

Paul's Joy-Giving Perspective

Intro... Ego & Ratatouille

Philippians 1:12-18

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.

Paul's Present Position (v.12)

An update from Paul on his present situation in Rome ... not how he planned

Arrested, ship-wrecked, on house arrest, and awaiting a possible death sentence

Paul & his Peers (v.15-17)

1. His Rivals
 - a. Preach from envy and rivalry
 - b. Full of ambition
 - c. Hoping to afflict Paul
2. His Friends
 - a. Preach from good will and love
 - b. Understand his position and God's plan

Envy and love

- How do you deal with rivals?
Friends?

Paul's Perspective (v.12-14)

Yet in these verses we get a glimpse of how Paul views his situation

- it is advancing the gospel
- it is affecting other believers

Instead of going on and on about life in prison, Paul takes a different approach. He takes a divine perspective on the whole situation, reminding the church that God's mission is being accomplished, that people are being positively impacted by his imprisonment, and that Christians are being emboldened. His words highlight how he treasures the gospel and thus maintains joy. (Merida and Chan, Exalting Jesus in Philippians, p.51)

- How do you view your circumstances?
- Do you know how your faith affects others?

Paul's Powerful Joy (v.18)

Does it bother you when others are praised, promoted, and more recognized than you? What about if they try to tear you down in order to build themselves up? Despite the fact that wrongly motivated preachers were using Paul's imprisonment as a means of tearing him down, Paul humbly said, "Christ is proclaimed. And in this I rejoice" (v.18). The way you overcome your wicked jealousy is by caring more for Jesus' glory than your own. Let the glory of Christ be your chief concern. (Merida and Chan, *Exalting Jesus in Philippians*, p.57)

How does Paul stay joyful in his suffering?

Every one of us should learn and take heart from this. No matter what hard place in which we may find ourselves, God can use us to advance his word in that very situation. Where is that you feel restricted in life? ... Wherever you find yourself, you can see your adverse situation as an opportunity to give testimony for Christ where one would otherwise not exist. You are not where you are by accident. You are where you are by divine appointment, for the purpose of sharing the gospel. (Steve Lawson, *Philippians for You*, p. 49)

- Where do you find joy?
- Who's reputation do you care more about? Your's or Christ's?