

Series: Stand Fast in the Lord

THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-18

Text: Philippians 1:12

Philippians 1:12

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;***

Introduction:

One of the reason Paul wrote this letter was to comfort the Philippian church about his situation in jail.

We often wonder why good things happen to good people.

Remember what we read in Matthew 5:

Matthew 5:45

⁴⁵ *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

Sometimes we don't understand the plan of God, but we know that we can trust Him.

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Note:

Sermon Content:

1. THE REALITY OF PERSECUTION (VS. 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.

For the Christians in Philippi, persecution was not just something they read about, it was a daily reality.

In particular, they lived with a concern for Paul who was imprisoned in Rome.

Notice:

A. The Perception of Persecution (vs. 12a)

Philippians 1:12

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;*

The phrase “should understand” means to get a knowledge of or perceive.

The Philippians were greatly distressed at the news of Paul’s imprisonment.

Thought:

What looks bad from a human perspective is often a part of God’s bigger plan that we will not have a full understanding of until we get to Heaven.

1 Corinthians 4:5

⁵ *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.*

Notice not only the Perception of Persecution but also:

B. The Progress through Persecution (12b-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.

1. The gospel advanced through Paul.

God had used and continued to use trials and afflictions to spread the gospel.

The Philippians not doubt remembered the ordeal that Paul and Silas experienced at Philippi when the church was established.

But remember as a result the Philippian jailor and his family were saved.

Because of Paul's current imprisonment, God spread the gospel through Paul into places it may have not gone otherwise – even into the palace.

Notice what we read in Philippians 1:13:

Philippians 1:13

¹³ *So that my bonds in Christ are **manifest** in all the palace, and in all other places;*

The word manifest means to be plainly recognized or known.

Not also Philippians 4:22:

Philippians 4:22

²² *All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of **Caesar's household**.*

These saint's in Caesar's household may have been a direct result of Paul's imprisonment.

Illustration:

The Church of England attempted to silence John Bunyan's voice by placing him in prison for preaching without a license.

Yet it was during his imprisonment that he wrote the book Pilgrim's Progress.

Not only did the gospel advance through Paul but also:

2. The gospel advanced through others
(vs. 14)

Philippians 1:14

¹⁴ And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Others gained confidence by Paul's bonds.

Illustration:

The world was saddened to hear that the group of missionaries Jim Elliot and Nate Saint were murdered in South America.

Yet as a result of hearing that story, hundreds of people were motivated to surrender their lives to foreign missions.

We have considered the Reality of Persecution but also note:

2. THE REALITY OF PROBLEMS (VS. 15-17)

Philippians 1:15-17

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.

Notice:

A. The Problem of Motive (vs. 15)

Philippians 1:15

¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

One preach for envy and strife.

The word envy means ill-will or spite.

The word strife means contention.

These were men who were moved by envy of Paul and were preaching not from a heart of compassion for the lost but because they desired to compete with Paul.

Understand:

This is the wrong motive. We are not in competition in the Lord's work.

Others were preaching for good will.

Again this is the wrong motive to preach.

Note not only the Problem of these Motives.

This leads us to consider lastly:

3. THE REJOICING IN PATIENCE (VS. 18)

Philippians 1:18

*¹⁸ What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, **Christ is preached**; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*

Paul didn't get bitter.

He realized regardless of the speaker, the Word of God was being proclaimed and that the Word of God would not return void even if the motive was not pure.

Isaiah 55:11

¹¹ So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Close:

Suffering is a reality of life, and suffering for the sake of the gospel is a reality of serving the Lord.

We may be tempted during these times to question God plan, but when we wait on the Lord, He allows us to see the big picture.

Isaiah 40:31

³¹ But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.