

Call to Worship: Psalm 95:1-2

Scripture Reading: 2 Samuel 9:1-13

Sermon: "Boldness and Access in Christ" Ephesians 3:11-13

Benediction: Hebrews 4:14-16

INTRODUCTION

Paul was about to tell us that he is praying for us, and to tell us what he is praying for us. But he paused as he was just beginning to address the fact that he is in prison as if he were a criminal. Paul has told us that the reason he is in prison is that he has been made a steward, to dispense the grace of God to us gentiles in the form of knowledge of a mystery. We saw last time that the purpose of this stewardship is to show the wisdom of God. Now he tells us some of the benefit we have in this, also

As a result of the stewardship of grace given to Paul for us, we have boldness and confidence in access to God through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

TEXT

Ephesians 3:11b-13 Christ Jesus our Lord, (12) in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. (13) Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

BODY

As a result of the stewardship of grace given to Paul for us, we have boldness and confidence in access to God through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- I. We are in Christ Jesus our Lord (11b-12a)
 - A. "Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have"
 - B. You are aware that you are in Christ Jesus in a certain sense, and not in every way
 1. Your body is not physically in His
 2. You are in Him mystically; that is, in a way that cannot be seen; there is a mystical union
 3. You are in Him in God's reckoning; God's calculations; God's thinking; God counts you as being in His Son, Jesus Christ
 - C. many times already in this letter we have been taught that we are "in Christ Jesus"
 1. 1:3 God the Father has blessed us in Christ
 2. 1:6 God made us accepted in the Beloved

3. 1:7 in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins
4. 1:11 in Him we have obtained an inheritance
5. 1:13 in Him you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise
6. 2:6 in Christ Jesus God has raised us up and made us sit together in the heavenly places
7. 2:13 in Christ Jesus you who were far off have been brought near by the blood of christ
8. 2:15 in Himself you have been made one new man
9. 2:16 in Him you are reconciled to God in one body through the cross
10. 2:21-22 in Him you are being fitted together, growing into a holy temple, a dwelling place of God

II. Being in Christ Jesus our Lord, we have something glorious: access to God the Father with boldness and confidence (12b)

A. Access to God the Father

1. recall this already has been mentioned Ephesians 2:18
2. that is, entrance to where the Father is pleased to show Himself
3. Paul states this here very briefly.
4. to understand it better, see this put in terms of the tabernacle in Hebrews 10:10-22
 - a) the priests of the Old Covenant, offering the blood of animals, could symbolize the taking away of sin, but could not really do it (11)
 - b) Jesus Christ, however, as the one perfect high priest, offered His own blood as the sacrifice that actually did take away sins (12-14)
 - c) God had given prophecy centuries before that in the new covenant He would do this
 - (1) He would change hearts so that sinners would love His law instead of their sins (16)
 - (2) He would forgive sinners their sins, defined as lawless deeds (17)
 - d) having forgiven us our sins, there is no longer the need for any more offerings for sin (18)
 - e) now we can enter the presence of God the Father
 - (1) by the blood of Jesus (19)
 - (2) by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh (20)
 - (3) with Him as our High Priest over the house of God (21)

B. Boldness in use of that access (19)

1. having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus
2. we do not come cowering, in terror, afraid to say anything

3. instead we come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16)
- C. Confidence in the use of that access (22)
1. let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance
 2. in Christ we have received all the necessary cleansing; we need not be ashamed before God, or worried that He will not receive us

III. This having access to God the Father through being in Christ Jesus our Lord is through faith in Him (12c)

- A. Everyone wants to have access to people richer and more powerful than themselves, in order to get to enjoy some of what they have
- B. Or, you want access to people you admire or adore, in order to enjoy being with them
- C. The ultimate rich, powerful, admirable, loveable person is God, so many, many people desire to have access to God
- D. But the bible tells us that we do not, in our natural state, have access to God; our rebellion against Him, our breaking of His laws, our sins, separate us from God
- E. People sense, one way or another, that they do not have access to God, so they try all kinds of things to get it, following the tenets of some religion or another
 1. meditating
 2. performing religious rituals
 3. offering sacrifices
 4. setting up idols or even building whole temples
 5. saying prayers
 6. doing good works toward people
 7. giving offerings
 8. living morally
 9. associating with religious people
- F. People even get so close to having access to God as to attend the meetings of a Christian church, such as this one, or some other, or even go so far as to get baptized and take the Lord's Supper
- G. But none of these things that people do, none of these works that they perform, give them access to God; still they are separated from Him
- H. If you, doing some of these works, think that you have gained access to God, you are deceived; you are no better off with God than you were before
- I. Nothing you can do, no work you perform, can get you access to God
- J. Instead, the Lord Jesus Christ has done all for you, so that you can access God through Him, and only through Him; more specifically, you can access God through faith in Him, trust in Him; through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and by nothing else

CONCLUSION

As a result of the stewardship of grace given to Paul for us, we have boldness and confidence in access to God through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

-We are in Christ Jesus our Lord

-Being in Christ Jesus our Lord, we have access to God with boldness and confidence

-We have this benefit in Christ Jesus not through anything we have done or can do, but through faith in Him

Hebrews 4:14-16 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. (15) For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. (16) Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Since all that God is doing through Paul results in such glory for us, we should not lose heart at Paul's tribulations

Glory for us

- being fellow heirs of the unsearchable riches of Christ
- belonging of the same body
- being partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel
- making known the unsearchable wisdom of God to the angels
- having bold, confident access to God in Christ Jesus our Lord

Tribulations

- Paul's tribulations
- the church's tribulations
- our own tribulations

Vaughn:

three leading words of verse 12: boldness, access, confidence. All this we have in Christ

The three words are bound together so as to form one complete idea, namely, that through faith in Christ we have free, unrestricted, confident access to God.

boldness

Gill:

liberty of coming, granted by god, and a liberty in their own souls to speak out their minds plainly and freely

Vaughn:

suggesting absence of restraint or fear, translates a Greek word that literally denotes freedom of speech. It was used in classical Greek of the free speech that was the right of every citizen of a democratic state. In the NT it signifies the liberty of believers

to approach God directly through Christ, with the added notion of freedom from the fear of being rejected.

Masters:

outspokenness, especially in prayer; uninhibited

Hebrews 10:10-22 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (11) And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. (12) But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, (13) from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. (14) For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. (15) But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, (16) "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR HEARTS, AND IN THEIR MINDS I WILL WRITE THEM," (17) then He adds, "THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE." (18) Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin. (19) Therefore, brethren, having **boldness** to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, (20) by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, (21) and having a High Priest over the house of God, (22) let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance G4135 of faith G4102, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 4:15-16 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. (16) Let us therefore come **boldly** to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

access G4318

Vaughn:

which betokens approach to God is the principal word here

Poole:

not only in prayer, but all the communion we have with God by faith in Christ

Gill:

into the holy of holies, to the throne of grace there, and to God the Father, as seated on it

confidence G4006

confidence [G4006] by [G1223] the [G3588] faith [G4102] of him [G846]

2 Corinthians 3:4-5 And we have such **trust** through Christ toward God. (5) Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,

Philippians 3:3-4 ForG1063 weG2249 areG2070 theG3588 circumcision,G4061 which worshipG3000 GodG2316 in the spirit,G4151 andG2532 rejoiceG2744 inG1722 ChristG5547 Jesus,G2424 andG2532 have no confidenceG3982 G3756 inG1722 the flesh.G4561 (4) ThoughG2539 IG1473 might alsoG2532 haveG2192 confidenceG4006 inG1722 the flesh.G4561 If anyG1536 other manG243 thinkethG1380 that he hath whereof he might trustG3982 inG1722 the flesh,G4561 IG1473 more:G3123

Poole:

with confidence of acceptance with God, and obtaining what we ask

Vaughn:

suggests assurance of acceptance.

through faith in Him [KJV, YLT, Calvin: the faith of him]

RWP: *dia tes pisteos autou*

G4102 G846

JRY:

This exact phrase “dia tes pisteos auto” is no where else in the NT; but the phrases “dia tes pistou” and “dia pisteos Christou” are
I conclude that the translation “through faith in Christ” is correct.

Gill:

it is by faith, and so is peculiar to believers

Calvin:

When the words “through Christ” and “by the faith of him” are used by Paul, in connection with the name of God, there is always an implied contrast, which shuts up every other approach, which excludes every other method of obtaining Divine fellowship.

Masters:

will God change?

Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Vaughn:

The Ephesians must not let Paul’s afflictions cause them to lose heart, but instead must look upon them as an occasion for glorifying God.

Indeed, Paul's very willingness to suffer on behalf of the Gentiles was itself an indication of God's favor toward them.

JRY:

I think that Paul's desire, verse 13, came to pass, as Christ's church is not ashamed of his imprisonment, but encouraged by it.

Of course, the Lord Jesus and His apostles had to be treated as criminals, because they were against what the world was for!