

## MORE THAN DISCOURAGEMENT by Carl McMurray

*... Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. So I ask you not to **lose heart** over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory. (Ephesians 3:11-13 ESV).*

In light of our previous article from this verse dealing with boldness it seems reasonable here to consider the result or NOT having such boldness, that is, “losing heart” as we read above in the English Standard Version. The NASV as well as the NKJV also translate this greek word, *ekkakeo* (1552) “lose heart”, while the NIV translates it as “discouraged.” J.D. Watson says that these translations sadly weaken the definition with such meanings. The actual definition of *ekkakeo* is to “turn out to be a coward, to lose one’s courage, to be utterly spiritless.” Paul is writing them from under house arrest in Rome. He is warning the Ephesians (and us) not to be despondent and quit the faith over what Paul is suffering. There is a great deal of difference between discouragement and giving up or just quitting in despondency .

So, how can we avoid this attitude of giving up and quitting? One way mentioned here is by boldness with confidence. Self-confidence? Would self-confidence have carried Paul through his whippings, his beatings, his stoning, his three shipwrecks, his hunger and thirst, his continual pursuit from town to town by Jewish hecklers and persecutors? Is Paul just saying have willpower and keep a stiff upper lip? No, it was NOT self-confidence that the apostle advocates but confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ. Confidence in the Lord’s constant presence and his continued providence. It is confidence in Jesus, otherwise known as a true faith, that will keep our head up, our feet going forward, and our heart on things to come rather than becoming so mired in the present that we give up, quit, or turn into spiritual cowards.

Everyone gets discouraged from time to time, but as Paul wrote in Romans 8:18, *“the sufferings of this present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”* One early reformer, John Huss, said, “You need not tie my hands to the stake. I will stand in the flames on my own.” Huss was calling on the same power that the apostle called upon, and that every Christians has the right to call upon, faith and confidence in Jesus Christ, because of His blood shed for us. No quitting.

Even adversity and trial have the ability to teach us and strengthen us beyond where we were previously. But, we must have the right attitude going in. Not one of failure, quitting, or cowardice, but one of confidence that Lord will see us through.