

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

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Acts 23:1-11

July 12 & 13, 2014

Boldly testify to the gospel under gospel motivation.

What's your reaction when you hear Jesus' words: *Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.* Does it motivate you with *terror* or the *fear of God*? What's the difference?

- *Terror* is pure law - I have to or else!
- *Fear of God* is a loving healthy respect of the living God, the Savior.
 - Thrilled: owning Jesus as my Lord and Savior - he calls me his own.
 - Know it's only right, if I disown him - he disown me.
 - I need this slap of reality to deal with my pesky sinful nature.
- The difference: gospel motivated, not law motivated.

What was Paul's motivation for this bold stand?

- The High Priest assumed it was law motivated arrogance.
- Jesus' encouragement reveals Paul's motivation:
 - *"Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."*
 - Law doesn't testify to Jesus! Only gospel does that.
 - Christ calls for gospel motivated boldness - faith produced

Boldly testify to the gospel under gospel motivation.

As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.

❖ Where's Paul's testimony **about Jesus**?

- Background/setting
 - Paul had addressed the mob from the steps of the barracks.
 - How Paul became a follower of Jesus, the Way.
 - devout upbringing as Pharisee, study under Gamaliel
 - zealous persecution of Christians stopped by Jesus - converted
 - Paul's last time at the temple, Jesus sent him to the Gentiles.
 - That's when the mob erupted and tried to tear Paul to pieces.
 - Their God despised the Gentiles.
 - Their rabid rejection of Jesus made them ripe for judgment in 12 years - the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD
 - They disowned God. He disowned them: *You are not my people.*

- What was Paul's motivation for this bold testimony?
 - Was he there to rub their noses in their own hate?
 - Did he raise the issue of the resurrection to save his skin? **Not at all!**
 - He wanted them to find comfort, hope, peace, and rest through Jesus
 - The gospel that filled Paul motivated him to care for them.

❖ Paul **boldly testified to the gospel under gospel motivation.**

- *I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead.*
- The mob didn't know the gospel and the hope of the resurrection.
 - The Pharisees acknowledged the fact of resurrection of the dead
 - Their hope for the resurrection was based on being good enough
 - Such a hope is full of doubt.
 - If your hoped is based on *good enough* - would your hope be sure?
- Jesus' resurrection proves his death paid for all our sins.
 - Jesus promises to raise all who delight to call him *my Saving Lord*
 - Jesus' followers confess him by words, life, and listening
 - His gospel is their source of life, way of life, a gospel motivated life
- A gospel motivated life is lived **boldly**, not trusting in self, but Jesus
 - Boldness flows from his trustworthiness & his amazing good news
 - Living bold in the gospel = **Boldly testify to the gospel under gospel motivation.**
- ❖ Did you notice Jesus' gospel motivation to Paul at the end?
 - *"Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."*
 - Not just a rah rah pep talk- not just a prophecy of the future
 - Not: *Since you did a good job here, I'll give you the opportunity to do it again in Roman. "No good deed shall go unpunished."* - law motivation
- It's filled with gospel - Jesus' promise of rescue and security
- Jesus is sending gospel filled Paul to the Gentiles, again
 - **Where gospel filled - gospel flows**
 - Knows the gospel's power to liberate, enlighten, unburden, comfort, give rest, peace, and renewal in life
 - Those who love the gospel love to love others with the gospel.
 - Believers boldly speak the gospel knowing **it** works.
 - Where there is gospel motivation, God's people boldly testify.

When your reaction to testifying to Jesus is timidity and fear, don't motivate yourself with the law saying, *But Jesus told me I have to or he'll disown me.* That's terror! Let the gospel fill you. Explore its promises and their implications. Remember the relief the gospel gives, and before long you will be amazed. You will

Boldly testify to the gospel under gospel motivation.