

PHILIPPIANS Chapter 1:12-30

1. How did Paul feel that his arrest and incarceration had impacted the ministry of the gospel? He felt that it had actually served to advance the cause of Christ. The language used seems to indicate that as a consequence of his incarceration the message had gone out.

a. What examples does he give to illustrate that? It was apparent to the praetorian guard (“the palace”) why he was incarcerated.

b. What can you discover about the praetorian guard? Do some digging! They were established during the 2nd Century BC. and were a personal guard for the generals and later for emperors. They also staffed jails, prisons and served at times as a police force in the city. Over time they exerted a huge amount of influence in imperial succession, often determining the choice of emperor (for huge bribes).

2. Although Paul had been arrested others continued to preach the gospel. What does the text say were their motives?

a. Those who stood with Paul: Were emboldened to stand firm in the gospel. They did it out of good will. Paul’s boldness apparently encouraged them to stand firm.

b. Those opposed to Paul: Tried to make trouble for him. They preached from a malicious motive, wanting to stir up additional trouble for him out of envy and rivalry (“contention/strife”).

c. The important thing for Paul was what? (vs 18a). That the gospel was proclaimed. One way or the other, the gospel was made known. He was an apostle to the Gentiles (Gal 2:8-9).

d. What should this tell us about how we should approach ministry? We should want to see the work of God advance no matter what our present circumstances. Read Eph 6:19-20. Paul wanted the Ephesian believers to pray that words (“words”/“utterance”) would be given to him to speak with freedom. Notice what he did not ask for: release from his chains. What is important to Paul? Look up Acts 22-28 and examine the ways he sought to use his legal troubles and incarceration to further the gospel.

3. From 1:18b-30 What was Paul’s desire in his situation? Compare this with the attitude of the apostles in Act 4:23-31? By life or by death to make Christ known and His people stand firm. Look at 1:28 - was Paul intimidated by the opposition? Should we be? The Philippians were exhorted no matter what happened to Paul to conduct themselves (“like a good citizen”) worthy (or commensurate) with the gospel. Do we stand on it or not? Somethings cannot be known until they are put to the test (like your spare tire or a fire extinguisher). In Acts 4:23-31 the disciples were ordered no to preach in the name of Jesus. In 4:29 they asked God to enable them to speak the word of the Lord with great (“all”) boldness

So:

How do we react to opposition or hostility?

How do we “redeem the time” (buy it up) for the Lord. The idea is to make the most of opportunities God gives us.

- Does anything happen accidentally?
- Will God use every situation for His purposes?

HOMEWORK

Read Philippians again and from 2:1-11 answer the following:

1. The term “if” in verse 1 is better understood as “since.” With that in mind what does Paul say that we have received as believers from Christ?

a. From verse 2 what are we directed to do? Make a list.

b. How can dissimilar people be unified in love, spirit and purpose as Christians. Take some time to think about this before you answer.

c. How is this shown by the way we are directed to behave (2:3-4)?

2. From verses 5-11:

a. How are we to be minded?

b. From 1 Jn 3:16-23, how are we to love one another?

- What might this entail (See also James 2)?

- How have we been loved by Christ?

c. What has Christ done for us (Please make a list!)?

d. Compare Isaiah 45:18-25 with Phil 2:5-11.