

ALL THROUGH CHRIST

"For I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"
[Philippians 4:13]

PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT & RELIANCE ON THE SPIRIT OF JESUS 1:12-26

The Spirit gives boldness to live for Christ. Most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear. (1:14) & For I know that as you pray for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me, this will lead to my deliverance. (1:19). Like Jesus, Paul's service to others brought him face to face with humiliation and death, but he is still confident that God will glorify himself in Paul's suffering. Even if Paul's service to the Church ended in his own death, it would be a gain because he could be with Jesus. However, like Jesus, he will continue to live, suffer, and serve in order to be a blessing to others. God wants to fill us all with the Spirit of Christ – to live boldly for Him without fear. What might this look like for us in our lives? Where might we develop conversations about faith with our colleagues, neighbours and family, trusting the Spirit will give us the words and the boldness we need. We are able to do this 'all through Christ'.

READINGS

Philippians 1:12-19 (Paul's chains advance the gospel)
Acts 2:1-4 (The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost)

TALK SUMMARY

The book of Philippians is a personal letter written in around AD63 to Philippi, a key hub in the Roman road system between Europe and Asia – a city founded by Philip, father of Alexander the Great. Paul had been imprisoned there as well in AD 52. He wasn't expecting us to be reading it 2000 years later. One key theme is the need to be bold in how we share our faith. He was chained to shifts of guards. Who are we regularly close to who we can share our faith with? The Spirit can help us to do this now. It was at Pentecost that the disciples received their Spirit of boldness, but it wasn't a one off event. People have had similar experiences throughout history. And when it happens, people are changed and they change others around them in their workplaces and social circles. But faith is not just Spirit. We also derive faith from the Bible in our head. The question is about balance between faith in our heart and faith in our head. Could we be more effective for Jesus if our faith had more of our heart?

Questions:

Conversation Starter

Who knows about our faith, and what it means to us, amongst our family, friends and others?

What might God be saying to me about this theme/situation?

Is the fire of the Spirit still burning bright in my heart or am I more of a head faith now?

What have I learnt that I want to hold on to?

Is the example of Paul's experience and how he expresses it to Philippi relevant to me today?

How am I going to put it into practice?

Would a more "heart-felt" faith change how I engage with the world as Christ's ambassador?