to get here before winter.”**

- a. almost impossible... the letter alone would take weeks to reach Timothy
- b. Paul knows that; but sends out a pathetic call for Timothy anyway

**WHY??? DEMAS’S DESERTION**

2. Demas: Betrayal and Desertion

**vs. 9-10 “For Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica.”**

- a. Demas a friend and co-worker of Paul

**Colossians 4:14 “Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.”**

- b. probably under fear of persecution, deserted Paul
- c. “Loved this world”... wanted an easy comfortable life here

**1 John 2:15-17 “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life—come not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lasts forever.”**

**Revelation 12:11 “... they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”**

- d. desertion of false Christians heartbreaking!!

3. Crescens, Titus, Tychicus: Loneliness

**vs. 10 “Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me.”**

**vs. 12 “I sent Tychicus to Ephesus...”**

- a. Crescens & Titus were simply carrying on their ministry
- b. NOTE: Paul’s authority and selflessness... “I SENT...”
- c. Luke alone stayed by Paul’s side... this kind of personal involvement helped Luke write Acts

## 4. Mark: Conflicts

***vs. 11 “Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.”***

- a. like Demas, at one point Mark deserted Paul on his first missionary journey
- b. Mark’s cousin Barnabas wanted to bring Mark along on the second journey
- c. Paul said “NO WAY!!” and they had a bitter argument... so bitter that they decided to part ways
- d. it turns out Barnabas was right and Paul was wrong... again we see the humanness of Paul...NO PLASTER SAINT

NOTE: spiritual leadership does not mean infallibility... but a consistent openness to the leading of the Spirit! Paul admitted his mistake and welcomed Mark back into service

- e. also note that Paul is planning to continue his ministry, even though he knows the “time has come for his departure”

***vs. 13 “When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas***

- a. physical trials... coldness, boredom; SCROLLS perhaps OT scriptures
- b. also note that no one of the Christians in Rome helped him by bringing him a cloak!! They were completely staying away from him

## 5. Alexander: Persecution

***vs. 14-15 “Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your guard against him because he strongly opposed our message.”***

- a. we know nothing about Alexander for certain
- b. perhaps he was the informer who handed Paul over to the Romans
- c. Paul does two things:
  - 1) commits his pain to God for retribution

***Romans 12:19 “Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.”***

2) warns Timothy about this man! Alexander opposed the gospel... his opposition to Paul personally was beside the point

For all of these reasons, Paul urgently desired to see Timothy...

“Come before winter” was his plaintive cry; at winter, navigation in a ship would be impossible

Paul was not some super-spiritual man who needed no earthly fellowship... at this moment he was not unlike Jesus in Gethsemane, calling for James, Peter, and John to stay with Him while he got ready to die.

The Human Side of Paul:

Three needs:

- 1) Personal interaction, especially with Timothy
- 2) Physical warmth from his cloak
- 3) Books for continued intellectual stimulation

It is very possible that none of these desires were granted!!

***“I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”***

It is the humanness and weakness of Paul that make his greatest triumph all the more remarkable!!

III. Paul’s Greatest Triumph: Deliverance from the Lion’s Mouth

***vs. 16 “At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.”***

## A. The First Defense

1. Roman trials allow for advocates for the accused
  - a. Christians accused of all kinds of crimes
  - b. atheism... because they rejected Roman gods, especially the deity of Caesar
  - c. cannibalism... because they ate the Lord's body and drank his blood at the Lord's supper
  - d. hatred of the human race... because they preached so boldly against sin
  - e. NERO blamed the Christians for the fire at Rome
  - f. procedure called for witnesses for the defense... no one came forward
2. No one stepped forward
3. Paul an outspoken leader... dangerous to be a Christian
4. Paul's Christlike response
  - a. Christ, Stephen, Paul
  - b. spoken here
  - c. lived out... vs. 21

***vs. 21 "Eubulus greets you and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers."***

## B. Strength from Christ

1. The "secret" of Paul's success... Phil. 4:13

***Philippians 4:12-13 "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation... I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength."***

2. Fulfillment of Christ's prophecy... "Do not worry what to say..."

***Matthew 10:19-20 "But when they arrest you, do not worry what to say or how to say it. At that time, you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."***

3. Testimonies from the mission field... surprising strength in extreme trials

C. “Delivered from the Lion’s Mouth”

1. Various interpretations
  - a. Romans used lions to execute Christians
  - b. perhaps a reference to Emperor Nero
  - c. Biblical reference: Daniel in the Lion’s Den

BUT Paul knew he was about to die!! A simple stay of execution no real cause for rejoicing

2. The effect of the Lord’s strength

***vs. 17 But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength , so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and all the Gentiles might hear it.”***

- a. full proclamation of the Gospel thru Paul
- b. all Gentiles heard it
- c. AND I WAS THEREFORE DELIVERED FROM THE LION’S MOUTH!!!

3. Paul’s greatest concern: FINISHING THE MINISTRY GOD GAVE HIM

***Acts 9:15 “This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”***

***Acts 20:24 “I consider my life worth nothing to me if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.”***

***Acts 26:19 “So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.”***

4. Paul’s greatest obstacle: his own weakness

***1 Corinthians 2:3 “I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling.”***

***Ephesians 6:19 “Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel for***

***which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly as I should.”***

5. Who exploits that weakness? The DEVIL

***1 Peter 5:8 “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.”***

6. Christ’s strength enabled him to overcome the devil, who exploits his weakness

The devil seeks to exploit our fear and weakness by causing us to keep quiet

**BOLD PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL OCCURS WHEN CHRIST STRENGTHENS US IN THE FACE OF OUR OWN WEAKNESS!!!**

Paul gave Timothy a powerful example to follow of the very charge he had given him at the beginning of this chapter... “Preach the Word... whether it is convenient or not!!”

If ever there had been a time when he could have had an excuse to give up preaching boldly, this was it... all alone, facing death before a mad Emperor, he stood boldly and preached the gospel fully

D. Rescued From Every Evil Attack

***vs. 18 “The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom.”***

1. Clear: Paul not thinking of physical attacks

***1 Corinthians 11:23-27 “been in prison... flogged severely, exposed to death again and again, five times lashed with 39 strokes by Jews, three times beaten with rods, once stoned, three times shipwrecked, spent a day and a night in the open sea”***

2. This is a spiritual attack

a. temptation to keep silent thru fear

- b. temptation to become discouraged & to give up
  - c. temptation to sin and thus be disqualified from the race
3. Christ is faithful in all these attacks & will bring us safely home

#### IV. Paul's Life Summary: Grace from God, Glory to God

***vs. 18 "To him be glory forever and ever. Amen."***

***vs. 22 "The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you."***

##### A. Paul was an apostle by the grace of God

- 1. Saved by grace
- 2. Called by grace to do a great work for God
- 3. The initiative was God's and so was the plan and power

**What does God get for his investment of grace? A return of glory!!**

##### B. "To Him be glory forever and ever"

- 1. God's glory is the radiance of His being
- 2. Paul's life added luster to God's reputation in this world
- 3. Paul's life was a bold and courageous demonstration of the Spirit's power
- 4. The church is like a tapestry of God's glory

#### Illus. Tapestry in Pakistan

##### C. He commits Timothy & the Church to God

***vs. 22 "The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you."***

**NOTE: "Grace be with you" is PLURAL**

- 1. When your work is done, leave the rest to God
- 2. God continues timelessly leading the Church from generation to generation

V. Series conclusion: A Call for Bold Believers

1. Boldness and Faithfulness in the Gospel

- a. Faithful to the message and to the Master
- b. Bold in the face of even violent opposition

2. Chapter summaries:

Chapter 1

vs. 6-7 fan spiritual gifts into a flame for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but of power, of love and of self-discipline

vs.8-10 don't be ashamed of Christ, but be willing to suffer for Him

vs. 13-14 guard the good deposit of the gospel... don't change the message

Chapter 2

vs. 2 multiplication ministry... WIN = BUILD = SEND

six images: good soldier, dedicated athlete, hardworking farmer,

skilled craftsman properly handling Scripture, clean vessel properly handling temptation, Lord's servant properly handling opposition

Chapter 3

vs. 1-9 terrible times in the last days... no fairy tale but a difficult and painful advance of Christ's kingdom

vs. 14-17 the perfect God-breath scripture & its two purposes: wise for salvation & thoroughly equipped

Chapter 4

vs. 1-8 PREACH THE WORD... whether its convenient & easy or not

INVITATION

In these nine messages, we've seen God's faithful apostle teaching us through Timothy what we must do to grow as a church. It all begins, however, with individuals just like you. Perhaps there's never been a time in your life when you have repented and asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior.