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If The Apostle Paul Was Speaking To Your City

By Mike Wendland

If Paul was speaking today... a modern fill-in-the-blanks parable for your city... as adapted from Acts 17:16-34) by Mike Wendland

"While Paul was waiting for them in (insert your CITY here) he was greatly distressed to see that the cities were full of idols.

So he visited various churches and talked to the pastors and religious leaders and as many religious organizations as he could about what was wrong with their society and he ended up as a guest on a TV talk show watched by many of the people of the community.

For it was television that was that culture's marketplace and the media reporters and anchors were the philosophers of the land.

These philosophers - known as anchors - were very secular. Some, called liberals, prided themselves on their great tolerance and openness to all ideas - except from those who claimed there was such a thing as ultimate truth or absolute right or wrong.

A few others, called conservatives, held that society should operate with the fewest rules possible and man should be able to do whatever seems best to him so that most of the goods and possessions and riches of the culture would go to those who earned them."

"On the talk show they confronted Paul. "What is this you are advocating?" they asked him, for they loved to sensationalize and talk of controversial things that brought conflict and drama and emotion. "You seem to be telling us that we are living life in the wrong way, as if YOU have a better idea."

Paul then looked directly at the camera.

"People of America... of (insert your CITY and your STATE). I see you are in every way a society seeking to improve itself. I see your temples to Mammon... the god of money... on seemingly every corner, some with drive in windows so you need not even get out of your conveyance to do your

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financial transactions.

I pass by a great many places you call health clubs and fitness centers that honor Aphrodite, your goddess of love and beauty and sexual rapture. There are your shopping temples and theatres worshipping Dionysos, your wine god and god of entertainment who causes people to behave in strange ways, driven by drunken-like desires to possess things and feelings far in excess of what is needed. "You have so many gods that I even saw, affixed to the chrome strip at the end of one of your favorite altars - the conveyance you call the automobile – a sticker, a bumper sticker with this inscription: "He who dies with the most toys wins."

"But I am here to tell you that as much as you worship yourselves, you are not God. And the living God, who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and can not be kept in a box or controlled by your money and intellect and pride. All those things you worship you can not take with you when you die. All those things you have prostituted your life to obtain are worthless when

God, in his time and season, stops overlooking your self-indulgence and pride and comes to demand an accounting of how you have spent your lives.

"And if you have spent them... squandered them... worshipping the false gods on the worthless altars of your culture... then... people of (insert YOUR state)... people of America... then you will discover that it is too late."

"Well".. said the talk show host. "We're out of time for this program. Maybe we will have you back again someday to talk more about this. But now... a word from our sponsor."

The camera turned off. And Paul left the TV station.

Only a few people heard what he said. The rest went back to their false gods and misplaced altars.

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Do not let Setbacks Stop You

By Cathi Pope

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"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" Philippians 4:13

There has been many times then I care to remember when I have read Philippians 4:13, and each time I have, it would register with me for a short while, sort of like a passive attitude, if you will. In other words, I would just take my faith for granted.

I am sure that you are probably wondering "what does she mean by that?" I certainly didn't realize this myself at first, but now I do. Let me explain. In the past, upon reading Philippians 4:13, or even quoting Philippians 4:13, my reaction would be, "oh yea, all I need is faith", then 10 minutes later I would forget about it.

Until, of course, it has been brought to my attention the conditions that the Apostle Paul was in when he wrote this letter. Paul was in prison in Philippi. Not only that, he wrote most of the New Testament while in prison in one place or another. We are not talking about the prisons as we know them today, oh no. Here is a description of the type of prison that Paul was in, they consisted of chains, fetters, and stocks that were used as means of confinement.

Now, given these surroundings, it would be understandable for Paul to just throw in the towel and say "I can't take it anymore, I give up". Let's be honest here, how many of us would throw in the towel? I can honestly say, that I have never even come close to this type of a setback, but what little I have come across, I would "throw in the towel" and give up.

Yet, Paul did not allow these setbacks to disrupt him in spreading the Gospel. He even expresses Joy while writing these letters. Amazing, isn't it? Yes, but not impossible, I thank God for Paul who was an example as to how we are suppose to do God's Will no matter what obstacle lay in his path.

So, next time we remember, Philippians 4:13, really know it in your heart and soul that you will not let setbacks stop you from fulfilling your destiny.

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