

## **Advance of the Gospel**

### **Philippians 1:12-18**

(NKJV) 12 But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,

13 so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;

14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

15 Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from good will:

16 The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains;

17 but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.

18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

The church at Philippi has sent their pastor, Epaphroditus to Rome with an offering and to find out how Paul is doing. I wonder if when they read the letter someone said, but how is Paul doing, skip down. But maybe they were more patient than we are.

Paul has sent this letter back to them but not until verse 12 does he tell them how he is doing.

#### I. Paul's situation

A. 12 But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, 13 so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;

#### B. I want you to know, brethren

1. They were already aware of Paul's past.
2. About 6 years before, Paul had taken a much needed offering to the poor Christians at Jerusalem.
3. While there he was falsely accused by the Jews to the Romans after the Jews had tried to kill him.
4. Because government works so well, Paul languished in prison for at least 2 years before being sent to Rome to have his case heard by Caesar.
5. On the way the ship had a ship wreck, I think it was run by one of the cruise lines. Twice in this incident Paul almost lost his life.
6. Once in Rome, Paul once again waited for some time another two years to have his case heard.

#### C. That the things which happened to me.

1. So what do you think of a God who will take a man that had dedicated literally his whole life to Jesus Christ and let him rot in prison for almost 5 years.
2. But Paul was not affected by all of that.
  - a. He kept his positive attitude. “For me to live is Christ, to die is gain”
  - b. If you had doubted Paul’s character during his ministry, there would be no doubt now.
  - c. Almost anyone can handle success, but very few can handle adversity.
  - d. Isn’t strange that many of God’s people are called on to be tested in the crucible.
  - e. Most do well but there are some who fall apart.
  - f. But not Paul, the more pressure the more he shines.
3. But we must never forget that we are all tried.
  - a. James 1:2-5 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,<sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.<sup>4</sup> But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. NKJV
  - b. 1 Peter 1:6-9 <sup>6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,<sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,<sup>8</sup> whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,<sup>9</sup> receiving the end of your faith -- the salvation of your souls. NKJV

D. Have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel

1. Whatever happened to Paul was a success if the cause of the gospel was advanced.
2. This word for furtherance means to like chop ones way through the jungle.
3. You see the furtherance of the gospel will probably not come through just walking along, for there will always be resistance.
4. It is like a football team pushing the ball down the field play after play. If the other team was not there they could just march down the field. But there will always be opposition to God’s gospel, to God’s work.

- E. 13 so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;
1. Who is the palace guard.
    - a. They are the secret service for the Caesar.
    - b. During the days of Augustus he chose 10,000 of his best soldiers who were to be the personal guard for the Caesar.
    - c. Later on this number grew much larger until they were responsible for the security of Rome which also mean the prisoners.
  2. How did this work.
    - a. Paul was not locked up in a cell, but rather chained to one of the praetorian guard soldiers.
    - b. They took 4 hour shifts so every 4 hours it was someone else's turn to be chained to Paul.
    - c. Day after day, month after month these royal guard have come to know Paul and his life and ministry.
    - d. They too have become Christians, which eventually would lead to their own arrest and death.
    - e. But these guards that guarded Paul also guarded the royal family.
    - f. Through these guards the gospel was taken to even Caesar's household.
  3. They had come to realize that they were not guarding a criminal but a very special person.
    - a. Someone who though all of the injustice heaped upon him had maintained that super positive attitude.
    - b. What can you do to a man like Paul.
    - c. If you kill him you just answer his greatest prayer and send him home.
    - d. If you afflict him, he glories in persecutions.
    - e. He was just like us, right?

II. The result

- A. 14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.
1. Most of the fearful Christians seeing Paul's positive boldness began to

15 speak the word of God without fear.

2. I mean if after that Paul has been through, if he can still preach a positive message of Christ than so can we.

B. 15 Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife,

1. 16 The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains;
2. But there were some leaders in the church at Rome who were envious of Paul and the attention that he received and the success he was having even while he was in prison.
  - a. Can you imagine that? God's people be envious and jealous?
  - b. I sure am glad that us saints in the 21<sup>st</sup> century do not have to worry about that any more.
  - c. No the truth is that 21 hundred years later we are still subject to the weaknesses of the flesh.

C. and some also from good will:

1. 17 but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.

III. The conclusion: Praise God that Christ is preached.

- A. 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.
- B. Isn't this amazing that far from wanting those who preach the gospel for the wrong reasons to stop, Paul rather rejoices that Christ is preached.