

Sunday, August 14, 2011

The Word of God cannot be chained

This fact is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit on the mouth of our teacher Paul, the Apostle, in his last imprisonment (2 Timothy 2:9). His hands were chained and the evil enemy thought that he was able to silence him, paralyze his movement, and limit his ministry. Nonetheless, **the word of God itself cannot be chained**, regardless of the unfair and unrelenting practices which Satan's tries to impose on us. Despite his restricted movement, Saint Paul was a beacon of light, force of love, powerful giver and teacher even when he was in prison. If people were able to visit him, he would speak to them about eternal life. When he was completely isolated, he would write spiritual Epistles that overflow with words of grace and comfort.

These Epistles spread throughout the earth, filled all places, and enlightened the ages, **for the word of God is living, effective, and cannot be chained.**

Our teacher Saint Paul benefited from prison and chains just as much as he benefited from the freedom of his movement. The prison was an opportunity to study the Scriptures deeply, and to bring out new treasures as well as old to nourish the whole church with his everlasting Epistles. It is enough to know that he wrote more than one third of his Epistles while in prison (about five Epistles: Philippians - Colossians - Ephesians - Philemon - Timothy II). The prison was transformed to a broadcast center that transmits **the living word of God which cannot be chained.**

He served with whatever means available to him. From the narrow place where he was imprisoned, he spread the message of peace, love and reconciliation with God through believing in Christ. Despite all the difficult circumstances, and as he ministered in shackles, his ministry had a powerful impact, not only on those who were around him, but also on all believers throughout the ages and until today, because **the word of God cannot be chained.**

The main focus for our teacher Saint Paul was to search, with a prayerful spirit, in the divine scriptures despite the criticism he faced. When governor Festus knew that he was reading many books while in prison in Caesarea, Palestine, He accused him saying: *"Much learning is driving you mad!"* Saint Paul replied: *"I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason."* (Acts 24:26,25). This reveals to us that Saint Paul the Apostle was keen to keep many of the Holy Books with him in prison, he made a great effort to bring them into the prison, and the governor knew about it

and allowed him to do so. He was also keen on bringing the Holy Books with him everywhere even to his last imprisonment in Rome when he talked to Timothy (2 Timothy 4:13) asking him to bring the robe he had left in Troas, saying, *"Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments."*

The word of God was his nourishment, consolation, companionship, and joy. It is the good portion which cannot be taken away from man (Luke 10:42), and it is the foundation of the Christian faith *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17). The Holy Spirit is able to spread the word using His special ways, we ought to do our part and be filled by the word and overflow on others. The Holy Spirit, then, is able to convey it and spread everywhere in ways that are unimaginable to us, because **the word of God cannot be chained.**

Lastly, when Saint Paul left Ephesus and Asia Minor with no hope to return back again, he was reassured that he left the congregation in the hands of God and his living word within them which is able to edify them and grant them eternal life with all Saints, *"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."* (Acts 20:32) **The word of God living in us and in our behavior cannot be chained**, but rather it leads us to a happy everlasting life.

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