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THE CONCEPT OF *ΤΑΠΡΗΣΙΑ*  
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by  
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May 1968

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. WORD STUDY OF <b>ΤΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ</b> . . . . .	3
III. <b>ΤΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ</b> TOWARD MEN. . . . .	7
In the Sense of "Publicly" or "Openly" . . . . .	7
In the Sense of "Clear". . . . .	10
In the Sense of "Fearless Apostolic Bearing" . . . . .	13
IV. <b>ΤΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ</b> TOWARD GOD. . . . .	26
The Approach to God. . . . .	26
In Prayer. . . . .	31
At Parousia. . . . .	38
V. CONCLUSION. . . . .	44
APPENDIX. . . . .	49
BIBLIOGRAPHY. . . . .	52



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis is primarily a word study of *παρρησία* as it is used in the New Testament. This study seeks to discover some of the meaning and significance of *παρρησία* for the New Testament and for the church today.

The procedure followed is characteristic of many New Testament word studies. Chapter II arranges the findings of lexicon, concordance, and dictionary. The contributions of the Old Testament, Septuagint, and Hellenism form the background for *παρρησία* in the New Testament.

Chapter III groups twenty-four passages containing the word *παρρησία* in the man-to-man relationship. These twenty-four passages are divided into three groups by translation. The first group of seven passages translates the word *παρρησία* as "publicly" or "openly." The second group of seven passages translates the word "clearly" or "plainly." The third group of ten passages translates the word *παρρησία* as "fearless Apostolic bearing." The basis for *παρρησία* is noted when evident in the context.

Chapter IV groups seven passages containing in the man-to-God relationship. These seven passages are divided into three groups, namely: *παρρησία* in the approach to God, in prayer, and at the parousia. The basis for *παρρησία* is given for each passage.



Chapter V gives the conclusions and significance of  $\pi\alpha\rho\rho\eta\sigma\iota\acute{\alpha}$  in the New Testament and for the church today.

An Appendix summarizes the concept as found in Luther's theology given in the book by Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther.



## CHAPTER II

### WORD STUDY OF ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ

The author is indebted to the work of previous scholars who have worked with the concept of *παρρησία*. The author will arrange their material as background to his specific work on the concept as it appears in the New Testament.

Schlier points out that *παρρησία* is first met in the Greek political sphere where only the citizen had the right to speak the plain truth and the courage to declare his convictions. The slave and stranger did not have this right. Athenian citizenship cherished the outspoken expression of opinion which was frankly presented in free and unhindered speech.<sup>1</sup>

The word is connected with friendship. A friend does not fear to speak to and criticize his friend. A friend need not flatter his friend. Friends among friends have "Freimut."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>H. Schlier, "*παρρησία*," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by G. Kittel (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, n. d.), V, 870. Hereafter referred to as Kittel.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., V, 871.



*Παρησιασμος* appears six times and *Παρησια* twelve times in the Septuagint.<sup>3</sup> Schlier points out that the *Παρησια* of God is the bright manifestation of God who now speaks out of His silence (Ps. 93:1). The Divine Wisdom can speak openly and freely (Prov. 1:30). The one time that the word appears in the Pentateuch it is the characteristic of the free man in relation to the slave (Lev. 26:13).<sup>4</sup>

Schlier further explains that *Παρησια* belongs to the just man who is just according to Jewish law. This just man is also wise. The just man can pray to God and be heard. God is the gracious Judge who completes man's freedom (Job. 27:9; 22:23-27).<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Unnik comments on the infrequent appearance of *Παρησια* in the Septuagint saying that unlike the class of words like *δύσιος* and *διαθνήκη* which went into the New Testament vocabulary stamped by a specific Hebrew imprint, *Παρησια* is a marginal feature when viewed in the whole context of the Old Testament.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>E. Hatch and H. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint (Oxford: Clarendon Press, n. d.), II, 1073.

<sup>4</sup>Kittel, V, 872-873.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., V, 873-874.

<sup>6</sup>W. C. Van Unnik, "The Christian's Freedom of Speech in the New Testament," Bulletin John Reynolds Library, XLIV (1961-62), 469-470. Dr. Unnik gives the following



The Hellenistic and Old Testament concepts appear in Jewish Hellenistic Literature. Moses and Abraham possess *παρρησία* which finds expression in mystical utterance. The friendship motif appears in that Moses is addressed as the friend of God and the origin of his *παρρησία* is this friendship. The eschatological motif also appears in that the just man can stand before the Judge on the last day and since he is rewarded for his good deeds, he can have joy, whereas the ungodly will have shame.<sup>7</sup>

*παρρησία* is used in Rabbinical vocabulary to signify the unveiled speech as opposed to metaphorical or parabolic utterance.<sup>8</sup>

In the Roman and Byzantine period, E. A. Sophocles says that the word means "full liberty, courage, and privilege." He supports his definition with the following:

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bibliography on *παρρησία* in footnotes 1-3 on p. 470: Kittel, V, 869-884; P. Jouon, "Divers sens de *παρρησία* dans le Nouveau Testament," Recherches de Science Religieuse, XXX (1940), 239-241; H. Windisch, "Exkurs ad 2 Cor. iii 12," Der zweite Korintherbrief (Göttingen, 1924) and O. Michel, "ad Heb. iii 6," Der Hebraerbrief (Göttingen, 1949); H. Jaeger, "*παρρησία* et fiducia," K. Aland--F.L. Cross (etc.), Studia Patristica (Berlin, 1957), I, 225 ff. [sic]; D. Smolders, "L'audace de l'apôtre selon St. Paul, le thème de la *parresia*," Collectanea Mechliniensia (Louvain, 1958), pp. 16-30, 117-133.

<sup>7</sup>Kittel, V, 876.

<sup>8</sup>Alexander Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," The Expositor's Greek Testament, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n. d.), I, 398.



" Οὐκ εἶχον παρρησίαν ἀτενίσαι εἰς πρόσωπον Ἰακώβ " and again, " οἱ παρρησίαν εἰληθότες τὸν παντοκράτορα θεὸν πατέρα καλεῖν ."<sup>9</sup>

A Concordance reveals that παρρησία appears thirty-one times in the New Testament: nine times in John, five times in Acts, four times in Hebrews and First John, twice in Ephesians and Second Corinthians, and once in Mark, Philippians, Colossians, First Timothy, and Philemon. παρρησιάζομαι appears nine times: Seven times in Acts, once in Ephesians and First Thessalonians.<sup>10</sup> Thus the word appears more frequently in the New Testament than in the Old Testament, and the word does not belong to the vocabulary of only one author in the New Testament.<sup>11</sup>

The next two chapters discuss this word as it is used in the New Testament.

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<sup>9</sup>E. A. Sophocles, Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods (From B.C. 146-A.D. 1100) (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1957), II, 862.

<sup>10</sup>J. Moulton and A. Geden, A Concordance to the Greek (4th ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), pp. 764-765.

<sup>11</sup>Unnik, XLIV, 472-473.



CHAPTER III

ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ TOWARD MEN

In the Sense of "Publicly" or "Openly"

There are seven passages where the word *παρρησία* means "publicly" or "openly." The first passage is: οὐδεὶς γὰρ τι ἐν κρυπτῷ ποιεῖ καὶ ἠντῆι αὐτὸς ἐν παρρησίᾳ εἶναι. εἰ ταῦτα ποιεῖς, φανέρωσον σεαυτὸν τῷ κόσμῳ (John 7:4). *παρρησία* has the meaning of "publicly" or "openly." It is placed opposite to ἐν κρυπτῷ and is further explained by φανέρωσον σεαυτὸν. The unbelieving brothers suggest that Jesus move from the obscure surroundings (ἐν κρυπτῷ) of the small town and show Himself and His works (φανέρωσον) openly in full view of the public in Jerusalem.

The next passage is: ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Ἰησοῦς· ἐγὼ παρρησίᾳ ἐλάλησα τῷ κόσμῳ· ἐγὼ πάντοτε εἰδόμενος ἐν συναγωγῇ καὶ ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, ὅπου πάντες οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι συνέρχοντο καὶ ἐν κρυπτῷ ἐλάλησα οὐδέν (John 18:20). *παρρησία* means "publicly" or "openly." In answer to the High Priest's question about His ministry, Jesus claimed a public ministry, fully in the open in contrast to any suggestion of a secret conspiracy.<sup>1</sup> His teaching was common property since

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<sup>1</sup>C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), pp. 92-93.



it took place in the very public places, the synagogue and temple. Jesus is not out to found a secret sect. His speech was "to the world" and his followers were from among those who heard him speak publicly.<sup>2</sup>

The next passage is: οὐδεὶς μὲντοι παρρησίᾳ ἐλάλει περὶ αὐτοῦ διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων (John 7:13). Παρρησίᾳ means "publicly" or "openly." Παρρησίᾳ ἐλάλει, "to speak openly" is contrasted with γογγυσμός "subdued debate." The presence of Jesus causes talk, but neither friend nor enemy will openly or publicly express an opinion concerning Him for fear that their opinion will bring them into collision with the Jewish authorities.<sup>3</sup>

The fourth passage is: καὶ ἴδε παρρησίᾳ λαλεῖ, καὶ οὐδὲν αὐτῷ λέγουσιν (John 7:26). Παρρησίᾳ means "publicly" or "openly." The context indicates that the silence of Jewish authorities had created a tension where neither friend nor enemy will publicly take a stand for or against Jesus. The established church had not passed its verdict. Suddenly Jesus appears on the scene speaking publicly and openly in the temple. This action leads the

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<sup>2</sup>G. Kittel, editor, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1935). V, 877.

<sup>3</sup>John 7:12.



Jerusalemites to conclude that the authorities passed their verdict on Jesus and permit Him to speak doing nothing to prevent Him.

The fifth passage in which *παρρησία* is to be translated "publicly" is: *ὁ οὖν Ἰησοῦς οὐκέτι παρρησία παριεπάτει ἐν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις, ἀλλὰ ἀπῆλθεν ἐκεῖθεν εἰς τὴν χώραν ἔγγυς τῆς ἐρήμου, εἰς Ἐφραίμ* (John 11:54). Jesus leaves the public eye and retires to a place near the wilderness because the Jewish authorities are taking counsel to put Him to death.

The sixth passage in which *παρρησία* is to be translated "publicly" or "openly" is the closing verse of Acts: *κηρύσσων τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διδάσκων τὰ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας ἀκωλύτως* (Acts 28:31). Acts ends up with the triumphant note that the Gospel is preached in Rome with absolutely no hindrance. *Ἀκωλύτως* indicates that there is no external nor inner personal inhibition. There is no fear of enemies or authorities which might silence Paul. Paul preaches *μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας*, with all the openness of a freeman. Paul's inner spirit is free to express itself openly and publicly. The messenger of God, empowered by God, conquers Rome.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>With the word *παρρησία* Luke is not only telling us that Paul's inner attitude was free of inhibitions. Luke



The seventh and final passage of this section is:

ἀπεκδυσάμενος τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας  
 ἐδειγμάτισεν ἐν παρρησίᾳ, θριαμβεύσας  
 αὐτοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ (Col.2:15).<sup>5</sup> The translator  
 of παρρησία is here directed by δειγματίσω.<sup>6</sup> The  
 exposure to be an exposure must be in open view. Παρρησία  
 therefore means "publicly" or "openly."

#### In the Sense of "Clear" or "Plain"

Just as publicly is the opposite of seclusion, so clarity is the opposite of obscurity. The relationship between the two ideas is obvious, making it easy to see how the same word that meant publicly means clearness.

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is saying that the Gospel is being preached publicly and openly in such a manner as any proclamation would be made anywhere by one who has the full right to make the proclamation. It appears that in Luke's mind is the picture of the Athenian speaking his mind as was his right and duty and παρρησία is to be understood in the classic Hellenistic sense.

<sup>5</sup>This is a most difficult passage. Every word is debated. Is the subject God or Christ? Are the ἀρχὰς and ἐξουσίας earthly or spiritual? Is the ἐν αὐτῷ Christ or the cross? The author feels that these questions need not be answered by this paper for the answer does not effect the topic. For a full discussion of these problems see C. F. D. Moule, "The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon," Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary, edited by C. F. D. Moule (Cambridge: University Press, 1958), pp. 99-102.

<sup>6</sup>In Matt. 1:19 δειγματίσω is used for an adulteress who is disgraced by exposure.



There are seven passages where *παρρησία* means "clear" or "plain." The first passage has the only appearance of *παρρησία* in the Synoptics.<sup>7</sup> It is: *καὶ παρρησία τὸν λόγον ἔλάλει* (Mark 8:32). *παρρησία* here means "clear." In clear, plain language Jesus connected suffering and Messiahship which to the disciples was incredible and incomprehensible. Peter understands the plain words of Jesus.

The second passage is: *εἰ σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστός, εἰπὸν ἡμῖν παρρησία* (John 10:24). In this passage the questioners demand a crystal clear, unable to be misunderstood affirmation that Jesus is the Messiah.

The third passage is: *τότε οὖν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς παρρησία Λαζάρου ἀπέθανεν* (John 11:14). Jesus here corrects the misunderstanding caused by the euphemism, "Lazarus sleeps" by saying, "Lazarus is dead."<sup>8</sup>

The fourth and fifth passages contrast communication *ἐν παρρησία* and *ἐν παροιμίαις*. The contrast clearly brings out the meaning of *παρρησία*. The passages

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<sup>7</sup>Dr. Unnik asks questions concerning the singular appearance of *παρρησία* in the Synoptics. Why doesn't Luke have it in his Gospel? He uses it in Acts. Why doesn't *παρρησία* appear in connection with confession? Is the word only used in connection with the revelation of the gospel-message? Cf. W. C. van Unnik, "The Christian's Freedom of Speech in the New Testament," Bulletin John Reynolds Library, XLIV (1961-62), 480.

<sup>8</sup>John 11:11,14.



are: ταῦτα ἐν παροιμίαις λελάληκα ὑμῖν.  
 ἔρχεται ὥρα ὅτε οὐκέτι ἐν παροιμίαις  
 λαλήσω ὑμῖν, ἀλλὰ παρρησίᾳ περὶ τοῦ πατρὸς  
 ἀπαγγελῶ ὑμῖν. Λέγουσιν οἱ μαθηταὶ  
 αὐτοῦ· ἴδε νῦν ἐν παρρησίᾳ λαλεῖς,  
 καὶ παροιμίαν οὐδεμίαν λέγεις (John 16:25,29).

Παροιμία is "veiled or symbolic utterance"<sup>9</sup> which  
 Jesus had used. He promises, however, that the day would  
 come when He would speak ἐν παρρησίᾳ, in clear,  
 understandable speech. In spite of the warning in verse 25  
 that the hour for plain speech was coming, the disciples in  
 verse 29 assume that they fully understood the meaning of  
 the Lord's words.<sup>10</sup> Here very clearly παρρησία means  
 understandable, clear communication in contrast to veiled  
 speech, παροιμία.<sup>11</sup>

The sixth passage is: Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐξ ὄν  
 εἶπεν μετὰ παρρησίας πρὸς ὑμᾶς περὶ τοῦ πατριάρχου  
 Δαβὶδ (Acts 2:29). Here παρρησία means speaking  
 "with clearness." Peter interprets clearly David's Psalm 16  
 as applying to Jesus and not to David.

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<sup>9</sup>C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John  
 (London: SPCK, 1955), p. 307.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 414.

<sup>11</sup>Bruce states that παρρησία is used in rabbinical  
 vocabulary to signify the unveiled speech as opposed to the  
 metaphorical speech. A. B. Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels,"  
Expositor's Greek Testament, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll



The seventh and final passage in this section is:

ἐπίσταται γὰρ περὶ τούτων ὁ βασιλεὺς, πρὸς ὄν καὶ  
παρρησιαζόμενος λαλῶ (Acts 26:26). Here παρρησιάζομαι  
means "clearly." Paul had been speaking about things which  
others knew, things which had happened in the open. There  
was nothing veiled in his speech. Thus, when Festus termed  
Paul's defense that of an inane intellectual, Paul retorts  
that what he said was clear to those aware of what had been  
happening in the area, and that his presentation was clear  
and plain talk (παρρησιαζόμενος λαλῶ ).

#### In The Sense of "Fearless Apostolic Bearing"

The above two concepts are connected with activity where  
the result is something said or done in the public view  
clearly and devoid of any intentional ambiguity. The one  
who consistently acts in such a manner is unafraid. If this  
person is an Apostle, then there emerges a third view of  
παρρησία which is "fearless apostolic bearing."

παρρησία is so consistently connected with those who  
preach the Gospel, especially in difficult situations, that  
it appears to be a technical term meaning "fearless apostolic  
bearing," which comes from God and is employed in the

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(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n. d.), I, 398. Hereafter Exposi-  
tor's Greek Testament referred to as EGT.



proclamation and defense of the Gospel. There are seventeen passages where the word is used in this sense.

The first passage is: *θεωρῶντες δὲ τὴν τοῦ Πέτρου παρρησίαν καὶ Ἰωάννου* (Acts 4:13). *παρρησία* here means a "fearless apostolic bearing," a stage presence. Peter and John possess this poise in a difficult situation before the Sanhedrin. They appear fearless in this tense situation. This type of poise must normally have been part of the behavior of those who were educated, because the members of the Sanhedrin are amazed at this fearless bearing being possessed by laymen or non-specialists which is the meaning conveyed by *ἀγράμματοι* and *ἰδιώται*.<sup>12</sup> The only explanation the Sanhedrin can offer for this *παρρησία* is that these men had been with Jesus Who, they remembered, "taught as one having authority"<sup>13</sup> even though He had no Rabbinic training.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature. A translation and adaptation of Walter Bauer's, Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur by William Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (4th edition; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 371.

<sup>13</sup>Mark 1:22.

<sup>14</sup>John 7:15.



The second and third passages deal with the source of this *παρρησία*. They are: *καὶ τὰ νῦν, κύριε, ἕπιθε ἐπὶ τὰς ἀπειλὰς αὐτῶν, καὶ ὡς τοῖς δούλοις σου μετὰ παρρησίας πάσης λαλεῖν τὸν λόγον σου . . . . καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν ἅπαντες τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος καὶ ἐλάλουν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ παρρησίας* (Acts 4:29,31). The source of the fearless apostolic bearing is God. It is God's gift. The man is "filled with the Holy Spirit" and as a result possesses a "fearless apostolic bearing."

This author agrees with Schlier who makes a distinction between the *παρρησία* of the cultured person, the source of which is education, and the *παρρησία* born from the authorization which God gives His slave.<sup>15</sup>

Dr. Martin Franzmann makes an excellent summary of the meaning, application, and results of being Spirit-filled and possessing *παρρησία*. He says:

The word which we are forced to translate with "boldness" is the outstanding characteristic of the Spirit-filled church in action. It signifies that free, glad, courageous confidence, that robust health of faith which comes from the assurance of free access to God the Father given in Christ by the Spirit. It is the energetic religious health which makes Peter and John say, "We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20); it is that high confidence of faith which makes Saul, when he has received the Holy

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<sup>15</sup>Kittel, V, 877.



Spirit, proclaim Jesus as Son of God in the synagogue "immediately" (Acts 9:20), "preaching boldly" both in Damascus and in Jerusalem (Acts 9:27-29).

This boldness is boldness under the Lordship of Jesus. It is the church which walks "in the Fear of the Lord," which enjoys the "comfort of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:31). It is a boldness under the reign of God, who gives His Spirit "to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:32).<sup>16</sup>

The fourth passage is: *καὶ διηγήσατο αὐτοῖς ... πῶς ἐν Δαμασκῶ ἐπαρρησιάσατο ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ. καὶ ἦν μετ' αὐτῶν εἰσπορευόμενος καὶ ἐκπορευόμενος εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, παρρησιαζόμενος ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου* (Acts 9:27,28).

*παρρησιάζομαι* is consistently connected in Acts with the public proclamation of the Gospel. In this passage the preaching of the recently converted Paul has a "fearless apostolic bearing" which Barnabas uses as evidence that Paul is honestly an evangelist in league with the Apostles.

The public preaching with *παρρησία* creates a reaction. On the one hand, such preaching persuaded the Apostles to accept and shelter Paul. On the other hand, such preaching aroused in others the desire to kill Paul.<sup>17</sup>

The fifth passage is: *ἴκανὸν μὲν οὖν χρόνον διέτριψαν παρρησιαζόμενοι ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ τῷ μαρτυροῦντι ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ...*

<sup>16</sup>Martin Franzmann, The Word of the Lord Grows (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), p. 13.

<sup>17</sup>Acts 9:27-29.



(Acts 14:3). Παρρησία is a "fearless apostolic bearing" which is not fleeting and transient. The evangelists, possessing Παρρησία, ἰκάνον μὲν οὖν χρόνον διέτριψαν. There is nothing momentary about this possession. It is rather a necessary ingredient for the continued proclamation of the Gospel. The Gospel must be presented fearlessly. The Gospel has its own forthrightness.<sup>18</sup>

The sixth passage is οὗτος τε ἤρξατο Παρρησιάζεσθαι ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ (Acts 18:26). Here Παρρησιάζομαι is the "fearless bearing"<sup>19</sup> possessed by Apollos, who is not an Apostle but is preaching like an Apostle.<sup>20</sup> The Gospel proclamation consistently is made with Παρρησία in Acts.

The seventh passage is: Ἐἰσελθὼν δὲ εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν ἐπαρρησιάζετο ἐπὶ μῆνας τρεῖς διαλεγόμενος καὶ πείθων περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ (Acts 19:8).

<sup>18</sup>This author agrees with Knowling's statement that the ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ contains the content of the message and the cause for Παρρησία. They speak about the Lord and relying on His grace they took courage. R. Knowling, "The Acts of the Apostles," EGT, II, 303.

<sup>19</sup>The author admits that the force of ἤρξατο could mean that there was teaching (Cf. Acts 18:25) prior to this in a less public place. If this is the case, then it would be better to render this "publicly" and place it in that section.

<sup>20</sup>The author adopted "fearless apostolic bearing" because the term most frequently is applied to those who were Apostles. There are four exceptions, namely: Acts 18:26; 1 Tim. 3:13; Heb. 3:6; 10:35.



παρρησιάζομαι is here the "fearless apostolic bearing" which appears in the face of a difficult situation where the opponents are ready and willing for combat. The opponents are described with two verbs: ἀπειθέω, "unbelief manifested in disobedience,"<sup>21</sup> and σκληρύνομαι, "be obstinate."<sup>22</sup> The "fearless apostolic bearing" is ready and makes one ready to follow the Lord into the shadow of death.

The eighth passage is: ἀλλὰ προπαθόντες καὶ ὑβρισθέντες καθὼς οἴδατε ἐν Φιλίπποις ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν λαλῆσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πολλῇ ἁγῶνι (1 Thess. 2:2).

παρρησιάζομαι is to be fearless without being foolhardy. This "fearless apostolic bearing" will face persecution, but it need not sacrifice the person to prove itself. Paul's shameful treatment prior to preaching in Thessalonica indicates that he follows the Lord's advice, "When they persecute you in one town flee to the next" (Matt. 10:23).

The παρρησιάζομαι is qualified by ἐν τῷ θεῷ. The author agrees with Morris, who explains that this phrase indicates that this is no natural courage but a supernatural

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<sup>21</sup>Knowling, EGT, II, 404.

<sup>22</sup>The literal meaning is "men who have made themselves difficult." Cf. F. F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 355.



endowment. The possessor not only is without fear, but he also possesses a complete confidence in God.<sup>23</sup>

The ninth passage is: *ἵνα μοι δοθῆ λόγος ἐν ἀνοιίῃ τοῦ στόματός μου ἐν παρρησίᾳ γνῶρίσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ὑπὲρ οὗ πρεσβεύω ἐν ἀλύσει, ἵνα ἐν αὐτῷ παρρησιάσωμαι ὡς δεῖ με λαλῆσαι* (Eph. 6:19,20).

Here *παρρησιάσωμαι* is the "fearless apostolic bearing" specifically in reference to occasion, purpose, and use.

The occasion is whenever one is to proclaim the Gospel.

Salmond rightly points out that the *ἐν ἀνοιίῃ τοῦ στόματος*

*μου* marks the time of action and should be translated "when I open my mouth" and not "that I may open my mouth."<sup>24</sup> The purpose of *παρρησιάσωμαι* is "to make known" (*γνῶρίσαι*) the Gospel. *παρρησιάσωμαι* is not used by the person for the person, but it is for service to the Gospel. The *ὡς δεῖ* is not merely "as I ought" expressing duty, but it expresses manner, "in the fashion I ought."<sup>25</sup>

There is no doubt about the message, but there is concern

<sup>23</sup>L. Morris, "The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians," The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, edited by R. V. G. Tasker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 43.

<sup>24</sup>S. D. F. Salmond, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," EGT, III, 390.

<sup>25</sup>E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 154.



that one proclaim it worthily, in a fitting manner; in other words, to proclaim it freely, clearly, and fearlessly.<sup>26</sup>

The tenth passage is: οἱ γὰρ καλῶς διακονήσαντος  
βαθμὸν ἑαυτοῖς καλὸν περιποιούνται καὶ πολλὴν  
παρρησίαν ἐν πίστει τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (1 Tim. 3:13).

Παρρησία here means a "fearless bearing" which the deacon possesses who has the qualifications which Paul spelled out.<sup>27</sup> Παρρησία is here connected with the godly life. The God-fearing man who is living the good life is the possessor of a "fearless bearing." The good deacon professes his faith fearlessly and publicly to his fellowmen with his conduct as his recommendation.<sup>28</sup>

The eleventh passage is: ἔχοντες οὖν τοι-  
αύτην ἐλπίδα πολλῇ παρρησίᾳ χρώμεθα (2 Cor. 3:12).

Παρρησία is the "fearless apostolic bearing" which belongs to the Gospel proclamation. The Gospel is presented with Παρρησία because the Gospel is not a message of condemnation and death, but of grace, mercy, and life to

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<sup>26</sup>F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Ephesians (London: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1961), p. 134.

<sup>27</sup>2 Tim. 3:8-12.

<sup>28</sup>Unnik, XLIV, 478-479.



every sinner who repents and believes.<sup>29</sup> The proclaimers of the Gospel are men who were formerly enslaved and condemned by sin. These men have been freed by God's action in Christ. Such men present God's freedom message to enslaved men with a complete freedom from fear and confidence in God.

The twelveth passage is: *Πολλή μοι παρρησία πρὸς ὑμᾶς, πολλή μοι καύχησις ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν. πεπλήρωμαι τῆ παρακλήσει, ὑπερπερισβεύομαι τῆ χαρᾷ ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῆ θλίψει ἡμῶν* (2 Cor. 7:14).

*Παρρησία* is that "fearless apostolic bearing" which is open, frank, and unreserved. This is that fearlessness between friends which needs not and does not hide affections. It praises when praise is due. Here Paul is happy with the Corinthian Church which has been obedient to his instructions and he has reports of their affection toward him; therefore, he openly and fearlessly expresses his feelings toward them. He is proud of them and is not afraid to say so.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>P. Hughes, Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), pp. 109-110. Hughes also argues for the authenticity and against any dislocation of this text which has been questioned because of the large number of hapax legomena and the spirit of exclusivism. Cf. p. 243.

<sup>30</sup>A. Plummer, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians," International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901) p. 97.



The next passage is: Διό, πολλὴν ἐν Χριστῷ παρρησίαν  
ἔχων ἐπιτάσσειν σοι τὸ ἀνῆκον (Philemon 8).

Παρρησία is the "fearless apostolic bearing" between fellow Christians which urges to duty. Here it is significant that the authority which belongs to the office is mentioned.<sup>31</sup> The office possesses the necessary authority which allows the man to operate in that office with "fearless bearing." The "in Christ" conditions and limits the authority of the office. The fearlessness comes from Christ having commissioned his slave and made the office-holder his prisoner.<sup>32</sup> "To fear God rather than man" is the motto of that office. Thus with full apostolic authority which begets a "fearless bearing," Paul could tell and command Philemon his duty.

The next passage is: Παρρησιασάμενοί τε ὁ Παῦλος  
καὶ ὁ Βαρναβᾶς εἶπαν· ὑμῖν ἦν ἀναγκαῖον  
πρῶτον λαλεθῆναι τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ (Acts 13:46).

Παρρησιάζομαι is the "fearless apostolic bearing" which produces a public and emphatic announcement to the opponents of the Gospel. The Jewish opponents saw the great

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<sup>31</sup>Osterley points out that the word ἐπιτάσσω is used of commanding which attaches to a definite office and relates to permanent obligations under that office. W. E. Osterley, "The Epistle to Philemon," EGT, IV, 213.

<sup>32</sup>Philemon 9.



crowd coming to the synagogue a second time to hear Paul's message and began speaking against Paul and his message. Paul and Barnabas did not mince their words but emphatically told these opponents that it was necessary that they should be the first to hear the Gospel in that area and now since they had rejected the message, it would be preached to others.

The next passage is: *κατὰ τὴν ἀποκαταδοκίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα μου ὅτι ἐν οὐδενὶ ἀίσχυνθήσομαι, ἀλλ' ἐν πάσῃ παρρησίᾳ ὡς πάντοτε καὶ νῦν μεγαλυθήσεται Χριστὸς ἐν τῷ σώματί μου, εἴτε διὰ ἡωῆς εἴτε διὰ θανάτου* (Phil. 1:20).

*παρρησία* is the "fearless apostolic bearing" which produces a Gospel proclamation. Here Paul's "intense watching" (*ἀποκαταδοκίαν*)<sup>33</sup> is a precaution lest he become unworthy of his Master in failing to witness to Christ. He desires that Christ be magnified in every possible way in which the "fearless bearing" can manifest itself.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>M. R. Vincent, "The Epistles to Philippians and to Philemon," The New International Commentary on the New Testament, edited by N. B. Stonehouse (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), p. 25.

<sup>34</sup>Unnik comments on the sudden change in the subject of this sentence where Christ becomes the subject and Paul the instrument in which the greatness of Christ shines out. Unnik sees here the real power of *παρρησία* in the fact that not only is the Gospel simply proclaimed, but that the Lord of the Gospel is revealed. Unnik, XLIV, 478-479.



The sixteenth passage is: *Χριστός δὲ ὡς υἱὸς ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ. οὗ οἶκός ἐσμεν ἡμεῖς, ἐὰν τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ τὸ καύχημα τῆς ἐλπίδος [μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν] κατ᾽σχῶμεν* (Heb. 3:6).

*Παρρησία* is here that "fearless bearing" which is found in the confession of Christians to Christ. Delitzsch terms it "der innere Zustand ungetrübter völliger Zuversicht, das fröhliche Aufthun des Mundes."<sup>35</sup> It is the confidence of a believing man's attitude toward a God whom he knows to be trustworthy. The basis for this *παρρησία* is membership in the household of God.<sup>36</sup>

The final passage in this section is: *Μὴ ἀποβάλῃτε οὖν τὴν παρρησίαν ὑμῶν, ἥτις ἔχει μεγάλην μισθαποδοσίαν* (Heb. 10:35).

*παρρησία* is the "fearless bearing" possessed by true

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<sup>35</sup>F. Delitzsch, Commentar zum Briefe an die Hebräer (Leipzig: Dörffling and Franke, 1857), p. 114.

<sup>36</sup>H. Montefiore, "A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews," Harper's New Testament Commentaries, edited by Henry Chadwick (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 74. Montefiore explains that Paul's anatomical imagery of the body or his nuptial analogy of the Bride are not used in this Epistle to describe the relationship between Christ and the Church. The writer does not conceive of Christians as "in Christ." He thinks rather of Christ as the founder and head of the Christian family, an extended family of the first century with its large variety of age, and its ramifications of relationship is the analogy used for the Church of God. Membership in this church begets the "fearless bearing" necessary for confession.



Christians making confession of their faith. There is a restless readiness in the true believer to proclaim before all people the ground upon which he rests. The "fearless bearing" finds expression in confession of faith which is emphatic, devoid of fear, ambiguity, and reserve. The author of Hebrews is making the point that if the "fearless bearing" is absent from the Christian's life, the question is then raised as to whether that life has the Christian faith. Here the *ἁπολογία* is definitely connected with the Gospel proclamation and in the form of personal confession.



## CHAPTER IV

### ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ TOWARD GOD

#### The Approach to God

Seven times the New Testament states that the believer has *παρρησία* in his relationship with God. The first passage is: ἜΧΟΝΤΕΣ Οὖν, ἀδελφοί, παρρησίαν εἰς τὴν εἴσοδον τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ αἵματι Ἰησοῦ (Heb. 10:19). *παρρησία* is the free, fearless bearing with which the believer approaches God.

In this passage the freedom of *παρρησία* is highlighted with the contrast made between the New Testament Christian and the Old Testament Israelite.<sup>1</sup> The Israelite approached God through a priest; the Christian approaches God directly. The priest approached God at a specific time and under fixed conditions; the Christian comes into the presence of God at any time.

The basis for the Christian's possession of a fearless bearing before God is the fact that the Christian approaches God "in the blood of Jesus." The Old Testament allusion is obvious. The Old Testament priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies because he was sprinkled "with the blood of

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<sup>1</sup>For another such contrast between the Christian and the Israelite cf. Heb. 12:18-24.



bulls and goats" (Heb. 9:25).<sup>2</sup> The Christian approaches God sprinkled with the blood of Jesus. This intrepidity before God is the quality of those redeemed by Christ. The way by which Christ, the High Priest, has entered into the presence of God is the way which remains open for His people to follow (Heb. 10:20). His blood has procured the entrance to God and is the reason for the believer's confidence.<sup>3</sup>

The next passage concerning the approach to God is:

ΠΡΟΣΕΡΧΩΜΕΘΑ ΟΥΝ ΜΕΤΑ ΠΑΡΗΣΙΑΣ Τῷ Θρόνῳ  
τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεος καὶ χάριν  
εὕρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν (Heb. 4:16).

Παρησία is the confidence<sup>4</sup> with which the Christian approaches God with a complete lack of any self-centered piety.

This Παρησία is not audacity. It lacks the presumptuousness found in self-styled religion. It lacks the haughtiness and self-esteem found in the religionist who

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<sup>2</sup>Ex. 24:8.

<sup>3</sup>Montefiore says that the baptism cleansed the conscience and from this the Christian has a fearless bearing. The writer of this study does not agree. H. Montefiore, "A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews," Harper's New Testament Commentaries, edited by H. Chadwick (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 174.

<sup>4</sup>Confidence, fearlessness, intrepidity and other such words will be used to translate Παρησία.



feels justified in petitioning divine help which when supplied he interprets as payment. On the contrary, the believer confidently approaches God certain that he will find the gifts of mercy and grace, that is: "forgiveness of sin repented of and confessed" and "power to triumph over temptation and supply of body, mind and soul."<sup>6</sup> Futhermore, the believer is seeking these gifts at "the throne of grace." The Old Testament allusion is obvious. One is reminded of the earthly mercy-seat where the propitiation was effected in token on the Day of Atonement. The guilt of the Israelite was carried away by the goat. The Israelite, now face to face with God, pleads for mercy as his representative priest appears before the mercy-seat.

Is this *παρρησία* an utterance or an inner feeling? Westcott considers it as "giving utterance to every thought and feeling and wish."<sup>7</sup> The writer of this paper, however, agrees with Moffatt<sup>8</sup> who considers this the inner feeling of

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<sup>5</sup>*προσέρχουμι* is used in the Septuagint for a priestly approach to God. Lev. 21:17,21; 22:3.

<sup>6</sup>G. Archer, The Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957), p. 34.

<sup>7</sup>B. Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews (Cambridge: MacMillian and Company, 1892), p. 109.

<sup>8</sup>J. Moffatt, "Epistle to the Hebrews," International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), p. 60.



fearless confidence which is more comprehensive and more in keeping with the Old Testament imagery of the high priest before the mercy-seat who acts and speaks.

The nature of Jesus is the basis for the believer's confidence. The believer approaches Christ who understands him and his temptation because he is the Christ who experienced the same. This is the transcendent yet sympathetic Jesus.<sup>9</sup> The presence of Jesus at the heavenly mercy-seat indicates that the work of propitiation has been completed, whereas the mercy-seat of the tabernacle was the appointed place where propitiation was performed in token.<sup>10</sup> The believer is confident in approaching the throne because the One who now sits on the throne is the same One who sacrificed Himself that the believer could come to Him. Belief supports the confidence, belief in the constancy of God's Word. Since God is always the same, and since He has promised mercy and grace, and since He cannot go back on His Word, the Christian can demand that God give according to His promises and can approach God boldly and confidently.

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<sup>9</sup>Heb. 14:14,15.

<sup>10</sup>F. Bruce, "The Epistle to the Hebrews," New International Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), pp. 86-87.



The third passage is:  $\epsilon\upsilon\ \psi\ \epsilon\chi\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\ \tau\eta\nu$   
 $\pi\alpha\rho\rho\eta\sigma\iota\acute{\alpha}\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \pi\rho\omicron\sigma\alpha\gamma\omega\gamma\eta\nu\ \epsilon\upsilon$   
 $\pi\epsilon\tau\tau\omicron\iota\theta\acute{\eta}\sigma\epsilon\iota\ \delta\iota\alpha\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\ (\text{Eph. 3:12}).$

$\pi\alpha\rho\rho\eta\sigma\iota\acute{\alpha}$  , as we have seen, is free, fearless bearing, or as Salmond phrases it in his notes on this passage, "freedom of spirit, cheerful boldness, and joyful mood of the reconciled to God."<sup>11</sup> It is in Christ that the believer may approach<sup>12</sup> God fearlessly.

The  $\epsilon\upsilon\ \psi$  , namely Christ, begins the clause and thereby receives the emphasis. Paul is saying that in Christ we have boldness, in Christ we have access. Christ enables the believer to approach fearlessly. Christ had foretold that the believer would approach the Father with requests.<sup>13</sup> Here is the fulfillment of that promise:

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<sup>11</sup>S. D. F. Salmond, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," Expositor's Greek Testament, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n. d.), III, 310. Hereafter Expositor's Greek Testament referred to as EGT.

<sup>12</sup>Foulkes points out that  $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\alpha\gamma\omega\gamma\eta$  could mean either "introduction" or "access." "Access" is the better translation for it is in keeping with the sense of the clause which speaks of an approach to God." F. Foulkes, The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), p.99. Also, Richardson connects the term with the expression of "the Way" in John and Acts and the priestly office of Jesus. A. Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), pp. 200-201.

<sup>13</sup>John 16:23



the reconciled believer confidently<sup>14</sup> approaches God with a fearless bearing.

The *παρρησία* comes to the believer through his faith. Faith clings to the work and word of Christ. George Stoeckhardt remarks that the Christian relationship to the Father was objectively brought about by Jesus and subjectively made the believer's by faith.<sup>15</sup>

### *παρρησία* Before God in Prayer

First John uses *παρρησία* four times, twice in connection with prayer and twice in connection with the *παρουσία* and only in the man-to-God relationship. The first passage dealing with *παρρησία* in connection with prayer reads: ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πείσομεν τὴν καρδίαν ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐὰν καταγινώσκῃ ἡμῶν ἡ καρδία, ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν καὶ γινώσκει πάντα. ἀγαπητοί ἐὰν ἡ καρδία μὴ καταγινώσκῃ, *παρρησίαν* ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεόν,

<sup>14</sup>The ἐν πεποιθήσει is the state of mind in which the believer enjoys the blessing. Salmond, p. 310.

<sup>15</sup>G. Stoeckhardt, Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, translated by Martin Sommer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), pp. 165-166.



καὶ ὁ ἐὰν ἀιτῶμεν λαμβάνομεν ἀπὸ  
 αὐτοῦ, ὅτι τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ  
 τηροῦμεν καὶ τὰ ἀρεστὰ  
 ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ποιούμεν (1 John 3:19b-22).

Παρησία is "the confidence of open childlike speech"  
 with the father.<sup>16</sup>

The crux of real importance in determining the ground  
 for *παρησία* is whether "God is greater than our  
 heart" is Law (Calvin's view) or Gospel (Luther's view).  
 Calvin says that John calls God greater than our heart "with  
 reference to judgment inasmuch as He sees far more keenly than  
 we do and investigates more searchingly and judges more severely."<sup>17</sup>  
 Again Calvin says, "Since God's knowledge penetrates deeper  
 than the perceptions of our conscience, none can stand before Him  
 unless the integrity of his conscience sustains him."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>R. Law, The Tests of Life (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1914), p. 280. Law also presents the translation problems on pp. 391-394.

<sup>17</sup>J. Calvin, "The Gospel According to St. John 11-21 and The First Epistle of John," Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), V, 278.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., V, 279. Modern interpreters holding Calvin's view are: Lic Wohlenberg, "Glossen zum ersten Johannesbrief III," Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift, XIII (1902), 632-645; George Findlay, Fellowship in Life Eternal (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1955), pp. 289-307.



Luther interprets "God is greater than our hearts" as Gospel. He says:

Even if our conscience makes us fainthearted and presents God as angry, still "God is greater than our heart." Conscience is one drop; the reconciled God is a sea of comfort. One's conscience is always fearful and closes its eyes, but God is deeper and higher than your heart and examines it more intimately. He gives us a light, so that we see that our iniquity has been taken away from us.<sup>19</sup>

Luther again says, "The heart knows nothing that is right. God knows everything and teaches me better things in the Word of the Gospel."<sup>20</sup>

The author of this study adopts Luther's interpretation for three reasons: (a) The understanding of the totality of John's Gospel; (b) An investigation of John 21:17; (c) The understanding of the totality of First John.

Friedrich Büchsel's examination<sup>21</sup> of the Gospel of St. John reveals John's emphasis is on grace rather than justice. He points out that John subordinates the justice of God to the grace of God. The essence of God is love,

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<sup>19</sup>M. Luther, "The Catholic Epistles," Luther's Works (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967), XXX, 280.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., XXX, 281.

<sup>21</sup>D. Friedrich Büchsel, "Die Johannesbriefe," Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament mit Text und paraphrase, bearbeitet von P. Althaus et al. (Leipzig: A Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung D. Werner Scholl, 1933), XIII, 59.



not judging holiness (John 4:8,10). Also, the glory of the Son of God is grace and truth (John 1:14,17). The Son of God came to save and not to judge (John 3:17). Despite the fact that no unbeliever can avoid the judgment of God, Jesus does not judge him (John 12:47); Jesus does not judge anyone (John 8:15). Therefore, in the light of the totality of John's Gospel, that which is greater than our heart is the grace of God. This means that God is gracious even in those moments when one does not have the courage to hope for grace.

Büchsel finds further support for Luther's interpretation with an investigation of John 21:7, a passage which Luther did not use for support. He says that the statement that Jesus knows all things points clearly to His grace. His grace does not forget love, even where the human guilt is manifest, and man does not have the courage to affirm his love to Jesus. The only way out for Peter was to trust the omniscience of his Lord which does not overlook or forget that the man weighed down by the guilt of a triple denial still loves Him. The omniscience of Jesus became the basis of his faith because he knows it to be the omniscience of love.



Finally the totality of First John supports Luther's interpretation. Schnackenburg<sup>22</sup> says that the "God is greater" is the good news about the God of grace and love. First John speaks about the strengthening of the consciousness of being redeemed (2:25; 3:14; 5:13,19,20), the overcoming of fear and lack of confidence (2:12-24; 4:18), the certainty of the victory over the destroying power of evil (2:3; 4:4; 5:4).

The author of this paper summarizes this section and rests his case on the words of Robert Law:

When it is said that "God is greater than our heart," what is meant is simply that "He knoweth," that is, takes cognizance of "all things." Our own heart does not take cognizance of all things. On the supposition made, its role is solely that of accuser. It is regarded as occupying itself exclusively with those facts that cast suspicion upon the reality of our Christian life, while it needs to be reminded of those that tell in our favour. But God takes note of all of the inconsistencies that conscience urges against us, and of the deeds whose witness we can cite in reply to its accusations. And for this very reason that He knows all, we can persuade and pacify our hearts before Him. To the hypocrite, who only seeks a cloak for his sin, the thought of the All-seeing is full of dread; but to him who, through conscious of much that may well be thought to falsify his Christian profession, is also conscious that it is in facts of a different kind that his deepest life has found true expression, it is full of comfort. The appeal to Omniscience is his final resort; his

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<sup>22</sup>R. Schnackenburg, "Die Johannesbriefe," Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg: Herder and Company, 1953), XIII, 181.



hiding-place in Light itself Ps. 139:23,24). Thus it was with Simon when not only his own heart accused him, but his Master so persistently voiced its accusations, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee (John 21:17).<sup>23</sup>

*παρρησία* is therefore the fearless trust and open child-like speech with the Father in prayer grounded on the omniscience of God and His grace.

The second passage is: *καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ παρρησία ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς αὐτόν, ὅτι ἴδαντι αἰτῶμεθα κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ἀκούει ἡμῶν* (John 5:14). *παρρησία* is the confidence with which a believer prays to the God who hears and answers prayer. "God is always listening," says Barclay, "we never need to force our way into the presence of God, or compel God to pay attention to us."<sup>24</sup>

What is the basis for this confidence? There are two reasons why *παρρησία* should appear here. First, the very context<sup>25</sup> is one in which the quality of confidence is expected. The context states the certainties of the believer's life, eternity is secured, victory is certain, Christ is near, Christians are separated from the world.

<sup>23</sup>Law, pp. 283-284.

<sup>24</sup>W. Barclay, The Letters of John and Jude (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 136.

<sup>25</sup>1 John 5:13-20.



The filial relationship with God is the one sure, certain, joyful dimension of the believer's life. The believer is fearless and free when in prayer, especially when assured of his salvation and in the presence of the God who saved him.

The second basis for the believer's fearless confidence is the assurance that God listens to and answers prayer.<sup>26</sup> The prayer and its requests are made "according to the Will of God." There is no prayer or confidence when outside of the will of God.<sup>27</sup> The will of God is for the good of God's people. Only in that will of God will be found a joyful, holy, and certain people who are fearless in the fullest sense of the word.<sup>28</sup> Stott remarks,

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<sup>26</sup>"God listens to us" is the theme of John. Cf. John 9:31; 10:41-42. Note also the present tense of the verb in the phrase *ἐξομασεν τὰ αἰτηματα* (John 5:15) which makes the answer to prayer most emphatic and certain. Here is the commentary to Mark 11:24, "Whatever you pray for and ask, believe you have got it, and you shall have it." Dodd says, "Here is the paradox that contains the secret of prayer; that in proportion as it becomes real prayer it carries its answer within it." C. H. Dodd, "The Johannine Epistles," The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946), p. 135.

<sup>27</sup>Limitation to prayer is expected in John. Cf. John 15:7, where one is to remain in Christ; John 14:14, where prayer must be in the name of Christ. Also consider the Lord's Prayer with its regulative clauses "Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done." Dodd, p. 134.

<sup>28</sup>Cf. John 1:4; 2:1; 5:13.



Prayer is not a convenient device for imposing our will upon God, or bending His will to ours, but the prescribed way of subordinating our will to His. It is by prayer that we seek God's will, embrace it and align ourselves with it.<sup>29</sup>

The believer, God's child, the man aligned with God's will approaches God fearlessly and confidently in prayer. It is the breath of his spiritual life. He is talking with his loving Father who has made all this his life possible. A fearless trust is a "must" in his behavior. He acts because of what he is. He has confidence because he is a son of God.

### Παρησία at the Παρουσία

There are two passages in the New Testament which state that the believer will have Παρησία before God at the Παρουσία. Both passages are found in First John.<sup>30</sup>

The first passage is: καὶ νῦν, τέκνιά, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἵνα ἐὰν θανερωθῆ σχωμεν Παρησίαν καὶ μὴ ἀσχυρθωμεν ἀπὸ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ (1 John 2:28).

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<sup>29</sup>J. Stott, The Epistles of John (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 185.

<sup>30</sup>Παρησία in the Gospel of John is always in relation to men and a temporal possession. In 1 John Παρησία is always toward God in a present or future time with an eschatological overtone. W. C. Van Unnik, "The Christian's Freedom of Speech in the New Testament," Bulletin John Reynolds Library, XLIV (1961-62), 486.



*Παρησία* is "Freimut" which comes from a good conscience.<sup>31</sup> It is that inward attitude that a man can live in security toward God. It is that trust which prompts the believer to speak openly and freely to God on Judgment Day. John Wesley summarized the concept in his hymn: "Bold shall I stand in Thy great day, for who aught to my charge shall lay? Fully absolved through Thee I am, from sin and fear, from guilt and shame."<sup>32</sup>

The opposite of *Παρησία* is shrinking from God in shame as did the wedding guest without the proper wedding garment in Jesus' parable.<sup>33</sup> The believer made righteous by Jesus has a joyful confidence before Jesus the Judge as promised by Jesus.<sup>34</sup> The believer has a fearless bearing with all shame and guilt absent from his conscience;<sup>35</sup> he is aware that he will not be shamed by the Judge on the Day of Judgment.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Schnackenburg, XIII, 145.

<sup>32</sup>M. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), II, 341.

<sup>33</sup>Matt. 22:12. Cf. Prov. 13:5: "A wicked man is ashamed and shall not have boldness."

<sup>34</sup>Mark 8:38. Cf. Prov. 13:5 and 2 Tim. 2:15.

<sup>35</sup>Vincent, II, 342.

<sup>36</sup>Schnackenburg, XIII, 145.



The basis for this confidence is the fact that the believer "abides in Christ." The writer of this study understands this phrase as a comprehensive term for the intimate association of the Divine in and with the believer. The Word, Truth, God, and Christ abide in the believer;<sup>37</sup> the believer has an intimate association with the Word, Truth, God and Christ.<sup>38</sup> Abiding in this relationship, the believer has a fearless confidence toward God.

The second chapter of 1 John is connected by the phrase "abide in Him." *παρρησία* before the Judge is a result of "abiding in Him." "Abiding in Him," the believer has the *παράκλητος* who pleads in his behalf before God (verse 1). The believer abides under the *ἔλασμός* (verse 2), the covering for the world's sin. "Abiding in Him," the believer keeps the commandments (verse 3), and reflects God's love toward men which is the great achievement of God's love toward him (verse 5). "Abiding in Him" spells forgiveness of sin (verse 12), victory over the devil (verse 13), and an intimate knowledge of and love for God (verses 14-15). "Abiding in Him," gives an anointing

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<sup>37</sup>1 John 1:10; 1:8; 3:24.

<sup>38</sup>John 8:31,44; 1 John 2:5b.



of the Holy Spirit's enlightening grace (verse 20).<sup>39</sup> Thus, the abiding in Christ is the basis for the believer's *παρρησία* at the *παρουσία*.

The second passage is: Ἐν τούτῳ τετελείωται ἡ ἀγάπη μεθ' ἡμῶν, ἵνα παρρησίαν ἔχωμεν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως, ὅτι καθὼς ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ (1 John 4:17).

We would translate thus: "In this love has reached its goal in our case, that we have boldness with respect to the day of judgment, because as he is also we are in this world."<sup>40</sup> *παρρησία* is the intrepidity and certitude the Christian possesses when standing before God at the Judgment.

The basis for this fearlessness is the union of God with the Christian, because he loves;<sup>41</sup> he loves as Christ

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<sup>39</sup> Barclay explains the significance of the unction by the Holy Spirit pointing out the grace of being chosen by God in Christ and connects this with Christian baptism. W. Barclay, The Gospel of Mark (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), p. 82.

<sup>40</sup> See Appendix for Paul Althaus' study of Luther's view of Christian certitude especially in connection with his comments on 1 John 4:17.

<sup>41</sup> The author interprets the phrase "as he is" to mean that, as Jesus is the Loving One, so Christians are the loving ones. This is in keeping with the context which is about the activity of love which drives out fear and prompts love. See Barclay, pp. 115-116 for a complete development of this concept in this context. Dodd, p. 119 and Richardson, p. 342 support the author. Likewise, the author disagrees with Stott, p. 169 who would have "as he is" merely mean



loves.<sup>42</sup> Whether or not the love is genuine and God-like will have its day of proof, the Day of Judgment. The final ripe fruit of the life of genuine Christian loving is fearlessness when the Judge comes to judge faith by its fruits.<sup>43</sup>

The pattern for perfect loving is God's love as manifested in Christ. A life lived in conformity with this pattern of Christ's loving will have as a result a fearless confidence before the Judge. This author agrees with Dodd that living as Christ lived means that the believers maintain their place in God's family. The objects of God's

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that Christians are the objects of God's favor. This seems to cheapen grace and almost sounds synergistic. Likewise, Weidner's interpretation that Christians are kindred souls with Christ and therefore need not fear Christ the Judge is rejected. F. Weidner, "Annotations on the General Epistles," The Lutheran Commentary, edited by H. Jacobs (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1900), II, 320.

<sup>42</sup>The author agrees with Dodd who points to the problem in the writing of John to distinguish the object of love. John's concept of love is a triangle which points to God, self, and neighbor with a source of God's love operating in the reconciled. It is a comprehensive term. Dodd, pp. 117-118.

<sup>43</sup>2 Cor. 5:10.



love return His love by keeping His commandments. The end result of such a life would quite naturally be fearless certitude before the Judge.<sup>44</sup>

The statement of Alan Richardson summarizes this passage and with it the author concludes this section:

In his baptism the Christian receives assurance that he will not be judged or condemned with the world and its demonic rulers; God's verdict of acquittal has already delivered him from that court of world-judgment. Those who have made their baptismal confession that "Jesus is the Son of God" are indwelt by God and consequently know that God, who is love, exercises his love in their case; thus, love is perfected with them, so that they may have boldness in the day of judgment.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Dodd, pp. 119-120. Likewise, Westcott comments: "Thus the whole train of thought is brought to a natural conclusion. 'God is love: he that abideth in love abideth in God.' In this communion love finds consummation, in order that 'by conscious conformity with Christ' the last trial of life may be overcome, when 'the last fear is banished.'" Westcott, p. 158.

<sup>45</sup>Richardson, p. 342.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

In this chapter the author will summarize his findings under three main headings: general conclusions, *παρρησία* before men, and *παρρησία* before God.

#### General Conclusions

*παρρησία* does not belong to the vocabulary of a single author. The word is found in Mark, John (both Gospel and the First Epistle), Acts, several Pauline Epistles, and Hebrews. It appears more frequently in the New Testament than in the Old Testament and is stamped with a Hellenistic rather than an Old Testament imprint.

*παρρησία* may be translated in three different ways. These are: "openly" or "publicly," "clearly" or "plainly," and "fearless bearing" or "confidence."

#### *παρρησία* Before Men

When *παρρησία* is used for an attitude before men, it may be translated in all three ways. There are seven passages in which the word is translated "openly" or "publicly." There are also seven passages where the word may be translated "clearly" or "plainly." The selection of the proper translation is obvious in all these passages and causes no problem.



There are seventeen passages where *παρρησία* may be translated as "fearless bearing." The author chose the term "bearing" because he found that the *παρρησία* is an inner feeling rather than an overt act or speech. One possesses this fearlessness which may be observed by others. This "fearless bearing" is always connected with the proclamation of the Gospel. The author of this study inserted the word "apostolic" because the Gospel-proclaimer was usually of apostolic rank. Therefore, the author suggests that the phrase "fearless apostolic bearing" may be used to translate the word *παρρησία* when it is used to describe an attitude which one possesses before men.

It is significant that *παρρησία* is not in the list of Christian virtues. *παρρησία* is not something that one possesses by nature. *παρρησία* is a gift from God, the result of "being filled with the Holy Ghost." Thus the possessor can have no pride in possessing this quality.

*παρρησία* can produce a reaction from the observers and is manifested before friend and (more often) before enemies. *παρρησία* is especially present when there appears an antagonistic or hostile segment among the hearers. The Apostle is and appears fearless, speaking frankly and publicly when and where one might expect to find some mark or appearance (however small) of intimidation. There is



none. God's messenger is dauntless and valiant in speaking God's message. All of the above-mentioned aspects of

*Παρησία* are found in Acts 4.

The Christian witness to the Gospel will be presented with a fearless bearing. This is God's ultimatum to convicted, condemned but redeemed and restored sinners. It is the very nature of the proclamation and its content which demands that it be presented with fearless forthrightness.

This author has strong reservations when hearing well-meaning preachers say, "Preach the Word of God with boldness." It seems to imply that the evangelist musters up his own courage. Such exhortation would seem to forget the nature of the proclamation. The proclamation of Law and Gospel, if it is God's message, will have in itself forthrightness and will demand fearlessness in presentation.

### *Παρησία* Before God

The author found that this section of the paper was by far the more difficult. It was not expected, at first thought, to find *Παρησία* before God, particularly on Judgment Day. This section presented the greatest interest and challenge. Here is the very apex of the paper.

There are seven passages in the New Testament which deal with a *Παρησία* before God. It is the possession of every believer. On the one hand, it is the freedom to



come 'before God directly, personally, and at any time. On the other hand, it is to be unafraid of God, the Judge.

The basis for the fearlessness is the redemptive activity of Jesus. The believer stands with intrepidity before God and especially before Jesus the Judge because Jesus freed him from guilt before God. God is the Father. God is the Savior. The believer can be fearless because God's promise is sure, and belief rests upon that promise.

There is no self-centered haughtiness in this freedom and fearlessness. The fearlessness proceeds from the merciful dealing and gracious activity of God. It is an unearned freedom. It is a fearlessness which rests upon Another's life, death, and obedience.

There are both Old Testament and Hellenistic reminiscences in *παρρησία*. There are the Old Testament overtones connected with the priestly activity, mercy-seat, purification by blood. These reminiscences are found chiefly in the Epistle of Hebrews. However, the real color in the New Testament is not derived from the Old Testament but from the Hellenistic concept of the Greek citizen's freedom to speak his mind publicly and fearlessly.

Sonship is the basis for fearlessness. Being in God's family is the source of freedom and fearlessness. Baptism, the new birth for the Christian, conveys to those reconciled



by Jesus fearlessness and confidence when standing before Jesus. Relying on God's love to them, they can expect love from God and so can be fearless before God.

Fearlessness is always connected to the will of God. It is not audacity. It is a fearlessness which exists because one is doing God's will. The believer is bold when realizing that the right of access to God's throne is Christ, but humble when he realizes that this right is not in himself but in Christ. A boldness which defies authority, fearing neither God nor man, leads away from God. This is not a courage founded on "cheap grace," having a forgiveness so easy that there is an indifference to sin. This would be moral ignorance.

This fearlessness in the approach to God is unlike the Old Testament man who approached God with fear and trembling. The New Testament approach to God is made in fearless freedom and confident trust. This is an aspect which makes Christianity distinct not only from the Hebrew but all other religions.

The last place one might expect to find a fearless bearing is before Jesus the Judge on the Last Day. However, upon further consideration, this is exactly the place where fearlessness joins faith and must ultimately be found if the believer is redeemed and reconciled to God in Christ as God promised. Once more to be reminded of this truth is the chief benefit the author derived from his research.



## APPENDIX

What did Luther say gave the Christian confidence before the throne of God on Judgment Day? According to Paul Althaus,<sup>1</sup> Luther gave two answers.

Luther interpreted 1 John 4:17 differently in the year 1527 than in the year 1532. In the year 1527 Luther said that the Christian would have confidence before God on the Day of Judgment because the reality of God's love would be completely known by the Christian. The certainty of that love gives the Christian a certainty and a confidence on the Day of Judgment.

Faith, of course, is what saves the Christian. Faith is that which makes the believer perfectly righteous before God in Christ. Faith receives Christ's righteousness. Faith is what justifies the man.

The Christian's love for his neighbor is a significant factor in the context of Luther's teaching of Justification. Love is the mark of a genuine faith. Love is a fruit of faith. Our love proves our faith and our faith creates our love; but it is always and only our faith which saves us. Our faith takes what God gives in Christ.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, translated by Robert Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 446-458. This is Appendix 2 which gives Luther's interpretation of 1 John 4:17a which Althaus entitles, "Love and the Certainty of Salvation."



Thus for Luther in 1527, Christian love merely verified that one had a genuine faith.

When Luther addressed himself again to this text in the year 1532, Christian love plays a more significant role. Luther says that there is a two-fold fear on Judgment Day. There is a fear of judgment according to God's high standards and a fear of accusation by our neighbor. Faith in Christ's work of salvation overcomes the fear of judgment by God's high standards. Good works and love remove the fear of accusation by the neighbor.<sup>2</sup>

Luther is very emphatic that this love is not perfect when measured by God's standard; however, it is perfect in that it has fulfilled its obligation toward the neighbor. As Luther says, "Thus through firmly grasping right works love silences the accusation of the others and no longer needs fear."<sup>3</sup> This does not mean that Christian loving has adequacy before God or establishes a right relationship with God.

Luther explains that there is a twofold oughtness in God's commandments. God expects more of the Christian than does the neighbor. There is all the difference in the world between answering to God's demands and to the demands of one's neighbor.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 451.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 452.



Therefore, in 1532 while Luther is emphatic and clear that love does not establish salvation, he does say that the works of love give courage to stand before the neighbor's accusations on the Day of Judgment. The confidence and glory of works are a minor sort when compared to that of faith.

Luther speaks of the relation of faith to works, saying that faith gives the most important joyfulness in the relationship to God; love makes us joyful in relationship to the Christian community and to the world.<sup>4</sup> Through faith there is glory in the fact that one belongs to God; through works and love one glories in the fact that no one has anything against him.

Althaus states that in a sermon at the end of Luther's life where this text is again treated, Luther stresses the fact that love is the hallmark of genuine faith which makes one confident before God and neighbor in the Final Judgment.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 455.



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