

Get Stubborn!

Last week Sam Spoke about '**The Spirit of Not Giving Up**' today I want to follow-up on that.

Soon after becoming a believer on Feb 15th 1965 I Got involved telling others about Jesus. One of the earliest of these 'expeditions' was to a 'Project' mission in Matlock, Derbyshire. One of the speakers inspired me with these words that I have never forgotten.

1 Cor 15:58 ESV ...*Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.*

This, along with other events in my life have built within me what many would call a 'Stubborn streak' into my character. I believe it is a God-given quality.

But Stubbornness is something of a two edged sword... it can be Positive... or Negative. So lets take a look.

Negative: Unreasonable, Intransigent. Resistant to change. Unwilling to listen to reason & sometimes... Unwilling to listen to God... It's generally negative... We all know about the child who was made to sit down, who said 'I am sitting down... but I'm standing up on the inside. It demonstrates something of a disobedient rebellious spirit. One major example of this is found in what happened with Sodom & Gomorrah.

Ezekiel 16:49-50: NIV *Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.*

It's no accident that Ezekiel speaking of Sodom highlights the lack of care for the poor before he ever mentions any sexual activities. The passage uncovers something deeper... the sexual acts were merely outward behaviours of inward attitudes. The heart issues ran much deeper: the people had become prideful, self-satisfied, and Subborn

Alarmingly this sounds all too familiar in today's society. I'm not going to dwell further on this negative side of things... Have you ever noticed that when God really wants to get your attention, He says the same thing in many different ways?

There are many examples of Negative ungodly Stubbornness throughout the Bible. There are also many who were Stubbornly Loyal to God... I want to look at a few of these positive, Godly ones.

Positive: Determined. Tenacious. Persistent. Not easily put off. Enduring. Faithful.

Daniel was one man who had this 'Stubborn determination' towards God. Taken captive by a foreign power, carried into exile & trained to serve a foreign king... Daniel still worshipped the Lord His God.

Dan 1:8 NLT *Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods.*

This was not a 'spur of the moment' thing he did just to be awkward... it was carefully thought out and had good reasons behind it.. Above all Daniel wanted to please God... in fact, reading the story there is no hint that Daniel wanted to disobey the king... instead he served him faithfully & well. The King valued Daniel.

Another word for Stubborn is **Determination...** 'The ability to make difficult decisions and accomplish God's goals based on the truths of God's Word, regardless of the resistance that may be encountered. It is the ability to aim toward Godly pursuits, & not allow ourselves to be distracted or discouraged'

Paul must have been a very stubborn determined guy... this is what he said about his work. When some people challenged his ministry...

2 Cor 11:23-28 NLT *Are they servants of Christ? I know I sound like a madman, but I have served him far more! I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again.*

Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes.

*Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. **Three times I was shipwrecked.** Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea.*

I have travelled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not.

I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm.

Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches.

1 Cor 2:2 MSG *I deliberately kept it plain and simple: first Jesus and who he is; then Jesus and what he did—Jesus crucified.*

3 ways can we be Stubborn for God

- **Prayer** *Eph 6:18 CEV Never stop praying, especially for others. Always pray by the power of the Spirit. Stay alert and keep praying for God's people.*
- **Word** *Josh1:8 ERV Always remember what is written in that book of law. Speak about that book and study it day and night. Then you can be sure to obey what is written there. If you do this, you will be wise and successful in everything you do.*
- **Fellowship** *Acts 2:42-47 Hybrid The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared life together. They broke bread and ate together. And they prayed... At the same time, they praised God and had the good will of all the people. Every day the Lord saved people, and they were added to the group.*

The New Testament tells us the parable of The Good Shepherd. He's not only counted his sheep into the fold for the night... He knows which one is missing... 'Flossie' AGAIN.

He goes out to find her... and stubbornly refused to give up until he does find her.

Ezek 34:16 WEB *"I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick;*

Jer 32:38-39 NLT *They will be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart and one purpose: to worship me forever, for their own good and for the good of all their descendants.*

God Is Stubborn In His Love For You...

Right from the very beginning we see this characteristic... In God Himself! In creation! In His Word & Will.

In **Gen 1:31 ERV** *God looked at everything he had made. And he saw that everything was very good.*

Mal 3:6 NLT *I am the LORD, and I do not change.*

God's Nature... His unwillingness to give in... His stubbornness is not haphazard. It's founded in His Love... His firmly resolved, absolutely determined, unrelenting love. Our God is incredibly... unbelievably stubborn in His love & concern for us. He does not give up. He does not give in. His Love Never Fails.

It Never gives up on me. (that seems familiar for some reason)

From the beginning He had created man... in his image. Created him...created YOU to know Him... to have fellowship communication & connection with Him. He wants you too to have that connection with Him. **Because He** has Loved you with an everlasting Love

Lets all stand....

I'm going to pray a very simple prayer... If you want to make that connection with for the first time God this is where you can start.... Everybody say it with me

*Dear Jesus, I know I'm a sinner and I need you to save me.
Thank you for dying on the cross.
Because of this, I am forgiven.
I want you to be the leader of my life.
Help me live my life for you. Amen".*

If you prayed that prayer for the first time... Please come & tell me! I have got some things that will help you as you begin to follow God.