

In the book of Acts, I watch the disciples being questioned for speaking publicly about Jesus despite the prohibition. They reply, „We cannot not-speak of what we have seen and heard.“ (Acts 4:20) Other disciples, after being tortured, go to prison. Instead of cursing and moaning, or instead of defeated silence, I hear them singing and praying aloud in that prison at midnight... (Acts 16:25) Some have paid for their devotion to Jesus by sacrificing their own lives! (Stephen – Acts 7; Apostle James – Acts 12)

What was different in lives of those disciples than in lives of many contemporary Czech and Slovak Christians?

- 1. They KNEW Jesus!** Not just the information, but by abundant personal experience with Him.
- 2. They RECEIVED Jesus!** In the sense that they firmly decided to follow and obey Him. And naturally, they also intensely –
- 3. „EXPERIENCED“ Jesus.** They perceived His nearness, His love, His strength, and from all this they experienced gratitude, joy, fulfillment, empowerment... The deep knowledge and acceptance of the Lord turned into unstoppable engine of enthusiastic devotion and a source of indestructible inner happiness.

„But I don’t experience such emotions...” Some believers look at me in disappointment when I quote these stories and biblical principles and my own experiences to them. Our culture pushes the belief on us that what we experience inside comes from somewhere outside! This is the devilish deception of our time! Has anyone ever told you that you yourself are the free and fully responsible creator of your own emotions?

We have imperatives in the Bible that don’t make much sense in our emotionally passive culture, „Be thankful.“ „Rejoice in the Lord always.“ „Love one another.“ (Colossians 3:15; Philippians 4:4; John 13:34) Our response to this is, „You can’t rejoice on command. And certainly no one can command me to love anyone...”

And have you ever thought that gratitude is only and only a free decision of your heart! Similarly, you can freely choose joy or hope and even love! It is a matter of the focus of your mind. Are you looking at the splendor and greatness of Jesus who is with you right now? Or are you looking at your small experiences and fears of embarrassing yourself?

Please understand correctly, this is not about denying my feelings! On the contrary, I need to acknowledge them, state them, maybe even confess some of them as sinful... And then, above all, take freedom with them! It's about my freedom! It's about control and responsibility in my life!

„I can't even get angry?“ someone would say sometimes. On the contrary! When my emotions are under my own control, I am free to get angry for a good reason, and it can be healthy and right! (Ephesians 4:26) However, I freely keep the degree and the expression of my anger in my own hands!

Does this approach of actively dealing with one's emotions lead to a flat, emotionless life? Quite the opposite! Accepting responsibility for my own emotions gives me the freedom to experience what I want to experience! Sometimes joy, and then maybe even grief when it's time to grieve. I can experience happiness and gratitude or, conversely, creative restlessness and a fighting passion for a change. The crucial point here is that I decide my inner life with all freedom and responsibility! And not the people or circumstances out there!

Does this mean that I am always a winner? I don't say that, but I'm learning! And it seems I am an encouragement and example to many - that our handling of emotions can be different than what is customary...

Would you now ask Jesus to give you „a power to control your emotions“? No, don't pray this way! I tell you that - if you are reasonably mentally healthy - you already have the power to control your own emotions! Thank Jesus for that freedom and power, and gratefully rejoice in every little progress you will now make with your free choices and experiences...

1. **KNOW Jesus** - this is for your **mind**,
2. **RECEIVE Jesus** - this is for your **decision-making**,
3. **EXPERIENCE Jesus** - this will set your **emotions** free.

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your wonderful example of working freely and masterfully with Your own emotions.