

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

PERSONAL NOTES, PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26 (Part 1, 12-14)

A. Paul's present condition (12-18)

1. The benefits of his imprisonment (12-14)

a. God superintended Paul's circumstances for the good of the Gospel (12), *I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel,*

1) *what has happened to me*

a) To Jerusalem and Caesarea, Acts 21:1-26:32

- 1] False accusations were made but no charges were brought against Paul.
- 2] A Jewish mob was kept from killing Paul as Roman soldiers took him into custody.
- 3] There were two Jewish attempts to murder Paul.

b) At sea, Acts 27:1-28:13

- 1] He was shipwrecked but none were killed.
- 2] He was bit by a venomous snake with no injury.

c) To Rome, Acts 28:14-30

- 1] He was under house arrest for 2 years, guarded night and day.
- 3] His imprisonment in Rome is the specific circumstance to which he referred in this verse.

2) *has really served to advance the Gospel*

a) The word *serve* means *to happen*, with the implication of the vent being directed to someone or something, Louw-Nida Greek-English Lexicon.

b) Circumstances of Paul's life were used by God to advance the Gospel. That is true for every Christian.

c) Warren Wiersbe, *The same God who used Moses' rod, Gideon's pitchers, and David's sling, used Paul's chains.*

d) Max Anders, *Paul appears to be reassuring the Philippians that even though his movements are restricted, mere human constraints cannot thwart the gospel.*

b. Two benefits noted by Paul (13-14)

1) That the Gospel was heard by many who would not have heard it without Paul's imprisonment (13), *so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.*

a) There were many who heard the Gospel because of Paul's imprisonment.

1] The *imperial guard* was assigned the responsibility of guarding prisoners who had appealed to Caesar.

a] Also, they guarded many of the high-ranking officials in the Roman government.

b] It was an honor to be part of this group of soldiers.

c] They guarded Paul 24 hours per day while he was under house arrest.

2] *all the rest*

a] Unsaved Jews, Acts 28:17-29.

b] Gentiles, Philemon 10, *I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment.*

c] Fellow Christians who came to visit Paul, *Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.*

d] Caesar's household, Philippians 4:22, *All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.*

b) It was known throughout Rome that Paul was imprisoned because of his commitment to Jesus Christ, Philippians 1:13, *so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.*

2) That other Christians are emboldened to share their faith because of Paul's faithfulness despite difficult circumstances (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.

- a) Paul's faithfulness to the Lord despite his circumstances encourage other Christians to boldly share their faith.
- 1] Thomas Constable, *Rather than taking a lower profile because their leader was in chains, most of the local believers felt inspired by Paul's courage. They were standing up boldly for Christ and trusting Him as they had not done before.*
 - 2] Robert Lightner, *The positive response Paul received in the face of opposition caused others to speak more courageously and fearlessly for Christ. Paul's confinement was doing what his circumstances outside of prison could never do.*
 - 3] D. A. Carson, *A whiff of persecution sometimes puts backbone into otherwise timid Christians.*
- b) Most but not all Christians became bold in their faith. That is still true today. I believe it is an issue of trust or lack of trust, not lack of ability.

CONCLUSION

- A. Paul's primary concern for people was their spiritual needs.
- B. He desired that every Christian would live what he/she believed and major on majors.
- C. Our circumstances are what God uses to work in and through us.
- D. Our difficulties can be used by God to encourage other Christians to live what they believe.