

Week 36: “Fearless Witness”

Day One: “Fearless Witness”

Read: Ephesians 6:19-20

Reflect: When was the last time that you a.) testified to God’s grace in your life or b.) shared the hope of the gospel with someone? What factors tend to prevent you from sharing these more frequently?

Dig: Read Ephesians 6:19

What are the two prayer requests that Paul makes in this verse?

Do you ever worry about ‘not knowing what to say’ when sharing the gospel?

- Read Matthew 10:19,20 and Luke 12:11,12 to note Jesus’ promise to his disciples regarding this concern.

- In these verses also note the consequences the disciples faced for proclaiming the gospel (i.e. when they and when you are brought...)

- Now note the consequences Paul faced for preaching Jesus (see 2 Corinthians 11:23-29)

No wonder Paul asks for prayer to proclaim the gospel fearlessly! What consequences do you face for proclaiming the gospel? What promises do you have? (Read Matthew 10:28-33)

Apply: Ask God for boldness to proclaim the mystery of the gospel today and then state out loud Paul’s words from Romans 12:16 “I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.”

Week Thirty -Six: “Fearless Witness”

Day Two: “Pray Also for Me”

Read: Ephesians 6:19

Reflect How regularly do you share your weaknesses, fears, and needs with other believers and ask for prayer support? How regularly do you pray with (not just for) your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Dig: Paul was a passionate and bold leader yet he didn’t hesitate to mention his weaknesses or to seek help from fellow believers. Read the following to note:

Paul’s weaknesses:

I Cor. 2:1-5

2 Cor. 12:9-10

Paul’s reliance and interaction with other believers:

Romans 1:11,12
2 Cor. 1:7;10-11
Ephesians 1:15-16
Philippians 1:19,20

Now read I Samuel 23:15,16 to discover one of the greatest treasure of godly friendship in the midst of hardship.

How is God asking you to be that kind of friend today?

Apply: In what ways do you need the support of fellow believers today, this week...? Don't stand alone: call or e-mail someone to pray with you. Now ask God to bring to mind others whom you can help 'find strength in God.'

Week Thirty -Six: "Fearless Witness"
Day Three: "Every Time I Open My Mouth"

Read: Ephesians 6:19-20

Reflect: How much talking do you do on an average day?

- a.) I speak only when spoken to
- b.) I initiate most conversations
- c.) People can't make be quiet

Are the words you speak God-testifying and God-glorifying?

Dig: Paul certainly had appointed occasions when he wrote about or preached the gospel. However, his testimony wasn't restricted to such occasions. What glimpses into his lifestyle does the phrase 'whenever I open my mouth' give you?

Daily opportunities to testify to God's grace and goodness abound. Check out how these passages reflect this and note what they say about when we should testify:

I Peter 3:15
Colossians 4:6

Apply: Read Isaiah 6:1-8. Ask God to purify your heart and lips and then look for ways he is 'sending you' today.

Week Thirty -Six: "Fearless Witness"
Day Four: "Mystery of the Gospel"

Read: Ephesians 6:19-20

Reflect: In what ways have you uniquely and personally experienced God's grace—to the extent that it is difficult (i.e. mysterious!) to describe to someone else?

Dig: Paul frequently refers to the 'mystery of the gospel.' (check out Col. 2:2,3 for another reference)

One aspect of this mystery is contrasted in these two texts:

Matthew 18:3

I Cor. 1:19-24

Which way are people more likely to truly hear the gospel—through a story of truth or through a logical argument?

In what ways can God use you and your story to make the mystery of the gospel come alive to someone else?

Apply: Tell your story: even in your routine conversations today testify as to how you've experienced God's grace and goodness in your life.

Week Thirty -Six: "Fearless Witness"

Day Five: "Lectio Divina"

Read: Ephesians 6:19-20

“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.”

Lectio divina (a Latin expression, which means sacred reading) is done in three stages:

Reading: you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness; after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.

Meditation: you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life: write down memories of events or conversations or other Scripture passages.

Prayer: you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer-- thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.