

Philippians 1: 12-20; “The Supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ”, Sermon # 3 in the series –“To Rejoice in Christ”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on March 3rd, 2019,in the Afternoon Worship Service.

This beautiful letter that Paul wrote to the believers at Philippi was written from prison. I think that sometimes we forget this, but we should not. The reason that it is important for us to remember this fact is because Paul is saying to us that we can still have great joy and a spirit of rejoicing in such circumstances if we will always remember to labor and live our lives from the vantage point of Christ’s victory at the cross. We must continually remember what Christ has accomplished on our behalf when we come into situations where either we are literally imprisoned for our faith or whether we feel as though we are imprisoned because of what we perceive others around us doing in relation to us, when we know that we are holding to the truth and doing what is right. How can we joy and rejoice in such circumstances? How can we best glorify God? That is what we will consider together before come to the Lord’s table.

Well I believe that this text is teaching us that we can joy and rejoice when we pray for, and when we really do expect that the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ will be enough for us to face difficulties that we will experience in relation to what God has providentially ordered for our lives, in the way that He would have us to glorify Him. We must remember that we have Christ and the supply of His Spirit in difficult and trying situations. 1st of all – Christ can supply us with grace by His Spirit when we are concerned about how the gospel and Christ’s kingdom can go forward. 2nd – Christ can supply us with grace by His Spirit when we are concerned about insincere Christians around us. And 3rd – Christ can supply us with grace by His Spirit when we are concerned about our own deliverance from the trial that we are going through for His sake.

1st of all – Christ can supply us with grace by His Spirit when we are concerned about how the gospel and Christ’s kingdom can go forward. (verses 12-14)

“But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” I suppose when the church at Philippi first heard about the apostle Paul’s imprisonment at Rome, they might have thought – This is terrible! How can Christ’s kingdom go forward and the gospel be preached far and wide if the one who is the apostolic preacher to the Gentiles is locked up in prison? But this is not how Paul wanted them to think. Rather he would have them to think of the opportunity that he was given to bear witness to Christ. His greatest concern was not himself and where he was. His greatest concern was whether Christ was being made known by him to people around him. And it did not matter who they were or what station that they were in, in life.

Let us remember that God has many ways of having His gospel spread far and wide, and they might not be apparent to us at first. Let us think in these terms; of the opportunity that we have been given, and how we can make full use of it. Does not the Bible teach us that it is our God who ordains all things that come to pass, according to the counsel of His will? And would this not even include the things which we might at first believe are a positive hindrance to the progress of the gospel? You will recall what happened to Paul. The history of this whole incident is related for us in the book of Acts. In Acts 21, during Paul’s missionary journey, they came to Caesarea, it says in verse 7, and they entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven original deacons of the church in Jerusalem. He had four virgin daughters who prophesied. And as they stayed there many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And when he had come to them, he took Paul’s belt, and bound his own hands and

feet, and said, ‘Thus say the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’” It says in verse 12 – “Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.” And what did Paul say? Did he say – Wow, am I glad that you told me this Agabus. I will certainly not go up to Jerusalem now. No, It says in verse 13 – Then Paul answered, ‘What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart?’ “For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” “So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, ‘The will of the Lord be done.’”

So, you see, this is where Paul’s holy bonds began. It began with a willingness to do God’s will in relation to witnessing for Christ. This what he was called to. And my brethren, this is what you and I are called to doing on a smaller, everyday level, in regard to our calling in life. God will so order the circumstances of your life in your particular situation that you will become a witness for Christ; right where you are, without your having to go to the mission field. You have a mission field right where you are, in relation to people around you. Are you a young mother with children? You can take the perspective that you are in a bondage in caring for them for these years when they are young, or you can see it as an opportunity to be a witness for Christ. You are willing to care for these children, but do you see it as an opportunity to bear witness to Christ in your spirit; that you would joyfully take up all the difficulties of raising these children?

That is what God and Christ are looking for. A joyful spirit in all that He has given you to do in relation to your everyday duties. This is how Christ’s kingdom goes forward. It is a tremendous witness. It is when the truth of the reality of Christ’s great grace is seen in you, dear believer, no matter who you are and no matter what station or position that you hold in society, or in the church. Well, from that beginning, of Paul’s willingness to do God’s will, he was providentially led by God to be bound at Jerusalem. He packed up and went up to Jerusalem, and when they got there they met with James and all the elders of the church in Jerusalem, it says in Acts 21: 18. They had heard that Paul in his preaching had been teaching all the Jews who had believed that they were to forsake Moses, and not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.” They wanted him to take four men with him and go into the temple and be ceremonially purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they would shave their heads and everyone would then know that those things of they were informed concerning Paul were nothing, but that he kept the law. But the Gentiles who had believed, they said, did not need to keep the law.

Now, Paul could have gotten into a big fight with these brethren, over the law having been fulfilled in Christ, and it’s ceremonies no longer being necessary to observe for a Jewish Christian, but he did not. Yes, it was true that he had been telling those Jews who had come to know the Lord that circumcision was abolished in Christ, and that to submit to it as something that was necessary, was not necessary. But he did allow for circumcision to be done in relation to some converted Jews because they were weak in their understanding of what was necessary in relation to God’s law. He himself had even circumcised Timothy it says in Acts 16, verse 3. But he did not see it as a necessary thing for any Christian. “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation,” he says in Galatians 6: 15. But it was controversy over this doctrine of circumcision which led to Paul’s being bound and eventually ending up a prisoner at Rome.

In Acts 21: 27 it says – “Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, ‘Men of Israel, help!’” “This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” This was the incident that led to Paul’s being bound and brought before kings and

governors of the people. In Acts 23, verse 11, in the midst of all of these difficulties, the Lord stood by Paul, in the night, and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome." How could the apostle's being in prison in Rome help Christ's cause at all? Well, in this case, we learn that the Lord had decided to use Paul in his imprisonment to become a witness to the whole palace guard. Yes, he was a prisoner there at Rome for preaching the gospel. But providentially he was given the liberty of dwelling alone in his own hired house, it says in Acts 28: 30. "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him." His guards would hear from him the gospel, and they would relate what they had heard to others there in the palace. And those Christian persons who came to visit him would also take away with them, the precious truths of God's word which Paul would give to them.

So let us understand that we can witness to Christ in every situation, no matter how dark or difficult. All of these providential orderings were coming from the Lord. His strong hands were ordering them for the fulfillment of Paul's ministry and for the promotion of the His own kingdom and His glory. And the question that I have for each of you who know Christ is this: Will you remember Christ, and the oppositions that He faced, and why He died? He died so that your sins would all be forgiven and He rose again to give you the supply of His Spirit. He faced oppositions in order that You might have the supply of His Spirit to witness in yours. Are you then willing to witness to Him in all the circumstances of this life in which you may feel you are being bound? For it will be glorifying to God, and a great help to other Christians around you, if your spirit is right towards all of the oppositions that you will face for the sake of truth and righteousness.

2nd - Christ can supply us with grace by His Spirit when we are concerned about insincere Christians around us. (verses 15-18)

"Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel." These statements are very revealing, my brethren. Sometimes men preach Christ even from envy and strife. Now, the apostle is not talking about unbelievers here; he is talking about professed believers and even some real believers as well when he says this. You should understand that there are some Christians who preach Christ from selfish ambition and strife. They will preach all of the doctrines of the Christian faith, and they may even preach them all correctly, but they have a problem with how they see themselves and you. They see themselves as great and they want other Christians to see them as great. They want to be seen by other Christians as someone who is very wise and spiritual; someone who has more understanding than others who have the gift and calling to preach and teach.

In this case, they were envious of the apostle Paul, and his gifts, and his success in the ministry, and since he was now in prison, they even wanted to add to his affliction by going out to preach in imitation of his ministry. They were saying in effect – You are now in prison but I will take your place and I will enjoy taking your place because I want my gifts to be seen by men and I want to establish my own authority for preaching and teaching, which I believe, Paul, are as great as yours. These men claim to be accountable to the truth of the Bible and the word of God, but they will not submit to being evaluated by anyone who does not see them as having greatness of gifts and abilities and insight, in a short period of time. They may truly have great gifts and ability, but they do not have proven Christian character, and thus they should be disqualified from ministry by a local church if they seek to be known as such, without having real love for the brethren who are holding fast to the word of God. The word of God teaches us that an elder must not be quarrelsome, but must be able to lovingly rule his own house, and not be

puffed up with pride, or be given to striving with the brethren to get his own way, or simply wanting see his own agenda established, no matter how Biblical it is.

People like this do not understand how God does His work in their life, or in any other Christian's life either. They do not think about the fact that God is evaluating them, and that He is providentially ordering all things for the good of His people and the true furtherance of His kingdom. The kingdom is not furthered by selfish ambition and strife. The local church does have a Biblical right to evaluate all men coming to them claiming to be teachers. Whether these men desire to preach and teach in the church, or whether they want to street preach and want to be under the authority of the local church, want to hold office in the church, they should be open to examination by those in the leadership of that church. These men, if they do not want the examination, and if they are unwilling to submit to the wise counsel of those who are in authority in regard to the things which need to change in their life which will prove that they are wise and holy in their behavior, if they are not willing to do this, they are acting as independent agents, and in the final analysis you will find, that they are accountable only to themselves.

But at the end of verse 15 and in verse 17 we find words which are very encouraging coming from Paul. He says – “Some preach from goodwill, and these do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.” God does have those ministers which He has called, which He has raised up, and who He has taught the right way to proceed. They are men of His appointment. It is preaching from goodwill toward towards those who have gone before you and who have faithfully taught the way of truth; this is glorifying to God. Men like this are men of the Bible, and they are men who hold to it at all costs; whether it means disapproval from those who preach in pretense, or imprisonment for them, or even death. Yes, they are men of love, but they will not tolerate or promote unholy or worldly selfishness, or sin, or strife. They are men of goodwill because they know that they can continue to minister even when persecuted or oppressed by men who are promoting themselves, or evil, or false religion. Paul is saying that there were good men who were like this in his day, men who became more confident in a righteous way because of his imprisonment. Paul was rejoicing that Christ was being preached, whether in pretense or in truth, for he knew that the truth would do God's work whoever proclaimed it. And so, he could rejoice even if some preached it from wrong motives. Come on down front now, to the Table, and I will have more words to you concerning Paul's deliverance.

3rd – Christ can supply you with grace by His Spirit when you are concerned about your own deliverance from the trial that you are going through for His sake.

(verses 19 and 20)

“For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” Before we partake of the Supper I want to give you some thoughts about deliverance from the prison that you may feel that you are in; your having taken your stand for the truth, and now you are receiving criticism or you are feeling oppressed by the opposition of those who you thought were loyal to Christ, but it has turned out that they are not. What are you to do? How are you to face this situation and bear up under it? I believe that verse 19 is telling us that rejoicing always in the Lord is way to approach such situations. In this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.” “For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance.” Let each of us remember Christ and what this great salvation that we are experiencing cost Him. He has poured out His precious life's blood so that you would be forgiven of all of your sins. But He has also died so that you might live and have the supply of the His Spirit to sustain you and give you the expectation and hope that you will be delivered from all of your trials. Psalm 34: 17 and 18 say – “The righteous cry out and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.” “The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.” “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.” May we partake of these elements with a thankful heart for the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

