

“Stout and Proud”
 Sermon for 7 February 2016
 Text: Galatians 2:1-10; Psalm 107:1-32

It is obvious that to assert that if there is a true gospel (in defense of which we should be stout and proud) there also must be a false gospel. Paul’s point is that there are false gospels and that *we must go on the offensive against them*. We must expose and root them out because peoples’ souls are at risk. Paul tells us in vv. 2:1 and 2:5 that he **went up to Jerusalem** so that **the gospel might be preserved for you**. He also went to stoutly oppose those who **slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery**. (v. 4)

Were you aware that there is a great fear of freedom out there? The though appears to be that if people were “free,” they would give expression to all manner of lawlessness and immorality (given our human nature, given our willingness to be awed by ourselves, by creation, by all that is under the heavens delightful and captivating *rather than be in awe of God!*). The Judaizers believed that a life of grace would be like a highway without guardrails and stop signs. This seems reasonable enough (at first blush) except that our freedom in Christ is constrained internally (by the law of love) and outwardly/spiritually by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the guardrail, stops signs and warning system that render the high way of the Christian life safe, travel-able and attainable. Hear me as I proclaim:

Salvation is freeing
 healing, releasing, helping and justifying power!
 The gospel corrects error,
 exposes idolatry, cancels sin
 revokes death, sickness and darkness!
 By it (in Jesus’ Name) we triumph over all our adversaries:
 adversity cannot defeat us, death cannot destroy us
 endless difficulty and challenge cannot discourage us.

Those are sin-broken,
 who feel they are spent, wasted,
 ruined, defiled and worthless,
 are released from captivity to self-loathing,
 and the prison house of ignorance and homelessness:
 Their exile is ended . . . their banishment ended.
 Jesus brings them all the way home!

In the place of all these evil, destructive things,
 instead of cursing and negativity,
 We obtain triumphant love in Jesus
 Who defeated despair (in hope) for us!
 And He established righteousness
 A new world order based on awe-struck worship
 freedom for goodness, mercy, kindness
 vindication and justice

Faith, hope and love . . . these three things abide.

All these are the things that Paul desired for his beloved sheep in Galatia. I desire that liberty for you. These are what he proved stout and proud for! I say, "Are they not worth fighting for?"

This grand, superlative, spiritual project is our project. Will you volunteer? Can Christ count on you to be stout and proud for the cause of Christian liberty?

Then comes this astounding claim: all of this came about as a gift. Salvation is not something we can earn, arrange, or accomplish on our own. Jesus did it all. His obedience, His righteousness, His sinlessness all worked together to bring about this great deliverance. Again, we are back at the truth of the gospel. Accept this as true, walk in its truth and we are eternally saved. Do we believe this? Yes, we may have to be stout and proud in the gospel's defense. What of it?! Stout and proud says **We must obey God rather than man.**