

Keeping A Biblical Perspective in Suffering Philippians 1:12-18

Main idea: Paul models a biblical perspective on suffering by choosing confidence over complaint, focusing on calling rather than circumstances, choosing courage over cowardice, and rejoicing in Christ even in the face of criticism.

My expectation ≠ my experiences

The result = Hurt and offense or opportunity & growth

Paul and the Local churches

Paul → Mission → Disruption

Gentiles disrupt our church life

Government disrupts our social life

Paul's opponents wanted sympathy from Rome; Paul wanted salvation for Rome.

Everybody loves missions until it disrupts our quality of life.

Four Gospel-Transforming Perspectives When Life Doesn't Meet My Expectations

1) Confidence rather than complaining - v.12

- The Philippians might have expected:
 - Imprisonment → restriction → less gospel ministry
- Paul sees:
 - Imprisonment → opportunity → gospel advancement

"In the infinite wisdom of the Lord of all the earth, each event falls with exact precision into its proper place in this unfolding of his eternal plan." -

2) Calling rather than confinement - v.13

- Confinement = chains attached to a guard (**Ephesians 6:20**)
- Paul sees himself as "a prisoner of the Lord" (**Ephesians 4:1**)
- His imprisonment is "in the cause of Christ"

3) Courage rather than cowardice - **v.14**

- Two perspectives: Supporters and opponents
- “Most of the brothers” = Supporters
- His supporters are emboldened to declare the gospel (**1 Corinthians 1:18**)

It is not courageous to merely say a kind word, but it does take courage to say a Christ-centered word.

4) Christ rather than criticism - **vv. 15-18**

- The pastor and his critics - **v.15**
 - Critics = “brothers”
- The critics' contrasted motives
 - From a desire for good - **vv.15-16**
 - From envy and causing conflict - **vv.15;17**
- The critics' desire - **v. 17**
 - Self-glory and to intensify Paul's suffering

So What?

- How do I put on a biblical perspective? **v.18**
- When the gospel and Jesus Christ matter more than me, myself, and I, I will begin to see things and people through a biblical lens.