

Sermon Discussion August 28, 2016

Overview

At Zionsville Fellowship, we have an ongoing call to consider how we can become a more outward-focused church. This passage in 1 Thessalonians is helpful as we consider what is necessary to have courage in sharing the gospel, and consequently what can keep us from sharing it.

The animating necessities for sharing our faith are boldness and courage. These are only required if some type of suffering is a potential outcome. Paul takes several verses to remind the young church of his earnestness in sharing the faith and to give them courage so they will hold tight to what was given to them.

Drew focused on three motivations that we have for maintaining this courage:

1. Overriding desire to please God
2. Sincere love for people
3. A continual resting in the gospel

Quotations

Two recommended books to encourage us in these efforts: "Honest Evangelism" by Rico Tice and "The Faith of Christopher Hitchens" by Larry Taunton.

Understanding & Application

If possible, watch these videos in preparation for or during your small group time together:

<http://t4g.org/media/2014/04/from-devastation-to-deliverance/>

<http://t4g.org/media/2014/04/5391/>

1. Consider/share experiences that you've had in sharing the gospel.
 - a. What situations have been encouraging to you? Discouraging? How is a high view of God's sovereignty helpful when it's tempting to be critical of our own efforts?
2. Drew highlighted that boldness is required because some level of suffering could result. In the western world, this is likely in the form of risking mockery and marginalization.
 - a. Have you experienced this form of suffering as you've sought to be faithful in sharing gospel?
 - b. If you haven't (say, in the past 12 months), experienced any form of this, do you think you're operating too safe – too far from the "pain line" to use Rico Tice's language?
3. If we take seriously the recent legal battle that failed to protect the religious/conscience rights of the family pharmacy in Washington State, how can we prepare to count the cost in our own professional lives?
 - a. What lifestyle choices might we make to give us the freedom to disassociate from a profession that forces us to violate our faith?
 - b. Does this impact the fields of work we would encourage our children to pursue?
4. Discuss the differences between Responsive Courage and Proactive Courage.
 - a. Can you provide examples of both of these in the recent past?
 - b. Which of these presents more of a challenge for you?
5. The foundational challenge from the sermon was that if we claim we love people and want to please God, but don't share the gospel boldly, we actually love our approval from others more and value that higher than our desire to please God and love people fully.
 - a. Discuss someone who God has put in your life who needs to hear the gospel. What will you do differently over the next weeks and months to have a consistent courage to share your faith?