

“The Persuaded Volunteer!”

2 Timothy 1:8-12

Intro. – How often do we hear others and even ourselves speak confidently when in fact we are not? Some speak with seeming boldness/understanding only to cover up the lack thereof. Like a schoolboy passing through a cemetery just before dark whistles to keep his courage high, we often see and hear of people doing in essence the same thing.

A good illustration of what I mean is “snowing” at school. When I went to school and we weren’t real sure of some answers, whether it was for a test or classroom discussion, we’d “fake our way through.” In short, we’d write a lot or talk a lot making it appear we really were confident in our understanding of the matter at hand. Such a strategic move was called “snowing the teacher.” Sometimes it actually worked, but, most of the time it did not. Any teacher worth their keep could see a blizzard coming a mile off!

With this in mind. Is this the case with the apostle Paul as found in our text? Is he speaking with seeming confidence to cover up fear and despair? Is Paul really as sure as he sounds or is he giving us a snow job? Let me simply say, absolutely! Every inspired word we read in our text is shot through with holy boldness. It was a boldness that had resulted from a deep and thorough persuasion. He was convinced of God’s infinite power, tender love and absolute faithfulness. How about you?

Purpose: to better understand the reasonableness behind accepting/obeying Christ

All of us here today, both forgiven (Christians) and unforgiven are not the volunteers we ought to be. What we want to do then, is look at the inspired apostle’s reasons behind his being this *persuaded volunteer*. In doing this, I believe we’ll not only see the necessity of our accepting and obeying Christ, but, we’ll also see an often neglected aspect of our relationship with Christ – the reasonableness behind living for Him! Let’s look at this *persuaded volunteer*:

I Persuaded That God Could SAVE

- “saved” (σωζω) = “rescue, heal or restore to health, deliver”... This is exactly what is meant here, Paul was persuaded that God could/would rescue, restore to health, deliver his soul!
- understand this in the light of the following:

A. Paul Realized His Lost State

1. He acknowledged his sin – 1 Timothy 1:15 “*chief of sinners*”
 - note he used himself to illustrate the depth of human sin...
2. He acknowledged that his sin incurred God’s wrath
 - a. a good Jew knew this was the purpose of OT sacrifices...
 - b. Romans 6:23 “*For the wages of sin is death...*”
3. He acknowledged if left in this state – state of unforgiven sin – he would be forever lost!

B. Paul Realized His Helplessness

1. Paul recognized apart from God’s grace... his was no match for the mastery of sin.
2. Romans 7:15,19,24 – expresses what is meant by *slave to sin*
 - Illus. – January ’84 *Reader’s Digest* – “Please Don’t Give Up On Me” = July 12, 1981, Bobby Elifritz, Highway 7, Tacoma, WA, was struck by a car. In hospital he lay in a comma – a prisoner of his own body. He couldn’t see, speak or move, but, he knew what was going on about him. Remembers hearing: “Mother – I bought the grave site next to his dad’s grave...” Another said, “Maybe we should think about donating Bobby’s organs....” “Still a another said, “Doctors say he could spend the rest of his life as a vegetable. If Bobby dies, maybe it is best.”

This illustrates in a small way, the helpless state Paul was in before he became a Christian.

C. Paul Realized God Alone Can Save

1. If any had reason have confidence in flesh, Paul did – Philippians 3:5 – Hebrew, Roman, Pharisee.
2. He tried and tried to “earn” heaven by his good works...

3. V 9 – not according to works, but according to His own purpose and grace.
4. Coming *in the flesh* and dealing with sin in person, God revealed to Paul, as well as, to you and me that God alone can save us!

Because of this, Paul became the persuaded volunteer he was!

II Persuaded That God Could CALL

- the *calling* brought up by Paul = God’s calling
- comes with a two-fold purpose:
 - A. A Call to Salvation
 1. We have already discussed this part of God’s call.
 2. Paul realized the reasonableness behind this call – he saw it as a call that met his greatest need = forgiveness from sin!
 3. This same call comes to us through the gospel...!
 - B. A Call to Holiness
 1. Note: “called us with a holy calling” (v 9).
 2. Behind the character and nature of God there is not one blemish to be found...
 3. Holiness, purity and righteousness are defined best by no one less than the author of these – God!
 4. This then is a call to holy service, a call to commitment!
 - a. Paul’s life was a life lived in response to the call unto salvation.
 - b. so thankful was Paul for his forgiveness and deliverance/healing from sin that his life was a life of holy service and commitment!

Thus, Paul was persuaded that God could call – He was called by the Gospel unto salvation which naturally led to a life of holiness. Sound reasonable? Be persuaded and become the volunteer Paul was.

III Persuaded That God Could KEEP

- words used here ought to be familiar to those involved with banking...
- “guard” = “hold in safe keeping”... “commit” = “deposited”
- Paul was persuaded whatever he deposited in service/commitment to God, God was able to *guard*.
- look at Paul’s deposits and the length of protection to see the reasonableness behind his persuasion:
 - A. The Deposits Made
 1. His body – shipwrecked, stoned, beaten etc.; yet, Paul looked forward to a joyful resurrection and a new body.
 2. His livelihood
 - a. no doubt many thought Paul had made a big mistake choosing to live for Christ. Why?
 - b. great power and wealth awaited him as a Pharisee, a Jewish leader...
 - c. or if he preferred he could have been a Greek philosopher having the strength of mind he possessed... why he could have rivaled Plato etc.
 - d. instead he chose to unite with a band commonly called “ignorant fanatics; yet, it was this band that turned the world right side up!
 3. His entire being
 - a. passions, desires, ambitions and all mental powers were devoted to One – Christ the Lord!
 - b. Illus. – Pierre Gassendi (philosopher) “I was born without knowing why. I have lived without knowing why and I am dying without knowing either why or how.”
 - c. 2 Timothy 4:7-8 “*I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.*”
 - B. The Length of Protection
 1. “Until that day” or the day most commonly spoken of by Christians as the Lord’s Second Coming.

2. This is the day for which all other days were made!

3. How long is this in coming? Until the ushering in of eternity when time shall be no more.

Thus, I present a persuaded Christian. Paul was persuaded God could keep whatever he deposited till that day. Sound reasonable? I urge all of us to be persuaded that God can keep. By doing so, we all can become the volunteers we ought to be!

Conclusion: Dr. Evan O. Kane was chief surgeon of Kane/Summit Hospital in New York City. Dr. Kane was persuaded local anesthesia could and should be used more often during major surgery. There were, of course, many squeamish patients who could not stand the thought of being “awake while it happened,” and skeptical colleagues who feared the anesthetic would wear off during surgery. To break this barrier, Dr. Kane found a volunteer who was willing to undergo major surgery using only local anesthesia.

Having done nearly 4,000 appendectomies in his 37 year career, Dr. Kane, now age 60, began surgically removing the appendix of his volunteer. The operation was a total success. Throughout the surgery the patient had only minor pain. Two days later the patient was released; far ahead of the schedule for “normal” appendectomies. As a result, Dr. Kane had proven his point. Thus, because of this innovative doctor and one persuaded volunteer, the potential for local anesthesia was finally realized.

By the way, this historical surgery took place February 15, 1921. The volunteer? His name was Dr. Evan O. Kane. That’s right, the persuaded volunteer was the good doctor himself!

We sing the song “A Volunteer for Jesus” but, do we recognize the need to be persuaded before becoming that volunteer? How the Lord desires our love, devotion and service. Is He worth it? Is it reasonable to give Him our ALL? He is more than worth it and it is more than reasonable. My prayer is that we all would be persuaded volunteers for Him!