

Stay Mission-Focused

- 1. The Advancement of the Gospel Is What Matters (12)**
- 2. Paul Shares Two Visible Results of His Imprisonment (13-14)**
- 3. God Is Faithfully Accomplishing Exactly What He Promised.**

CONCLUSION: Often we can become disheartened by the discouraging circumstances we encounter in this broken world and miss indicators of God's steady progress in making His name glorious in all the earth. Paul pointed out two examples of how the very thing we see as hard (his chains) was actually the means God was using to advance His Kingdom. Jesus has not only counted the cost for building His Church, but He has paid the price fully on the cross. So let us rejoice in what we can see and understand as well as what we cannot. Our King is faithful and is steadfastly doing just what He told us He would.

Ephesians 2:19-22

¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but *you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,* ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² *In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

First Peter 2:4-10

⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ *you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house,* to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

⁷ So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,”

⁸ and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, *that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.* ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but *now you are God’s people;* once you had not received mercy, but *now you have received mercy.*

Luke 14:25-33

²⁵ Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, ²⁶ “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ *For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?* ²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹ Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. ³³ So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.