

Introduction

1. It was at the Diet of Worms in April 1521 that Luther appeared before Charles V and a host of political and religious leaders. He was asked to retract the contents of his books. He replied that he could not retract anything he had written until it was proved contrary to Scripture or right reason. He was finally asked again to recant, but he again indicated he could not because of his conscience and then spoke those immortal words: "Here I stand; I can do naught else. God help me. Amen." (Hie stehe ich. Ich kan nicht anders. Gott helf mir. Amen.)

2. So it is with the Grace Bible Church under the fine and dynamic leadership we have here. For those who labor with us it is GBC or blessed service. That is the true spirit. We, like Luther, have said we can do naught else. God help us! Amen.

3. For GBC it is the: 1. Absolute authority of the Bible. 2. Absolute clarity of Christian doctrine. 3. Absolute separation from worldly practices. Blessed be God. This sort of spirit is found in the Word. It is a page out of the old Book. Hence, the new look of GBC is really from the old Book. Look at Philippians 1 and see how Paul stood the same way:

1. FELLOWSHIP OF THE GOSPEL vs. 5

The Greek construction is "unto" the Gospel. Hence, here is fellowship of the workshop and not armchair. The Gospel is good news. This good news must be told. Therefore, Paul expresses gratefulness for the Philippians who stood with him in the interests of the Gospel, with a view to promoting it. This the same as 2:22. GBC stands for motion, direction, and striving towards the spread of the Gospel. This is the essence of its fellowship. Pastor, staff and members of GBC say: here is where we stand--fellowship unto the Gospel ministry!

2. APOLOGY OF THE GOSPEL vs. 7

The original Greek behind this word "apology" is a

transliteration of the Greek noun. There is no idea of excuse inherent here, but rather a matter of defense and justification or the desire to make clear the grounds of belief and course of action. So the thought here is not for Paul himself, but the Gospel. The same word is used in Acts 22:1; 25:16; 2 Tim. 4:16; 1 Pet. 3:15; vs. 17. Now, some folks don't like controversy and they shy away from it. But, remember Jude 3! Those of us who take a stand have a battle on our hands! Let's rise to it. Thank God, this is where GBC stands. They are not giving in to liberalism or compromise, but standing for the defense of the Gospel!

### 3. CONFIRMATION OF THE GOSPEL vs. 7

The word used here speaks of "confirmation, establishment, and the guarantee of a transaction." Hebrews 6:16 is the only other use of the term. The thought is of the actual stabilization of the Gospel. The definite article used with apology above is not repeated here, hence there is a close connection between the two items. Whereas the defense of the Gospel has to do with Paul's "opening and alleging" (Acts 17:3) and his "reasoning and persuading" (Acts 19:8) and the powerfully confuting of the Jews by Apostles (18:28), this present idea is of "exhorting, teaching, preaching" (15:32-35; 16:5). Thus, the Gospel overthrows its foes and strengthens its friends. GBC stands for the Gospel in defense, but it also stands for the Gospel in teaching and exhorting. What a stand!

### 4. FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL vs. 12

The Greek word for "furtherance" is a military term used to speak of the progress or advance of an army that has to make its way through forests and over mountains. Paul admits that the things which have happened to him have not impeded the Gospel, but progressed it! Paul's attitude was great (vv. 19-25). As for the work, he saw it clearly (vv. 13-18). But this is exactly where GBC stands: for the furtherance of the Gospel. Their attitude is right--dead or alive. Their view of the work is right--not attacking others, but forcefully going about doing the job for the Lord. What a blessed ministry. Here GBC stands.

### 5. BECOMING OF THE GOSPEL vs. 27.

This is a great word. The verb "becometh" relates to

being a citizen, living as a citizen. The noun is used in 3:20. Philippi was a Roman city. Not in Rome, but from Rome. How appropriate. They were to live like Romans. So, we are admonished here to adorn the Gospel as being citizens of some other place. Beloved, this is a great word in a day of unbelievable involvement in worldliness. Things that once were sacred amongst believers have been admitted as open for dilution. Thank God for GBC which is, under God, seeking to take a stand. We are against the worldly aspects being propagated today. True, sanctification is a work of the Spirit. It is a ministry from the inside out. BUT, to deny that there is a wall of separation between the believer and the world is as ignorant of Gospel truth as can be. God still cries for cleanliness of life, living, morals, etc. Here GBC stands! A similar word used by Paul is to "walk worthy of the Gospel" (Eph. 4:1). Paul used the word of this text of himself toward God (Acts 23:1).

### 6. STRIVING FOR THE GOSPEL vs. 27

The verb here is used only two times in the N.T. (here and 4:3). A page out of the athletic games is used here. Teamwork is the thought. Combined earnest effort is the thrust. This is all related to the "faith of the Gospel." The definite article makes it clear that a standard of doctrine is essential, not an option. I like that. It means that Paul commended the Philippians for their willingness to stand shoulder to shoulder for the truth of standard doctrine and not running off after all kinds of aberrations. Praise God! This is where GBC stands. The doctrine of the truth of the Word of God. Ask them what they believe. They will tell you. This is done with one soul and one spirit.

Conclusion: GBC takes a stand. We stand for:

- a. Fellowship unto the Gospel
- b. Apology for the Gospel (defense)
- c. Confirmation of the Gospel
- d. Furtherance of the Gospel
- e. Behavior of the Gospel
- f. Cooperation for the faith of the Gospel

Here we stand. Will you stand with GBC? God grant that an army of believers in Ann Arbor will stand. Having done all to stand. The day is a great one. It is a day of unprecedented opportunity. God give us a host to STAND! Amen.