

something he kept coming back to and just wouldn't get away from. He testified of Jesus and His resurrection, we can say, repeatedly so. This comes out so clearly again in the original for in verse 18 where we read "he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection", the verb tense of "he preached" is once more in the imperfect tense meaning this was a matter of ongoing action; this is what Paul kept on doing over and over again. It wasn't just a one time theme for him but a repeated theme for him. Verses 31 and 32 prove too this was in fact so.

Reading from the writings of Paul in the New Testament, it is clear also that he recognized the power of the Christian faith is clinched and climaxed in the fact of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Jesus' resurrection proves Him to be the God-sent, God-approved, God-triumphant Saviour of sinners He truly is! Paul lived his life, as he says in Philippians 3:10, that he might know Christ and the power of His resurrection. In II Timothy 2:8, Paul's last written letter in the Bible, the apostle exhorts, "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel."

This resurrection fact makes the gospel all so valid and sure and urgent beyond words! No wonder Paul came back to this again and again. If we would be faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ the Saviour today, we must do no less than come back to the heart of the gospel message about Jesus and Him crucified and risen again, over and over, repeatedly so.

There is much more to learn about how Paul testified of Jesus' resurrection looking at Acts 17, but we will have to come back to it next time. In the meantime don't live as if Jesus hasn't risen from the dead, for He has! And that makes Him the almighty most blessed and only Saviour of sinners indeed. That is also what so drove Paul as missionary of Jesus Christ the ends of the earth. Amen.

Hans Overduin, Radio Pastor

April 15, 2007

Publication No306

BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



TESTIFYING OF JESUS AND THE RESURRECTION [1]

In this message, the Sunday after Easter, I invite you to consider with me a man who lived so in view of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. He didn't just believe the doctrine of Jesus' resurrection but he lived by the grace of God in fellowship with the resurrected Saviour and in praise and honour of Him every day, everywhere, with everyone. In Acts 17:18 we are told how Paul kept on preaching and teaching the good news of Jesus, the once crucified and now risen Saviour. Let us read that Scripture passage, Acts 17:16-34, and then we will focus on in what ways Paul went about always testifying of Jesus as the resurrected Saviour. "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.) Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God,

we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."

From this Holy Spirit inspired and infallible Scripture, notice with me one way Paul testified of Jesus and His resurrection was caringly so. Caringly so, I say, for what are we told when Paul comes to the city of Athens and he sees all the idolatry there? Verse 16 tells us his heart and mind, his spirit the text says, becomes stirred within him. What this means is it overwhelms him with grief and pain and even anguish that the people of Athens are so steeped in false worship and are living in ignorance of the one true and only living God. It was said of Athens that there were more idol gods in that city than people, indeed, I read somewhere that in the city the idol gods outnumbered the people almost three to one! But the point is, Paul saw all the idols and statutes and idol shops and temples and shrines, etc. and it disturbed him deep in his soul. In the Greek the verb form of him being stirred within is in the imperfect tense meaning this was something ongoing in him. You see, Paul couldn't shake it; it impacted him, it affected him, it caused him to speak about Jesus the living Saviour, caringly so, yes!

Caringly so, for while that city with so much history and so much learning, that center also of culture and the philosophies of men, seemed to be so great and glorious, yet Paul saw how misguided they were! How hopeless and lost they were in their ways, and therefore, notice, it says in verse 17, he disputed, literally he dialogued and reasoned with the people as he met with them, first in the Jewish synagogue there, but then also in the market place and on the streets of that idolatrous city. Seeing so many people worship and follow after dead and lifeless idols gods and useless religions of men, and knowing Jesus is the living Saviour and only true God together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Paul testified of Jesus, the living Saviour, caringly so!

In our times, how many follow false religions of man's own making and how many live only just for this world. That so many are thus headed to eternal destruction, and not knowing or refusing to know and follow the one only true God Who in Christ Jesus is the triumphant and living Saviour of sinners, should affect us. How many pursue empty, self-centered, totally this world-minded only religions, and live and die without hope. Knowing Jesus, the resurrected living Saviour, does it stir you too deep within that so many

all around us in our cities and in the whole wide world are worshipping and serving they know not what? When you know Jesus, it makes you live life caringly so towards others, isn't that true? Then also when sometimes you find yourself not caring so, being caught up in the here and now, you ask for God's forgiveness and for a compassionate and caring heart for others, all those around us still lost in sin and darkness.

Notice next Paul also then testified of Jesus boldly so, our second point. Here Paul was in this godless, worldly, cultural center of the world, one among so many, but knowing Jesus as the living Saviour and the Christian religion as the only true religion, also because of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, he began to dialogue with the people and he wouldn't keep quiet about Jesus, the crucified and risen Saviour, as the one only true Saviour God Whom we must come to know shall it be well with us. Paul spoke boldly, for you agree it takes a certain courage to approach people concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ, especially also if they are busy following after other religions and other pursuits. Yet when you know Jesus Christ as true and risen Saviour, it moves you to want to speak and testify. You may be afraid to do so, you may wonder how you should begin, you may fail in many cases in trying to witness, but still you want to, and you pray to do so, and at different times in different ways you do seek to speak about Jesus to others whom you see are so lost in sin and darkness in their own ways.

See Paul here confront that great, idolatrous, supposedly learned city of Athens! What made him so bold? Well, having the truth can make you bold, especially when you know also everything else is the lie. The Christian faith as founded on God's Word and grounded on the crucified and risen Saviour, Jesus Christ, speaks the truth and not the lie, promotes life and not death, brings salvation and not condemnation, proclaims liberty and not captivity, brings light and not darkness, spreads peace and not terror, brings hope and not despair, brings love and not hate, leads to heaven and not to hell! Besides that, Paul knew too, while he was by himself there in Athens, he was not by himself, but trusting the Lord, his Saviour, though with His resurrected body Jesus was in heaven, yet with respect to His "Godhead, majesty, grace, and Spirit" at no time was He absent from Paul. Paul knew one with God is greater than a whole city without God. We may know this too still in our time as confessing Christians today. And when you know this all, you can and do become bold even when you feel so timid, and then you pray to be bold, because you see, people need to know the Lord, the one true God and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent, Whom to know is life eternal. Paul testified of Jesus and His resurrection caringly so and boldly so. Is this something to learn from for us today?

How this theme of Jesus and His resurrection which Paul preached, meaning really the whole message of Jesus Christ as the one and only Saviour of sinners and the God of the Bible being the one only true God, is