

"Gutsy Gospel"

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[0 : 00] Um, so it was a long night and some hard work, but I think I've got a good sermon here for you that I hope will, will bless you. Um, once again, I do this because I, I care about you and I want to see you grow in Christ.

It is a labor of love. Um, so if you would please read with me following along, uh, starting in verse 12.

Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech and that's it. I was going to do that whole section 12 through 18.

Um, but there's so many concepts wheeling around in Paul's discussion here that I wasn't quite able to, to wrap it all together.

So today we will just be focusing on this, this simple phrase here. Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech.

[1 : 04] I wonder if you would consider yourself a bold speaker. Um, especially when it comes to the things of God, would you consider yourself to be a bold speaker?

Someone who, who says things with, with force and without hesitation. I would venture to guess that most of us wouldn't consider ourselves to be bold speakers.

That we're probably a bit on the reserve side, especially when it comes to talking about God outside of church context in our regular life.

Um, I think there's lots of natural things within us, not good things, but natural things that cause us to be hesitant to speak about the things of God when we're around people who aren't believers.

Fear of man's a particularly big one. Um, we want the approval of others. We want to be thought well of, and we are aware that Christ is not a popular subject for many people.

[2 : 10] But Paul shows us here that he has a hope that equips him to be able to be a bold speaker for Christ.

If anyone knows reasons to fear man, it's Paul. He has been stoned a number of times, chased out of cities for fear of his life.

And yet here he speaks about the reasons why he has great confidence and great reason to use boldness of speech.

So I want you to, as we work through this, be encouraged and empowered by the truths that Paul is resting in. So that you too might be a bold speaker for Christ.

So today we will be looking at, at two points. Point number one, such hope. And point number two, great boldness.

[3 : 12] Coming directly out of the way Paul structures his sentence, we have, since we have such hope, therefore we use great boldness.

I want you to, uh, think about your life. Think about times when, when you are bold for things. What caused you to be willing to be bold or adventurous or risk-taking?

Maybe one of your boldest moments was asking someone out on a date. We all know how stressful that can be. Or maybe it was some adventurous new activity.

Perhaps one of you here is a skydiver and I don't know about it. Or a snowboarder or some other exciting activity that takes a fair degree of boldness to get out and go do.

How do you buy skinny deathboats? That takes some boldness. Um. Or sometimes we need boldness to confront people about certain issues.

[4 : 18] I find that's one of the hardest places for me to be bold is to tell people things that I know they won't like to hear. Um. So think about different ways that you have been bold in your life and in what has helped you to be that way.

And as you think about those things, I think it should become clear that when we feel secure in something, that that gives us greater freedom to be bold.

Oftentimes we're bold because we feel safe and secure in some way, shape, or form. I might not have a difficult conversation with someone I barely know.

But I know that my dad, whom I have a good relationship with, I can have a much more confrontational discussion with. Because there's a security of the relationship that makes me free to be bold.

Awesome. It also reminds me of an activity that I quite enjoy. Um. They have these treetop obstacle courses. Where you hook up into a harness and you're 40, 50, 60 feet up in the air going through an obstacle course.

[5 : 37] Um. As someone who is scared of heights, it's one of the last things you might expect me to do. Oh, yeah. Um. But I am able to be bold on those obstacle courses.

Because the harness they put you in is never letting you go. You can fall right off the obstacle and you'll just hang there a foot down and be absolutely fine.

They make you test it a few times on a lower level and you feel like, okay, this can hold your weight. And so that security, that line there gives me great boldness.

Because I know even if I absolutely mess up this obstacle, I'm just dropping a foot and I'm going to be fine. That is like what Paul is talking about here.

That the hope he has gives him a security that makes him free to be very bold. Therefore, since we have such hope, that hope comes with a security, we use great boldness of speech.

[6 : 50] So let's look at what this hope is. And hopefully by working through that, we can find security for ourselves that will equip us to be able to go out and be bold for Christ.

To use great boldness of speech. So point number one, such hope. I want to mention before we get deep into this that the Bible uses the word hope differently than we often use it in English.

In English, I might say something like, I hope it doesn't rain today. And what I mean there is that there is a chance that it is going to rain and my preference would be that it doesn't.

But when the Bible uses the word hope, it's not talking about this sort of wishful thinking or this preference about what's going to happen. But it more so means something that you are setting your plans on, that you're counting on to be a certain way.

It's closer to when we might say, I pinned all of my hopes on it not raining today. Or I made all of my plans being confident that that wouldn't happen.

[8 : 16] So then if I'm proven wrong, it messes up everything. This is the biblical idea of hope, something that you stake your life on.

Something that you believe in, that you don't have yet, that changes how you do everything. So in Bible terms, your hopes are something that you are willing to stake your life on.

Something that you anticipate and you're betting everything that you will have. The hope that Paul is talking about here is the glory, the privileges and the blessings of the new covenant.

We have already had a piece of those blessings as a new covenant people. But we also labor in hope of greater blessings that are going to come one day.

The fullness of the covenant when it is completely fulfilled at the second coming of Christ. This is what Paul has been talking about all through chapter 3.

[9 : 27] Is these blessings and privileges of the new covenant. This hope that we have as believers. So what we're going to do is we're going to review the hope that Paul has outlined in chapter 3.

Going through all the different points he touches on to show off just how wonderful this new covenant that we have is. He starts off earlier in chapter 3, verse 3 saying, Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but by the spirit of the living God.

Not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. Here we get one of the first beautiful parts of the new covenant that Paul is talking about.

We get the truth that we as believers take part in God's amazing work of transforming lives.

God is not simply in the business of marking down stones with rules to tell people what they're doing wrong. But in the new covenant, God is in the business of taking sinful, rebellious hearts And transforming them.

[10 : 59] We can and we should go out and speak with boldness. Because we have a certain expectation. A hope that will not be put to shame.

We can be confident that when we bring the word of God. He will at some times and in some ways be pleased to use that word to take sinners' hearts and transform them into living flesh hearts.

We can be confident that God is working even when we can't see it. We should be encouraged to be bold.

Since we don't have to be clever enough to fix people's problems. But rather, we simply have to be faithful to God.

And we will find that he does this work by the spirit of the living God. Writing his laws on tablets of flesh. That is, of the heart.

[12 : 10] So be encouraged to know that when you speak the truths of the Bible. The Lord of creation is working through you to achieve changes in the lives of sinful men.

Paul continues to talk about the hope that we have as believers in verses 5 and 6. He says, Here in these verses we learn that it is God who equips us to do the work of ministry that we are called to do.

We do not have to fear that we are disqualified to be used in God's kingdom. That I'm not smart enough or righteous enough.

I'm not clever enough or kind enough to achieve the plans of God. No, our confidence doesn't come from our hope.

Our security doesn't come from our own abilities. But it comes from God who makes us sufficient. So we, being made sufficient by God, are free to be bold for God.

[14 : 04] We are free to be bold because he is supporting us. He is making us capable to do the ministry we are called to do. If I am trusting in myself when I evangelize a co-worker, I have great reason to be nervous, to be timid, to be unsure of myself.

Because my abilities will never save a sinner. But when I read in these verses that it is God who makes me sufficient for the work of ministry.

I then have the security that can make me free to be bold in my words. Knowing that it's not about me. It's not about my abilities.

But about the God who makes me sufficient as a minister. And makes you all sufficient as ministers of the new covenant. Then Paul continues on to show even more of the hope, the security, the blessings we have in this new covenant.

In verse 6, he highlights how the Spirit gives life. He goes on to say, For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

[15 : 29] That means that we should have the boldness of doctors. Who know from their years of training and experience that they have the power to save lives with their work.

Because we have a Holy Spirit who is capable of giving life to the dead. We can have confidence in boldness when we go out to minister.

Because we have with us the power to bring life to the dead. Not of ourselves, but of the Holy Spirit who accompanies us in our work.

We must speak with boldness to a dying world. Because we have the cure to its disease.

I love how Richard Baxter captures this. He's writing and he gives instructions to pastors. And he tells them that they are to preach as a dying man to dying men.

[16 : 37] You know, feeling that sense of desperation. The urgency that we are in a world that is perishing. And because we have the Spirit that gives life.

We have the cure, the answer to their problems. So we can speak with boldness. Because we have the real solution to the problems of the world.

The Spirit that gives life. So I wonder, having the cure, will you be bold and faithful?

Will you step up and bring words of life to people who are perishing? Or will you stand by knowing you have the cure to the world's disease and not offer it to them?

Having this blessing, will you take advantage of it and speak with boldness to the world? Or will you sit idly by while they perish in their sins?

[17 : 44] But if all of that hope, all of that security, wasn't enough to give you boldness?

Wasn't enough to encourage and empower you? Remember also what Paul speaks of in verse 9. We learned in this section that we labor for a covenant that will come in radiant glory.

Far above and beyond anything that we have ever seen. If you were here when I preached on this, we spoke about the first lights of dawn on a horizon.

That's what our life is like now as new covenant people. We see the first glimmers of the glory of the new covenant. And we know that one day that sun will arise and it will transform everything with its light.

There is no glory in this world that will compare with the glory that will come in these final days. This is good news.

[19 : 11] It means that you are completely safe. It means that you are completely safe. That if you, because of bold speech, find yourself tortured and executed, it will still be a victory for you because of this coming glory.

If you, because of this hope of glory, preach with boldness and find yourself even losing your life, all it will be is trading a lesser glory for the greater one that outshines it all.

This hope gives us security because it is a promise that regardless of whatever cost we face in this life, we have a wealth coming that completely unbalances the scales.

It would be like the parable that Jesus tells in Matthew 13, 44. He says the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up.

Then in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. It is this lesson that the glory that's coming to us, the hope of glory that we have, that expectation that we should stake our life on, is so worthwhile that you could lose everything you have and still be richer for having that.

[20 : 59] If I know that no matter what I do, I will have riches of glory beyond my wildest dreams, riches of glory, riches of glory, riches of glory, the riches of glory of being with my savior.

I then become free to have great boldness for the cause of Christ, because come what will, I will have Christ one day. And that changes everything.

Is the kingdom of God valuable enough to you that you would give up everything?

What do you have that is worth so much more than the hope of this gospel? What would you struggle to sacrifice for this hope of glory?

I tell you, it's not worth it. Like Abraham offering his beloved son on the altar, he gets a far greater reward.

[22 : 07] We have such a hope that we can be truly bold, secured by the great promises we have, the promises of power in the spirit, life-giving ministry, promises that God will make us sufficient for the work ahead of us, and promises that no matter what the cost, we will be greatly rewarded with a glory beyond all other glories.

If we have such a hope, we must therefore be bold out of our security. So point number two, great boldness.

Having meditated on that hope that gives us great boldness, let us now think on what it means to use great boldness of speech.

First of all, I think we should be proud. I think that we should be a proud people with bold speech.

Not because we're proud of ourselves, because we think we're so much better than everyone else, but because we are proud of the God we represent, and we are in awe of what sort of being he is that does these amazing things.

[23 : 43] The God we represent is something worth boasting about. Just think on this. The God of the universe died for you.

That should be so amazing that you want to talk about it all the time. I mean, what could be more interesting?

The TV show you watched? The food you had at Thanksgiving? Would you really put that on the same level as the God of the universe dying in your place, even though you're a filthy, wretched sinner?

We boast about so much stupid things. I think about how sometimes I'll even boast about how my life is worse than other people's lives.

You know, we're complaining, and I want to prove that I have more of a reason to complain than other people do, so I boast about my life being worse than theirs.

[24 : 52] Like, oh, you only got six hours of sleep last night? I only got four, you know? As if that's something to be proud of. And we'll boast in that.

But will we boast in the beauty of Christ? Will we boast in the Savior who is perfect and glorious beyond anything else?

I tell you, everything good you've ever enjoyed in this life is just a shadow of Christ. There is nothing good, truly good in this life that isn't found more perfectly, more fully in our Savior.

So if you're going to boast in anything, boast about your Savior. Be proud to be his ambassador. Talk to the world with boldness of speech that comes from your pride in Christ.

Talk with the boldness of speech that fits the God we deserve, that we serve. I love what Jeremiah 9 says.

[26 : 08] Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom. Let not the mighty man boast in his might. Let not the rich man boast in his riches.

But let him who boasts, boast in this, that he understands and knows me. That I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth.

For in these things I delight, declares the Lord. The first part of being bold of speech is to be proud of our Savior, to boast in him.

Second, we should speak with confidence. No more bashful timidity. Are you nervous about speaking God's truth?

As if it can't hold up to scrutiny? As if it's some fairy story? Do you speak as if you somehow need to prove yourself to other people that these things are worth respecting?

[27 : 25] Do you take the glorious truths of Scripture and put them out before other people to judge whether or not they're actually good?

Or do you speak with confidence, knowing that these words are true, life-giving, living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword?

You should not answer to other people. They answer to God. And you are his ambassador.

Whether or not they listen to you is not in your control. Your place is to speak the words of Jesus. To speak the words of him who says, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

Your confidence doesn't come from yourself, anything about how smart you are. But it comes from who he is and the confidence and conviction that he has.

[28 : 32] You should speak with boldness and confidence. Yet all the while, still being respectful. This isn't licensed to be arrogant and dismissive of everyone else.

And especially respectful to authorities. But you should still pray and study the word. That you might have unshakable faith.

That you could go forth with great boldness and confidence. I wanted to give you a few great examples of bold Christian speech.

I love Daniel chapter 3. Where you have three Jews. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Standing before King Nebuchadnezzar.

He threatens to burn them alive if they will not worship his statue. And listen to their bold speech as they answer him. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king.

[29 : 40] They're respectful. Oh, Nebuchadnezzar. We have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace.

And he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.

These are men who have boldness of speech that comes from being secure in their hope of glory in God.

These are men who have learned the lesson of 2 Corinthians 3 verse 12. That such hope as we have merits great boldness of speech.

Or consider the famous reformer Martin Luther. The speech he gives against the Roman Catholic Church.

- [30 : 46] After the speech, he would become an outlaw labeled as a heretic. He would be hunted under threat of execution. Possibly even being burned at the stake if he would be caught.
- And this is how he ends his speech to the Roman Catholic Church. He says to them, If then, That is boldness of speech.
- Here I stand and I can do no otherwise. God help me. Amen. That is boldness of speech.
- These are men who know the hope they have in Christ. And are undaunted by anything that the world could do to them. So we should speak with confidence.
- Third, we should speak being unafraid of the consequences. Be honest with yourself.
- [32 : 20] Are you afraid to die for Christ? If you had to face down a gun today for the sake of your savior, Would you turn your back on him?
- Now there have been godly brothers and sisters who in the light of such things have stumbled for a time.
- But it's important to count the cost. Are you afraid to suffer for your savior?
- Or do you remember that if you die for Christ, it is a sure guarantee of your salvation?
- Have you not read what it says in 2 Timothy? It is a faithful saying. For if we are dead with him, we shall also live with him.
- [33 : 20] If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. Is it too much for you to be inconvenienced by boldness of speech for Christ?
- When he was crucified for you, could you stand a little mockery? Could you stand a little isolation?
- He instructs us all to take up our cross and follow him. We ought to speak being unafraid of the consequences.
- For he bore our sins for our sake. Fourth, we should speak with urgency. The hope we have frees us to a boldness of speech with an urgency like no other.
- You must call people to repentance. Not casually mention it. Not just offer it like a tip about a good bank.
- [34 : 33] Or a type of car you found useful. You must call people to repentance with urgency. Look square in the face of sinners who you love and say, You must repent or you will perish.
- You must call them to the Savior. For even now, their soul is slipping into hell. And who knows what hour will be their last.
- Do you feel this urgency? If you do not speak now, it may be too late. So we ought to speak with urgency of boldness.
- I love how striking it is in Romans chapter 10 verses 13 through 17. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.
- How then will they call on him whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him whom they have not heard?
- [35 : 44] And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.
- Can you speak so timidly or so shyly?
- When the door to hell is so close to them going through it? When all that is needed for them to escape eternal destruction is to call upon the name of the Lord.
- Can you stand by and say nothing? How will they know unless someone preaches to them?

I'm calling on you now as believers in Christ to speak with boldness and urgency to dying men. There are some people in your life that you will be the closest Christian that they ever get to know.

[37 : 12] Will you let that opportunity pass you by knowing that an eternal soul is at stake?

We must speak with great urgency and therefore be so bold. Fifth and finally, imitate Christ.

Speak with boldness by imitating Christ. He, for sinners, set his face like a flint.

He knew his destination and he went to the cross with great boldness. He knew that the hope he was laboring for was so great, so wonderful, that the inheritance of you all was so precious to him, that with boldness he faced down torture, execution, and the wrath of God.

For the prize of your soul, he lived with great boldness. Consider Hebrews 12, which says, Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.

[39 : 02] And here we get the pinnacle, how he endures these difficulties for the hope that he has. Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated now at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself. Consider his example so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted in your struggle against sin.

For in your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood. If our Savior had not been so righteous and so bold as to face any challenge for the sake of you, we would be hopeless.

If he was in any way squeamish and bashful about the things he would have to face for our sake, we would be on the path to hell.

But look at how even in the midst of his agony, he speaks bold words of love for sinners. He cries out, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

[40 : 40] Do you have the boldness to pray for forgiveness for the same people who are hurting you while they are hurting you? Imitate Christ.

And even in his darkest hours, he entrusts himself to God. His security, his hope that gives him boldness of speech is his Father in heaven.

As he prays, Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit. So brothers and sisters, let us remember our hope, this powerful, mighty, glorious gospel that transforms hearts and brings sinners to life.

And let us, in light of that hope and the security we have, speak bold words of life so that others might come to know the Jesus that we boast of.

Let's close in prayer. Lord, we are unworthy servants, unworthy of your love, unworthy of your sacrifice.

[41 : 57] So we have nothing better to offer than our filthy rags, our measly existence. But Lord, we would pray that you would receive this offering of our lives and that you would send your spirit to make us able to suffer even death for the sake of your name, that as many as possible, that all of the elect would come to know your glory and the joy of your salvation.

It is in your Son, our Savior's name, we pray. Amen.