

## Covenant Life

- Our next prayer meeting is **TODAY** at 3pm where we will have Children's ministry and a Formation I teaching.
- **Please note** that we will change our pattern of Prayer Meetings in May. Instead of our normal 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays we will meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays to allow families more time on Mother's Day (May 12) and to have a special meeting on Pentecost (May 19). Therefore, the **next prayer meeting will be next Sunday May 5<sup>th</sup> at 3pm.**
- Registration for Camp Jesus (June 10-14) is still open. For more information click [here](#).
- [GodsDelight.org](#) has prayer meeting [audio](#), [summaries](#), [transcripts](#), [teachings](#), and [Jubilee](#).
- Your ongoing financial support to the Community is sincerely appreciated. Please donate online [here](#) or mail your donations to P.O. Box 225008 Dallas, TX 75222.

## Reflection

In the [First Reading](#) today Luke repeats himself in successive verses when describing Paul's testimonies using the words "*spoke out boldly in the name of the Lord*". For Luke to have used these words repeatedly, he must have been particularly impressed with the courage and passion of Paul. What struck me was how Luke then immediately describes the church which was "*being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord*".

It seems worthy of our time to reflect upon the connection. The church will not grow without witnesses. The church will not walk in the fear of the Lord without witnesses. Those who do not know our Lord and His great love, need us. They need us to follow Paul's example and speak boldly in the name of our Lord!

I imagine that Paul did not wait for someone to ask him a question. I imagine that Paul did not wait for a specific outreach invitation. I suspect that Paul went out of his way to share the Good News boldly with whomever would listen. Are we comfortable in our private space and hesitant to speak out boldly? Might we have a greater impact on the local church if we more closely followed Paul's example?

In the [Second Reading](#) we are exhorted to even go beyond word and speech and ensure we are living in deed and truth by following His commandments and loving one another. I am reading a book on developing virtues and this week there was a page dedicated to a crucial way we grow in virtue - through community. The author

highlights the importance of seeing the virtues lived out and the value of spending time with those whom we want to imitate. This to me has been one of the most significant blessings of our Community. We can say that we want to live in deed and truth; we can say that we want to follow His commandments and love one another; but we all know that this is much harder to do. This is where Community comes in. We have examples of others doing it. We have others that are willing to support our journey. We have others we can imitate. We are so blessed!

Whether in community or not, one of life's most significant challenges is where we focus our attention. The world is always tempting us to engage in its domain. The Gospel today makes a critical point. Jesus explains the importance of remaining connected to Him. We can get distracted by the world, we can even become distracted by doing 'good' things for the church or our Community. The point that Jesus is making to us today is that apart from Him we can do nothing.

This is why nearly every Community meeting I have ever been a part of begins in prayer. Even if it is a business-related meeting, we invite God in and ask that His Will be made manifest. We pray that we all leave our agenda at the door. I can recall many Community members pausing to pray when a decision needed to be made or just because we wanted to really understand God's will. This is who we are.

This line should haunt us if we think doing good things is enough: "*Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.*" Nothing. Sisters and brothers, let us never be convicted about working toward our own agendas. Let us never be conflicted about whom we serve. Let us never be confused why we gather as a Community and whose we are. Let us embrace the pledge that every personal and every Community activity begin, focus on, and end with Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, the vine we are all connected to!

*Jesus, You are the vine, we are the branches, and we desire to remain in You. It is our intention to build Your church by boldly witnessing You. We resolve to live in deed and truth by following Your commandments and loving one another. Empower*

*our ability to do this by pouring out Your Holy Spirit upon us in abundance. We pledge to remain in You, to seek Your perfect will in all situations and to never take our eyes off You! Amen."*

God Bless,

David