

Series: Philippines 2024  
Title: Trials Further the Gospel  
Text: Php 1: 12-20  
Date: Feb 11, 2024  
Place: SGBC, NJ

God brings to pass all things in providence. And whatever God brings to pass in providence is for the furtherance of the gospel.

Christ put Paul in prison at Rome. He used men to do it but it was God our Savior who did it. Paul wanted his brethren at Philippi to understand that the things that happened to him—rather than hinder the gospel—had furthered the gospel.

**Philippians 1: 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;**

Paul lists some things as examples. One, the Lord saved some in Caesar's house.

**Philippians 1: 13: So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*;**

Two, many brethren were more bold to preach Christ.

**Philippians 1: 14: And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. 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.**

Three, it resulted in Paul's own growth in grace and further unified the brethren.

**Philippians 1 :19: For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 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.**

**Subject:** Trials Further the Gospel

Paul was imprisoned at Philippi. But God worked a miracle and set him free. God produced an earthquake. God turned the hearts of the magistrates to set Paul free (Acts 16). But God had not set Paul free from his chain at Rome. So the Philippian brethren might think the Lord was against Paul. Therefore, Paul assured these brethren that everything that had happened had resulted in the furtherance of the gospel of Christ.

**Proposition:** Everything God works in providence furthers the gospel of Christ and works good for God's saints.

Romans 8: 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.

## ENABLED TO PREACH CHRIST

**Philippians 1: 13: So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*;**

By putting Paul in prison at Rome, the Lord enabled Paul to preach the gospel in places he would have never been able to preach, including Caesar's palace at Rome.

When initially arrested at Jerusalem, Paul was given a large audience and preached the gospel to them (Acts 21: 28-36; 22: 1-30). Then as they took Paul to Rome, God shipwrecked them on the isle of Melitus. Paul preached the gospel to the barbarians on that island (Acts 28). On the voyage, they stopped at Puteoli, Paul

met brethren and preached the gospel to them for seven days (Acts 28: 13-14). Then he met brethren at a place called The Three Taverns and preached the gospel to them (Acts 28: 15). Then at Rome, Paul preached the gospel.

Acts 28: 24: Some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

Acts 28:30: And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31: Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

Brethren, one of the most encouraging verses in scripture is found at the end of this letter to the Philippians. Writing from prison at Rome, Paul says,

Philippians 4:22: All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.

The Lord Jesus Christ accomplished the redemption of each elect child that God gave him in eternity. He purged the sins of his people and made us the righteousness of God in him. Therefore, the satisfied justice of God demands that each one must hear the gospel preached, be born again of the Spirit of God and given faith in Christ.

Therefore, because God had elect in Caesar's house in Rome—the Lord worked all things together to have Paul arrested to have him delivered to Rome. And the Lord drew those elect to hear Paul preach Christ. And the Lord gave them faith in Christ.

Is anything too hard for the Lord? When his saints were persecuted and scattered, scripture says,

Acts 8: 4: Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Acts 11: 21: And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

So Paul was not ashamed of his chain. He said,

2 Timothy 2: 8: Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: 9: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, *even* unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. 10: Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Everything God works in providence furthers the gospel of Christ and works good for God's saints. Wherever God puts you, preach Christ!

## **BRETHREN EMBOLDENED TO PREACH CHRIST**

**Philippians 1: 14: And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. 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.**

Those who were near Paul while in prison, saw the joy the Lord put in his heart. They saw the Lord providing for Paul, protecting him so he could preach Christ. They saw the Lord calling out his people through Paul's preaching. So "*many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.*"

Paul said, "*Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; ...[they] preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds*" Paul knew that some were *envious* of him. They preached Christ wanting to promote their own name above Paul. It made them glad to see Paul suffer imprisonment. Paul's imprisonment was something they could use to belittle Paul to brethren and promote themselves. They

were motivated by a competitive spirit rather than good will. They served but not sincerely. Paul told Timothy how all in Asia had turned against him and he named two men who promoted it. They said things to brethren to turn brethren against Paul which added to Paul's bondage.

When I first was called to be a pastor, I held all the pastors in high esteem. They had been used of the Lord to bless me and my family and I regarded them highly in love for their works sake. But a few years in, some things happened that greatly surprised me, things that disappointed me.

One aged pastor told me, "Sadly, there are some who preach of envy and strife to promote themselves. They will watch for anything they can use to speak negative about you." I did not understand it then but I do now. This wise pastor's counsel to me was, "God is on his throne. Do not speak against them to any brethren. Trust God to deal with such men. God will give discernment to your brethren to know what men are doing when they speak against you." He said, "And one more thing, when men speak against you, God will use it to make brethren listen to your preaching more."

In Paul's day, what those men did not understand is that Paul did not care what their motive was. Paul did not have such a selfish, competitive spirit. He simply rejoiced that they preached Christ. He would not have rejoiced if they preached a false gospel—but though their motive was bad, though their motive was in pretence, though they sought to add to his affliction—he rejoiced because they preached Christ in truth according to the scriptures.

I pray God keep me from having a selfish, competitive spirit. Men have more gifts than me. They minister to larger congregations. But I know that is of God, not of men. So I am thankful to God and pray for them. Their prosperity is my prosperity. We are members of the same body, righteous in the same Lord Jesus. Therefore, as long as they preach Christ, I am thankful. I have nothing in which to glory; I am only a sinner saved by grace. I am willing to confess I am the least of God's servants, the chief of sinners. But who is Paul, who is Apollos? One plants, another waters but it is God who gives the increase.

But Paul knew there were others who preached of good will, out of love for Christ. These were men who loved Paul. These were men who knew Paul was set for the defense of the gospel. Paul said, "*What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether [their motive is] in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*"

So long as men preach the truth that all men are sinners unable to obey the law in righteousness, unable to justify ourselves, unable to sanctify ourselves, unable to save ourselves, I rejoice. So long as they preach Christ is God in human flesh—the one Mediator between God and his people—the only salvation of his people, we praise God. So long as men preach that Christ honored God's holy, just and good law for his people making us perfect and complete in him, we rejoice that Christ is preached. So long as they preach that it is of God that we are in Christ, that is of God that Christ is made unto us Wisdom and Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption, we glorify God for sending forth the gospel. So long as God is blessing his word and calling his people to look away from self, away from this world, to believe on Christ and follow him—then "*I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*"

If a man's motive is wrong, if he is God's then God will deal with him. But I trust Christ. And if Paul's imprisonment did not hinder but rather furthered the gospel of Christ then I know God is able to use a man with a bad motive to do the same.

John Newton said, "Well it is for us that there is One who *watches the watchmen*, a Shepherd who himself neither slumbers nor sleeps, and yet knows how to have compassion on those who are prone to do both."

## **FOR THE GOOD OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

**Philippians 1: 19: For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 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.**

God used Paul's imprisonment for Paul's good and for the good of the brethren. Through trials, God makes his child trust Christ more and self less—that is true growth in grace. Paul already knew the things he declares

here by the Spirit through the gospel but, now, he knew them more, by experience, by this providence of God.

He said, "*I know this shall turn to my salvation*"—"whether by life or by death." Paul knew Christ had already delivered him so he knew Christ would deliver him. Brethren, Christ has redeemed his people from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. He has redeemed us from death and Christ is our Life. He has already delivered us. Therefore, rest assured, he will yet deliver us. Either God will deliver us from the trial or, even better, the Lord will deliver us from this body of death and this sinful world into his glorious presence through death. But "*I know this shall turn to my salvation...whether by life or by death.*"

He said, "*It is according to my earnest expectation and 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.*" God's promise to his child who trusts Christ is that we shall never be ashamed, never confounded.

1 Peter 2:6:...Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Isaiah 45:16: They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols. 17: But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

By the grace of God our Father, by Christ Jesus our Redeemer, "*by the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,*" every believer has this immutable promise of God, we shall never be ashamed. Not only shall we not be ashamed, but "*by the supply of the Spirit of Christ, Christ shall be magnified in our body, whether it be by life or by death.*"

Philippians 4:19: But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

The Philippians had already seen God bring glory to his name and magnify Christ in Paul by delivering Paul from prison. So they might think that is how God magnifies Christ—by delivering us from every trial and sparing our lives in this earth. Paul said if it will magnify Christ to let Caesar kill me then so be it. Paul's confidence and hope was that "*Christ shall be magnified in my body whether by life or by death.*" Brethren, remember that! When we need dying grace, God will give dying grace!

Not only did God use this trial to work good for Paul, he worked good for other brethren as well. Paul said God will do this for me "*through your prayer.*" Paul's trial made these saints cast all their care on Christ. It drew them nearer to Christ. It united them to Christ in prayer.

There is no better good worked for us than when God sends providence that causes us to cast all our care on Christ alone (1 Pet 5: 7). Everything God works in providence furthers the gospel of Christ and works good for God's saints. Paul preached Christ where he otherwise would not have been able to preach. Others were emboldened to preach Christ. Both Paul and the saints were drawn nearer to Christ and grown in grace by this trial.

Romans 8: 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.

**Amen!**