

CHAINS, CRITICS, CRISIS AND COURAGE

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26

Text:

Introduction:

Paul stands as a great example to us in learning how to effectively proclaim the gospel. Regardless of the challenge or the difficulty, we must remain faithful.

Note:

1. SOMETIMES CHAINS ARE USED TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL (VSS. 12-14)

Philippians 1:12-14

¹² But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; ¹³ So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; ¹⁴ And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

A. Paul was chained to a guard. The shift changed every 6 hours, so Paul was able to witness to at least four men a day.

2. SOMETIMES CRITICS ARE USED TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL (VSS. 15-19)

Philippians 1:15-19

¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: ¹⁶ The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: ¹⁷ But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. ¹⁸ What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. ¹⁹ For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

A. Criticism is hard to take because it is an attack against us personally.

Illustration: Instead of being critical note:

John Wesley and George Whitefield disagreed on several doctrinal issues. Both of them were successful preachers. A man approached Wesley and asked him if he thought he would see Whitefield in heaven. Wesley said no. The man said “So you don’t think he is really

saved?” Wesley said “Oh, I believe he is saved alright. It is just that he will be so close to the throne of God and I so far away that I may never see him.”

B. One of the greatest tests of our spiritual maturity is when we feel the natural urge to bite back, to overcome that and just keep serving the Lord. Let our walk do the talking.

3. SOMETIMES CRISIS ARE USED TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL (VSS. 20-26)

Philippians 1:20-26

²⁰ According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. ²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²² But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. ²³ For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: ²⁴ Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. ²⁵ And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; ²⁶ That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

A. Because of Paul's chains Christ was known.
Because of his critics Christ was preached. Because
of his crisis Christ was magnified.

Illustration:

Similarly a star is much bigger than a telescope, Christ is greater than us. However, we can be used, even in our trials and tribulations, to magnify the Lord.

B. Paul says "To live means I get to continue serving the Lord and teaching you as his followers. To die means I get to leave all this suffering behind and go be with the Lord.

C. Whatever trial you may be facing right now, it can be used to magnify God.

Paul used his Chains, Critics, and Crisis with Courage

- Because of Paul's Chains, Christ was known (vs. 13)
- Because of Paul's Critics, Christ was preached (vs. 18)
- Because of Paul's Crisis, Christ was magnified (vs. 20)

- Because of Paul's Courage, he rejoiced in the Lord (vs. 18)

Close:

Our chains may not be as dramatic or difficult as Paul's, but there is no reason why God cannot use them in the same way.

Examples:

Fannie Crosby-

At six weeks of age, Fannie Crosby was blinded, but even as a child she determined not to be confined by the chains of darkness. In time, she became a mighty force for God through her hymns and songs, over 8000 of them.

When asked about her blindness she said:

"It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank him for the dispensation. If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me."

Joni Erickson Tada - on suffering

“Only God knows why I was paralyzed. Maybe He knew I’d be ultimately happier serving Him. If I were still on my feet, it’s hard to say how things have gone. I probably would have drifted through life - marriage, maybe even divorce - dissatisfied and disillusioned. I wouldn’t change my life for anything. I feel privileged. I’m really thankful He did something to get my attention and change me. You know, you don’t have to get a broken neck to be drawn to God. But the truth is, people don’t always listen to the experiences of others and learn from them. I hope you’ll learn from my experience, though, and not have to go through the bitter lessons of suffering which I had to face in order to learn”

Susannah Wesley-

Susannah Wesley was the mother of nineteen children. Out of that large family came John and Charles Wesley, whose combined ministries shook the British Isles.