

## Let Your Jesus Be Known -Ryan Parsons-

Many years ago, on the shore of a Caribbean island I stood smelling and tasting the humid, still air as I listened to a preacher, in a purple suit, proclaim the Word boldly. It was well into the week's Gospel meeting and there were Christians from all over the island as well as members of the community soaking up the message. At the back of this open air, covered pavilion/fish market, the portable sound system blasted the sermon throughout the village. In the middle of it all, at the back fence, stood a drunk heckler. You heard me right. Ever been in a worship service that involved a heckler? It is an experience you will never forget.

For a week we had walked up and down mountains, through jungles, on dirt paths, dodging large lizards and sitting in small shanties, studying the Bible with willing participants in triple digit temperatures. Although culture shocked and weary, we were excited. The last thing we wanted to do was lose traction.

I considered both the double foot drop kick and a blind side spear tackle as my first two options for the heckler. But suddenly I became acutely aware, for the first time, how important it was for me to handle this situation in a Christian way. At this moment, not only was God watching, but the people I had taught and invited to experience Christ were too. Moreover, the drunk guy was only one of several skeptics that stood in the shadows and listened intently for any error or inconstancy in the message that they might use to discredit the Gospel. Despite the stress everyone was feeling, it was paramount that the situation be handled correctly.

### **Philippians 4:5**

*Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand;*

Scholars have translated "reasonableness" in a few different ways. For simplicity and ease of understanding, I think it is better translated:

"Let your **Jesus** be known to everyone."

If you want to read a biblical story about a heckler, spend some time in Acts 16. Paul promptly dealt with a heckler in Philippi and it led to his arrest and receiving a beating. That night, bleeding and in pain, Paul and Silas sat inside the jail. Rather than rattling the bars, crying out for their rights as Roman citizens, scripture tells us they were...*praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them* (Acts 16:25). Paul and Silas' "reasonableness" shone through the dark and it led to an entire family being baptized that night. Praise God!

At the time of Paul's letter, the Philippian Christians were in no better of a situation. Stress and mistreatment was still a part of their Christian life. However, Paul is encouraging them to let their hope and rejoicing in Christ shine through and lead to a reasonable, gentle, Christ like response to everyone around them.

Our world is no different and the way we act now, WILL influence how people perceive Christ. Regardless of the insanity and hate around us, we have to "let our Jesus be known to everyone" by the way we respond. God bless you as you shine for Him this week!