

**Sermon Title:** Advancing Through Difficulty  
**Sermon Series:** Philippians – Unbreakable Joy  
**Scripture:** Philippians 1:12-18  
**Speaker:** Elder Brad Bush



### **Philippians 1:12-18 ESV**

12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. 14 And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. 15 Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. 16 The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

**1. Paul chooses a positive \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Paul knows his \_\_\_\_\_.**

### **Acts 9:15-16 ESV**

15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."

**Vs. 21 – "for me to live is Christ and to die is gain."**

**Everything in life is an opportunity to advance the gospel of Christ.**

### **Philippians 1:12-13 ESV**

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Our witness to unbelievers is deeply affected by our attitudes.

**2. Paul chooses to be \_\_\_\_\_.**

### **Hebrews 12:1b-2a ESV**

“...run with endurance, the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus...”

### **Acts 28:30-31 ESV**

30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

### **Philippians 1:14 ESV**

14 And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Leader in the community

Leader in the Church

Leader in the home

Leader over self

**Adversity Increases Impact**

**3. Paul chooses \_\_\_\_\_.**

### **Philippians 1:15-18 ESV**

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**Paul considers the mission above personal reputation or preferences.**

**God is sovereign**

### **Romans 3:23 ESV**

“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”

### **2 Corinthians 12:8-10 NLT**

8 Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. 9 Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. 10 That’s why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

### **Job 42:2 ESV**

“I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”

**God wants to use you**

Our adversity:

- helps us to grow stronger
- gives us opportunities to witness
- makes us better leaders
- increases our impact on the world
- ultimately glorifies God in our life

You can choose a Positive Attitude, you can choose Faithfulness to God's mission, and you can choose Grace toward other people.

**Ephesians 3:20-21 ESV**

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, 21 to Him be glory in the church, and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!

**Amen.**

## Questions

### Getting to Know You Questions

1. Share an example of an adversity in your own life (past or present). How did it make you feel during that time? How did it affect your attitudes, actions, and health?
2. Can you remember a time when God used adversity in your life to help or encourage someone else?
3. Does going through hard times make us stronger? Share an example from your own life if you can.

### Into the Bible Questions

Read Philippians 1:12-18

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15 Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. 16 The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

1. What was something from the passage or sermon that surprised you, helped you, confused you, or bothered you?
2. In Philippians 1:12 Paul says “what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel”
  - What can we learn from his example?
  - What in your own life has advanced the gospel?

### 3. Read Acts 28:30-31

30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Paul preaches Christ even while imprisoned 'with all boldness and without hindrance'

- Where does his boldness come from?
- Read Philippians 1:14 What effect does Paul's boldness have?
- How can we be bold for Christ when we feel inadequate or weak?

### 4. Read 2 Corinthians 12:8-10

2 Corinthians 12:8-10 NLT

8 Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. 9 Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. 10 That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- What is the difference with how we see our weaknesses and how God sees them?
- Share what you consider to be a weakness in yourself with your group.
- For the group: How might this weakness be used by God as a strength?

## **Application**

1. What steps can we take as followers of Christ to be better witnesses to unbelievers? Think of someone specific that has been watching how you live out your life and faith.

2. Think of another believer who may be going through a hard time? Maybe you have had a similar struggle. How can you encourage them? Ask your group to hold you accountable to encouraging them this week.

3. As a group, pray for the adversity in each other's lives.

4. What is one way you can advance the gospel this week?