

CONFIDENTLY SPEAK FOR JESUS!

Titus 3:8 --- Pastor Richard P. Carlson

During his initial 1960 presidential campaign, John F. Kennedy often closed his speeches with the story of Colonel Davenport, the Speaker of the Conn. House of Representatives. One day in 1789, the sky of Hartford darkened ominously, and some of the representatives, glancing out the windows, feared the end was at hand. Quelling a clamor for immediate adjournment, Davenport rose and said, "The Day of Judgement is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. Therefore, I wish that candles be brought."

That is confidence in standing for truth and speaking the truth. Today, as we approach this text, God is placing on my heart the deep need in our day to learn to face the lions in our lives with confidence, when we know it is a battle we must fight, a hill we must be willing to die on, and a road we must take. Jesus said when His hour was come in Gethsemane, in Matthew 26:45,46, "Behold the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going; behold the one who betrays me is at hand." Now that is confident speaking and confident standing for truth after the emotional wrestling and sweating as it were "great drops of blood" in the Garden of Gethsemane. If we want to know where this confidence comes from that Paul speaks of in Titus 3:8, one look at Jesus in the Garden speaking when His hour was come is enough. Our confidence is only in Christ by His indwelling Holy Spirit.

Dr. Ray Stedman tells a fascinating story. Have you ever wondered which is stronger, a lion or a tiger? Is it true the lion is the king of the jungle? Here's Ray Stedman telling the story. He writes, "As a boy I used to wonder what would happen if a lion and a tiger got into a fight. For years I would play that over in my imagination and speculate about the outcome. Until one day I happened to see a movie exhibited by Dr. Louis Talbot. He had been in India on an occasion when a lion and a tiger had somehow accidentally fallen into the same pit. Someone was there with a movie camera and filmed the whole thing."

Ray Stedman continues, "I tell you, I watched with great interest as this battle went on! These cats circled one another, one would lash out at the other, they would spit and snarl and leap about in that light way cats have. Then suddenly they would grapple together and roll about, spitting and biting. It was tremendous to watch! Then, quicker than the eye could follow, something happened; the tiger appeared to cave in. He simply fell down. The lion had caught it at just the right moment, had slapped it on the side of the head, and had crushed its skull. That was the end of the battle.

Way back in I Chronicles 11:22, Ezra is recounting the tales of David's mighty men, men of strength and confidence. The Bible reads, "Benaiah the son of Jehoida, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, mighty in deeds, struck down the two sons of Ariel of Moab. He also went down and killed a lion inside a pit on a snowy day." What an adversary that was that Benaiah the son of Jehoiada met on this snowy day. Perhaps, this lion in this pit was the worst possible foe he could ever meet. And worst of all, it was on a snowy day! You and I face "lions" like that, often, don't we? We can have something awful--and it flashes into our minds. Perhaps, as I have said these words -- which is your worst possible foe? Perhaps, it is something you have dreaded, something you have been afraid of, something you have long thought might happen to you, but you have hoped it never would. Perhaps, it has been there on the horizon of your thinking, always threatening, and you have been wondering if it were ever going to happen. The worst possible foe, the thing you have dreaded more than anything else -- that is the lion in your life. Do you face fearful odds like Benaiah in the pit with the lion on a snowy day?

Examine with me this text today in Titus 3: 8. The ESV translates this verse, saying, "The saying is trustworthy; and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people." After comparing translations and the Greek text, I prefer the way the old 1978 New American Standard Bible translates it. I read, "This is a trustworthy statement, and concerning these things, I want you to **speaK confidently**, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men/people."

The title of this message hangs on the Greek word **diago**, which the ESV translates **insist**, and the old KJV says "**affirm constantly**." **Diago** is only used twice in the New Testament. It means to lead our life knowingly. It derives its roots from **diagnosis**, used only once, meaning the examined life, or to examine, or it gets its roots from **diaginosko**, used twice, which means to know thoroughly and to the uttermost of our ability to know. What does it mean to lead our life knowingly as we speak? I believe **confidently speak** hits the nail on the head. How do we confidently speak in the face of lions, even on snowy days? I see **three definitions** in this text explaining why and how we as believers are to speak confidently these things God has given us. What are they?

SPEAK CONFIDENTLY THE WONDERFUL TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL FOR THEY ARE GOD'S TRUSTWORTHY TRUTH. (I.) "These things" in verse 8 are the wonderful truths of the Gospel. What are these wonderful truths of the Gospel? First, man is a hopeless sinner. (v. 3) Secondly, God the Father is kind and full of love for us as hopeless sinners and his love and kindness appeared in Christ's first coming. (v. 4) Thirdly, God the Holy Spirit in mercy has regenerated us and renewed us, (we who have believed God.) Why do I speak of believing and faith? The context of Titus is clear. Notice, that is part of our verse in Titus 3:8—

“those who have believed God” and in Titus 1: 6 it speaks of having children who believe. Titus 1:1 speaks of the faith of those chosen of God. This is something special that believers, the whole world over, polarize about. Some say that it’s all our believing and others say it’s all God’s choosing. But the Word says it is both faith, believing, and God’s choice. It is “the faith of the chosen of God” by which that Holy Spirit in mercy regenerates and renews us. (v.5 Fourthly, the work of salvation has been poured out richly to us in Jesus. (v.6) Fifthly, the grace of Jesus Christ is the effective cause of our justification, not the deeds we have done in righteousness. (v. 5, 7) Sixthly, the purpose of our salvation is that we become heirs in hope of eternal life. (v.7)

Now those are the things we are to speak confidently about. This is a fierce battle—to maintain balance and not succumb to fear or ever being caustic or sharp as we stand for truth. A battle is raging in our world today. But just like sovereignty and free will, there is no music unless the guitar has two points to be attached—at the end of the neck and on the other side of the bridge. No tension between these points and there is no chance for biblical music—only man trusting in his own works to be saved which is false, or man thinking it is all of God and therefore, he has no responsibility to respond by repenting, believing, and receiving the Lord Jesus, which is just as false. It may sound easy, but this is a profound battle splitting churches across America. This matter of “the faith of those chosen of God” must be confidently proclaimed.

These balanced things—these wonderful truths of the Gospel are to be confidently spoken about. The Greek word for speak or affirm confidently or constantly in verse 8 is **diabebaiooma**. It means to confirm thoroughly, with solemnity and earnestness. This doesn’t mean that we speak with bitterness or with caustic fervor, but it requires a passionate, earnest affirming of the balance of the wonderful truths of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, how are we doing on speaking God’s wonderful truths of the Gospel? Notice, we are to speak confidently because it is God’s trustworthy, reliable command. The word for trustworthy is **pistos** which means believing, trusting, and it is very possible to translate it, “This is a believer’s statement. **Pistos** in II Corinthians 6:15 is found in the verse, “Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a **pistos/believer** in common with an unbeliever?” So, in essence, this first definition of **diago**--confident speech is that believers speak confidently the wonderful truths of the Gospel because we are believers and because the truths we speak about, are trustworthy. Secondly,

SPEAK CONFIDENTLY THE WONDERFUL TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL BECAUSE THEY WILL CHANGE BELIEVERS’ CONDUCT. (II.)

Notice, “I want you to speak confidently so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds.” It is our believing that orders our conduct. The Greek word for “careful” in verse 8 is **phrontidzo**. It means to exercise much thought, to be anxious or careful. This is not worrying, but careful thoughtfulness every believer should use daily as God the Holy Spirit directs us.

What does our confident speaking help believers to be careful about? The answer is “engaging in good deeds/maintaining good works. The very mark of the believer here is careful diligence in what? The Greek word for practicing or “maintaining” good works or deeds is **proistemi**. This word means to stand before, in essence, a watching world. The main meaning is to do helpful useful deeds for others. God wants confident speaking of sound doctrine to put in believers a careful practice of useful deeds.

But there are two other words here, “**good**” which is from the Greek word which is **kalos**. It means beautiful, valuable, virtuous, honest, and worthy. The Greek word for profitable is **ophelimos** which means helpful, to give advantage, serviceable. Look at Paul’s confident words to Philemon’s runaway slave, Onesimus. Paul’s confident word of the Gospel changed the life of that man, Philemon’s once unprofitable runaway slave to his becoming his profitable brother in Christ. Let’s turn a page in Scripture and read Paul’s words about a changed life in Philemon 8-19, Thirdly, and lastly,

SPEAK CONFIDENTLY THE WONDERFUL TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL BECAUSE IT IS OF GREAT PROFIT TO ALL IN THIS LOST WORLD.

(III.) This text says, “These things are good and profitable for men.” This balanced speaking of sovereignty and free will, this balanced speaking of the place of the law as a schoolmaster, yet the pre-eminence of grace, this balance of responsibility and freedom, this balanced speaking of the wonderful truths of the Gospel will light up our dark world for we, like Christ, the true Light of the world, we are also the light or lights of the world with Jesus shining through our vessels, cracked pots or earthen vessels in whom we carry this treasure.

In this balancing act, **some folk want no responsibility**. All is God and of God and He removes the necessity of our feeling any “yoke.” But Jesus told us to take His yoke upon us. He says that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. (Matthew 11: 28-30) In other theological camps, **there are folks bent beneath life’s load and pressured by performance**, forgetting that Philippians 2:12,13 is balanced. We read, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, (that’s the Greek word **katergazomai** meaning to do work fully, to finish a task, to do that from which something results) for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” God’s work is **energeo**. It means active, operative, effectual, mighty, supernatural, and God’s energy shows us from where the source of our energy to do our tasks come from—from Christ alone within us.

Our world needs to see God’s children have this balance. What is the difference between law and grace?" The difference is that the law commands without supplying a motive to obey. In fact, the law creates a feeling of rebellion within us.

Whenever we see a sign that says, "Keep Off the Grass," we may have been known to have an urge to walk across it. Do you ever feel that way? There is created in our spirits immediately a sense of rebellion: "Why should I keep off the grass?" I resent being told not to walk on it. We usually don't walk on the grass, because we know we will get into trouble, but sin in us would like to walk across the grass. Now that is law. It is a command without creating a desire to comply.

God's grace commands a higher motivation than law, and grace also creates an ability and a desire to comply with the demand. It's like the sign on newly planted grass that has no law in it. It's not merely the usual, blunt "Keep Off The Grass." Right in the middle of a beautiful, newly planted spot, green with new grass, here is this sign, that simply says, "Please Give Me A Chance!" That is grace. No one would walk on that grass. That sign appeals to the underdog in every human heart. It creates a sentiment of "Let's give that young grass a chance." That is grace.

"These things are good and profitable for men." Just the manner in which we speak confidently can make all the difference in our lost world. All of us probably have miles to go before we sleep on this kind of a balanced way to present the Gospel so that the world is attracted to Jesus. The offense of the Gospel will always be there, but let it never be the offense of me or you or us together. We all face lions, and we may even face them on snowy days, but God wants us to be victors, speaking confidently for Him. "This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men." May God help us face our lions on a snowy day with confident balanced speech that wins the day with those God places in our lives even if we are in prison speaking with a runaway slave. May the power of the Gospel make us this new year, those who never give up on anyone, but instead, we remember the sweet reasonableness of Jesus with the woman caught in adultery, and the way of Barnabas in bringing Paul into the fellowship of Jesus' first twelve apostles before God finally confirmed Paul among the twelve apostles.

I bless you with the peace of Titus 3: 8. "This is a trustworthy statement, and concerning these things, I want you to **speak confidently**, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men/people." Let's go out and win battles for God, even defeating lions on a snowy day for His glory, with the sweet reasonableness of Jesus, and the courage of the indwelling Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Christ in you, the hope of Glory. Amen.