

Philippians 1.12-18

Advance through Adversity

Xtians in Philippi LOVED Paul – Father in Faith led them to JESUS

SAD & Concerned in Prison > Man of God is STILL in PRISON

4.10 “I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me.” /

4.14 “it was kind of you to share my trouble”

Sent Member/Pastor? To Help Paul GOT SICK: 2.25 I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need'

Why do Bad Things happen to Good People? Hero Paul? Kids? Family?

1. Selfless Advance – Gospel Progresses thru Paul’s Imprisonment

Paul was STRATEGIST > Reach World for Jesus > KEY Cities

Letters: Ephesus, Thessalonica, Corinth, Philippi > especially ROME

Letter 2 Rome from Corinth ‘I’m ready to preach the Gospel to you at Rome’

Expected GO to Rome as Preacher: God sent as Prisoner AND Preacher

Last 8 chs ACTS tell Story Paul’s Arrest & Imprisonment @ Rome

Several PRISON Stories in Acts – Peter, Paul/Philippi/ Miraculous EXITS

PROBLEM > Paul in Prison LONG TIME 2/3 yrs – Where is God??

v. 12 Now I want you to know, brothers / 1st C Main Pt of Letter

If Papyrus Breaks in Transit > At least get Main Pt into Reader’s Hands

Humble Summary v. 12 “what has happened to me” > NOT About ME!

God gave Moses ROD, Gideon JARS, David’s SLING, Paul’s CHAINS

Paul Few Prison Details: Sick? Hungry? Cold? Alone? Comfort? Trial?

1st C Rome Convicted Felons rarely Prison > Too Costly, Other Penalties

Prison = People on Trial, waiting Verdict / Dungeon, Barracks, House - Acts 28

2 Timothy 2.9 I’m...bound w chains as criminal. But word of God not bound!

Paul’s JOY Not in Positive Circumstances but in Preaching Christ!

Paul models Joyful Xtian response to Suffering, Persecution, Strive

v. 12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. --- **2 Specific Ways...**

a. **Contact with the Lost Chained Roman Soldier 24/7 – 6 hr Shifts 4 X's**

v. 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

v. 13 “for Christ” = participating in X’s Sufferings / With Him in Prison

Service Not Only FOR Christ but also IN Christ

Charles Spurgeon “Prince of Preachers” > 1000’s London late 1800’s

Wife Susannah biggest Supporter became INVALID: Book Fund 4 Pastors

Worked w Circumstances > 1000’s Pastors Grew in Word > USA, Euro

Chains “really served to advance gospel” – Contrary to what you Think

v. 13 “known thru out whole imperial guard” > Talking about Paul & Jesus

No Indication GUARDS looked Forward or Interested in Hearing Paul

Prisoner who PRAYED for Them – Cared for their Eternal DESTINY

Visitors from around Roman World – Received Gifts from Many People

Only Reason he’s Imprisoned FOLLOWS man named Jesus calls LORD

No Ordinary Prisoner – Innocent Man serving a Sinless Savior

Gospel Spread thru ELITE Guards & Families > DEFENSE of the Faith

Mothers FEEL Chained to Kids > Susannah Wesley 19 kids, Hid in Closet

2 sons John & Charles Wesley, Preacher & Hymn Writer – Changed World

Fanny Crosby BLINDED 6 weeks old > Writer 9000 Hymns & Songs

How is God working thru Challenging Circumstances we are Facing?

See Circumstances as God-given Opportunities for Gospel Advance

NOT that God works DESPITE Circumstances > THRU Them!

We should expect that the gospel will make the greatest strides in places where there is no doubt God is the agent of the work... We are not as likely to find the greatest advances of the gospel within the circles of prestige, power, and wealth so pervasive in the West. Frank Thielman

b. Courage for the Saved

v. 5 “your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now”

v. 14 most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

SPEAK = Everyday Conversation > Coconut Wireless @ Paul

Our Chains may Not be @ Dramatic/Difficult but God can Use Us too

Discouragement can Spread thru Church like a Wet Blanket

Before Bldg sat Thatch – Wet, Leaves, Bugs, Fleas, Wetter, Scratch, Stink

1855 Bldg Opened – Roof, Wood Floor, Benches! > Encouragement!

But so Can Encouragement > Paul tells BAD News in a GOOD Way!

Erika Kirk models Forgiveness > 1000’s want to take Charlie’s Place

NO Suggestion SUFFERING is Good – or Gain Merit – Should be Sought

Reports about No Electricity CUBA > Dozen Xtian Students in Beijing

Xtians & Families NO Political Power > Focus on Christ & His Kingdom

Last 20 yrs Methodist Church Cuba grown from 6 k to over 50 k!

2. Selfish Envy– Gospel Progresses thru Paul’s Rivals

Challenge for M > Write Supporters > Do you Tell them BAD NEWS? Philippians SURPRISED
to Learn Troubles Paul had w Xtians in ROME

v. 15 Some preach Christ from envy & rivalry, but others from good will

If Jesus is THE Truth Xtian Ministry requires Honesty, Wisdom, Love

Bible much to say Need to Know – Going Directly to Person Offense

Believers DIVIDED over Paul – Then & Now > Changed Gospel

Painful to Hear about Failures of Pastors & Church Leaders, Hypocrisy

a. Motives Matter

Some Preach out of Envy & Rivalry – Hard to Hear & Understand!?

SAD when Ministry has Sell Stuff – Need \$! – World Suspicious @ Profit

“If that is what a Xtian IS – or a Church IS – I don’t want it!”

Others Preach to AFFLICT ME! – Sad Words! Seeking Self Advancement

That they could be TOP DOG since Apostle Paul stuck in PRISON

v. 16 The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.

Paul balances Negative Impact of Opponents w Positive Impact of Friends

Never told Names of Either Group > Only Name that Matters is JESUS

Not Saying Motives NOT Matter – Paul’s Love for Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 2.2-6 though we had already suffered & been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted w the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never came w words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from U or others

BOTH Groups Preach Christ and in that Paul REJOICES

God uses Message world calls Weak & Foolish 2 show Power & Wisdom

v. 9 it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge & all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent

Paul wanted to PREACH Not POLITIC > Trust was in Christ Alone

Divide Church when Take Sides > God is ONE, but always MAJORITY

Corinthians Believers had some People taking them Before Pagan Judges

1 Corinthians 6.7 'To have lawsuits at all w one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? '

More important Exalt Name Jesus in church than worry about Own Name

Christ was Preached > Despite Adversity was No Envy in Paul’s Heart

2 Greatest English Evangelists > John Wesley & Geo. Whitefield

Wesley: Arminian / Whitefield: Calvinist > Same Gospel diff Emphasis

Whitefield Died asked Wesley “Do you expect to see George in heaven?”

No. No!! Not Saved?? He’ll be so close to Throne, I will be too Far Away!

b. Power in the Gospel Not People

How Do We Measure Preachers? Looks? Personality? Presence?

Gospel is the Power of God for the Salvation of All who Believe

v. 15 “preach Christ” / v. 16 “the gospel” / v. 17 “proclaim Christ”

v. 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice / Gk ‘truth’ Honest Motives!

Paul Not Rejoicing in Pain of Affliction / Evil Motives of Some Preachers

JOY in Christ – Good News of Salvation is being made Known

When PROBLEMS in Life, Church, Ministry easy to become BITTER

Paul sees things from Jesus’ Perspective – J.O.Y. > Jesus Others Yourself!

1.19 Paul expected his Case to Turn out Successfully

Critics and Chains did not Stop Paul from Preaching Christ!

“It is easy to develop a streak of bitterness in our spirits when we see the errors of other professing Christians...so long as the one concern of our lives in the honor of Christ we will be safeguarded...we must reserve in our hearts a sanctuary of love for Jesus Christ – from which everything but trust in him & love for him is barred”
Sinclair Ferguson

Psalms 77 // I cried out to God for help; // **I cried out to God to hear me.** // When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; // **at night I stretched out untiring hands, and I would not be comforted.** // I remembered you, God, and I groaned; // **I meditated, and my spirit grew faint.** // You kept my eyes from closing; // **I was too troubled to speak.** // I thought about the former days, the years of long ago; // **I remembered my songs in the night. My heart meditated and my spirit asked:** // “Will the Lord reject forever? // **Will he never show his favor again?** // Has his unfailing love vanished forever? // **Has his promise failed for all time?** // Has God forgotten to be merciful? // **Has he in anger withheld his compassion?”** // Then I thought, “To this I will appeal: the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand. // **I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.** // I will consider all your works and meditate on all your mighty deeds.” // **Your ways, God, are holy. What god is as great as our God?** // You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. // **With your mighty arm you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.** // The waters saw you, God, the waters saw you and writhed; the very depths were convulsed. // **The clouds poured down water, the heavens resounded with thunder; your arrows flashed back and forth.** // Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, // **your lightning lit up the world; the earth trembled and quaked.** // Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen. // **You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.** **Amen and Amen.**