

NED MEN'S MINISTRY

Andy Bashwinger

Let Your

"What, then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come."

Acts 21:22

We have a natural response and then a first response. What I mean by that is that when something happens or someone says something, we have a natural thought or reaction based on our nature. Hot-headed? You know how you'll respond. Procrastinator? You also. We don't need a whole lot of instruction on that – we've gotten pretty in touch with our natural feelings. The difference between natural and first is what comes out after we've taken a moment to process what has happened.

The elders' natural response to Paul's coming was their first response! They were glad that so many were coming to Christ, but clearly first on their hearts and minds were those who had previously come to Christ and were greatly disturbed by what proved to be false rumors. First on their heart and immediately from their lips.

Paul's first response never betrays what his natural response may have been. He doesn't seem to speak but continues in the same, straightforward faithfulness and submission to the mission that marked his ways on the mission field. Verse twenty-six he simply goes along with his plan without fuss or rebuke, "Well, if they had only known what I did and went through for the Church...". God was his reward and shield; he was at peace internally, and so, he could be externally as well.

Letting ourselves (and our first – and eventually natural, responses) be transformed by the will of God to the image of His Son, Christ Jesus is a major theme of Scripture, made especially clear in the New Testament teachings of Jesus and the apostle Paul.

In just a quick search we find Jesus saying:

- Let your light shine (Matt. 5:16)
- Let your yes, be yes and no, be no (Matt. 5:37)
- Let your left hand not know what your right hand is doing (Matt. 6:3)
- Let your heart not be troubled, nor fearful (John 14:27)

And Paul writing:

- Let your gentle spirit be known to all (Phil. 4:5)
- Let your requests be made known to God (Phil. 4:6)
- Let your heart be ruled by the peace of Christ (Colo. 3:16)
- Let your speech always be with grace (Colo. 4:6)

There is a lot of submitting there – don't miss it! God won't force us; but rather, through circumstances encourage us to continue becoming more submitted to the image of His Son, Christ Jesus the Lord of our earthly lives and Savior of our eternal souls.

This is hard work – we can never do it without the Spirit's infilling and one another's encouraging, but it can be done. Remember, we are better together.

Rev. Andrew M. Bashwinger
Pastor, Waverly C&MA
NED Men's Ministry
pastorandy03@aol.com

