

Philippians 1:12-26

Verses 12-14:

--(12) Paul begins to address personal issues knowing that the church was concerned for his well-being and the cause of the gospel. What would they do without Paul the apostle?

--Paul wants them to know, and to assure them, what has happened to him has actually become a part of ***the furtherance of the gospel***. The word for ***furtherance*** means *to strike forward* and was used to describe a pioneer.

2 Timothy 2:8-9: Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained.

--Paul explains two clear ways the gospel has been pushed forward during his imprisonment.

--(13) First, God was using Paul's imprisonment to bring the gospel to Praetorium guards. No doubt many were being saved. Also, it was becoming ***evident*** that Paul was not in prison because of crime or insurrection but because of his message about Jesus Christ.

--We know from **Acts 28** that Paul was under guard—likely being changed every four hours—and that he still had freedom to receive visitors and write letters.

--If a firsthand look into the daily prison life of an apostle was an incredible daily testimony, what should be the witness of our daily freedom?

--(14) Second, Paul saw that God was using his imprisonment to encourage other believers to be bolder in sharing the gospel.

--The Greek word for ***bold*** (*tolmao*) has the idea of *daring*—those willing to dare to do something and those unwilling. Like Joseph of Arimathea coming to Pilate and asking for the body of Jesus Christ—**Mark 15:34**, or Moses trembling and not daring to look at God in the burning bush—**Acts 7:32**.

Verses 15-17:

--Who are the envious and selfish preachers Paul is referring to? Most commentators agree Paul is not speaking about false teachers or heretics because he was never shy to call out and reject a false gospel. It seems like these are true believers—though they are preaching the gospel with mixed motives.

--How was this being done? We don't really know. The emphasis is on how the gospel is going forward despite Paul's life hanging in the balance.

--Here is what we do know:

--First, there were some preaching the gospel ***from goodwill. . . out of love***. These loved God and Paul and were willing to step in and fill the gap while the apostle was imprisoned. Love and goodwill motivated daring and fearless gospel preaching.

--These knew God appointed Paul to defend the gospel and they were determined to join him and do the same, whatever the consequences.

--Second, there were some preaching the gospel **from strife and envy. . . from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains.**

--What was their issue? Were they losing prestige with Paul around? Were they comparing their ministry with Paul's? Were they criticizing his ministry because of the circumstances he found himself in? Who knows?

--What we do know is that there are still tons of preachers around today who preach—**not sincerely**—with mixed motives! They have a ministry with strings attached.

--Part of the reason Paul is bringing this up is because the church in Philippi was also facing their own version of Christian envy and strife and selfish ambition (See **1:27+2:3**). So will we!

--What does Paul do? How does he respond?

Verse 18:

--To Paul, the gospel was more important than his own personal role or ministry in advancing it—yes, even more important than his own life. All he cared about was that the gospel was preached and the cause of Christ advanced.

--Paul rejoiced that **Christ is preached** and in **the furtherance of the gospel**—not false teaching, false gospels, or false christs. *We are not called to preach: miracles, social reform, tongues, healings, theology, demons, etc. We are called to preach Christ.*

--Again, Paul was never shy to rebuke or correct anything doctrinally, morally, or spiritually in conflict with the gospel or the person of Christ. He even named names. But he was apparently willing to allow motives to be judged by Christ on that day.

1 Corinthians 4:5: Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

Verses 19-21:

--(19) Here was Paul's confidence—that his life was going to be delivered either way. Their prayers and the supply of the Spirit would see him through.

2 Corinthians 1:5: For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.

--(20) Paul's **earnest expectation**—which is the same Greek word as is used in **Rom. 8:19** for the creation and means *looking with head erect and neck outstretched*—**and hope** was that in the end, he would never be ashamed of his life in Christ.

--Paul expected faith and obedience in all circumstances to be vindicated in the end.

1 John 2:28: And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and no be ashamed before Him at His coming.

--The Christian life may be difficult but God's promise is that it is also eternally worth it.

--That being the case, Paul's goal wasn't to get out of prison or to defend his reputation. Paul's goal was that ***Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.***

--He wanted Christ to be seen in all his life circumstances—that was his aim. When we magnify something with a microscope or telescope we are bringing something small or distant to others into clearer view.

--Like Paul, our circumstances or plans may change, but as Christians, our purpose never should. Hold your plans lightly but hold your purpose tightly! This will make you unashamed, bold, and focused. *Just think of how Philippi started!*

--We are all called to magnify Christ in our life and our death.

John 21:19: This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God.

--(21) That is why Paul can say this amazing statement. Death can only be gain to one whose life is Christ—otherwise, death is a separation from all your life is about and becomes loss.

--Will death separate you from all that you live for? Do we have any gains in our death?

--For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

--Christ made Paul live! Jesus Christ was the singular passion of his life. His one pursuit. The object of his eye. His life was not self-centered but Christ-centered.

--Many people want their lives to be sorted out and taken care of by Jesus Christ but they don't want their lives to be for Jesus Christ.

--What makes us live? What really drives us? What are our hearts bound to? One day we will all have to say: *For me, life has been. . .*

--(As an aside. We don't know much about the intermediate state of Christians who die and go to be with Christ before their resurrection. That said, Paul helps us understand at least one thing about that existence—it is a gain not a loss. (23) Far better and not worse.)

Verse 22:

--Amazingly, Paul's life was so tied to Christ and to the Church—not to self—that if he had the power to decide what would happen, he wouldn't know what to choose!

--For him, life in the flesh meant fruitful labor for the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:58: Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that you labor is not in vain in the Lord.

--Can we say this of our lives? If not, we should begin today! You never know what any good seed sown will produce!

Ecclesiastes 11:1: Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.

Verses 23-24:

--Paul expounds on his confounding situation saying that he is ***hard-pressed*** between two good options! In it all, he wanted God's best—the excellent (10).

--He had a strong ***desire to depart***—the Greek for ***depart*** was used of *breaking camp* or *losing the cable of a ship*. This should be a desire that is growing in each of us. Paul was ready when

his time came.

2 Timothy 4:6: For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

--To strike the tent in this life is to be with Christ in a life that is far better—not soul sleep.

Verses 25-26:

--Even so, Paul expects to be set free and see them again. That was what it looked like God was doing and the most probably outcome.

--The word he uses for their **progress** is the same as was used for the **furtherance** of the gospel in **12**. The first related to the gospel with sinners and the second related to the joyful faith of saints.

--We are all to be progressing in Christ, even the most mature saints has room to grow!

Saphir (Christ Crucified): "As the believer progresses and his path becomes more complicated he is taught more about the Spirit; for he needs this doctrine increasingly for his comfort and growth. His faith is not so strong and unwavering as he imagined; the ardor of his love soon vanishes; the power of sin, which at first he fancied was utterly broken, makes itself felt again; prayer becomes languid, and joy seems to have taken flight. In other words, God leads him into the valley; and lest he should make a Christ of his faith, and a wellspring of a cistern, he is taught something of himself. Who does not know of this second stage in the Christian life, at first so painful, so humiliating, and filling the soul with perplexity? It is then that we learn that the Spirit, who has renewed our hearts, must also sustain the new life; that we depend entirely on divine grace and power, not merely to bring us to Christ, but to keep us in Him. The necessity of this constant divine influence reminds us of our sinfulness and the utter corruption of the flesh; the certainty of this divine preservation gives us a new view of God's love and assurance of His faithfulness. Thus, as in all God's dealings, there is progress in ever-increasing, widening and deepening cycles; the believer experiences again, in a more enlarged and profound manner, what he was taught at his first conversion. He sees now more clearly the guilt and helplessness of man, the hardness of the human heart, our utter dependence on a Father to love us, on a Savior to save us by the shedding of His blood, and on a divine Spirit to quicken and enlighten the soul, and fill it with the love of God. He feels now, with deeper humility and truer joy, that salvation is of God, that divine grace lays the foundation and performs the good work in us until the day of Christ."

--Paul's presence in this life meant the joyful progress of others' faith. What of our life?