

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

PERSONAL NOTES, PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26 (Part 2, 15-18)

- A. Paul expressed the motives of Roman Christians in proclaiming the Gospel (15-17)
1. Some preached the Gospel with improper motives (15a, 17), ***Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry...The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.***
 - a. They were motivated by envy and rivalry.
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *Some were hoping to advance their own reputations by their activities. They were envious of Paul's prominence and were striving with their fellow believers for selfish reasons.*
 - 2) Godly motivation is serving others not serving self.
 - b. They proclaimed the Gospel for selfish reasons.
 - 1) It appears these preachers were more concerned about what people thought about them than about Christ.
 - 2) Robert Lightner, *...it seems that they were believers who for some unknown reason did not love the apostle or appreciate his work. Though they were doctrinally sound, they promoted themselves.*
 - 3) It is a mistake to try to mix personal ambition into the Gospel ministry since a Christian's ambition is to be like Christ, Romans 8:29, *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*
 - c. They wanted to add hurt to Paul's imprisonment.
 - 1) Max Anders, *They hoped Paul would think they had taken over his place and so would be disheartened.*
 - 2) D. A. Carson, *It really is sad that so great a man as Paul has frittered away his gospel opportunities simply because he is so inflexible. After all, I and many others manage to remain at large and preach the gospel. One must assume that Paul has a deep character flaw that puts him in the path of trouble. My ministry is being blessed, while he languishes in prison.*
 2. Others preached with proper motives (15b-16), ***but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.***
 - a. They were motivated by good will.
 - 1) Such a motive is tied to God's good pleasure as in Philippians 2:13, *for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*
 - 2) It is benevolence toward others based on the nature of our good God.
 - b. They were encouraged by love to proclaim the Gospel.
 - 1) Max Anders, *Motivated by Paul's example, those who preach with right motives do so in love. Such love flows out to Paul, to unbelievers needing the gospel, and to God.*
 - 2) Godly love is not factious as noted in 1 Corinthians 1:11-12, *For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."*
 - c. They believed Paul's imprisonment was because of his defense of the Gospel.
 - 1) Paul was in prison not because of wrongdoing but doing what is right, living and proclaiming the truth of Christ.
 - 2) His imprisonment may have been an embarrassment to some but for others it was the means by which they heard the Gospel, Philippians 1:12, *I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.*
- B. Paul rejoiced that Christ was proclaimed whether the speaker had proper or improper motives (18), ***What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,***
1. The joy of Paul's life was that Christ is proclaimed.
 - a. *What then?*
 - 1) It is looking back to motives, *what does it matter?*
 - 2) Thomas Constable, *While motivation is important, it is even more important that the gospel gets proclaimed.*
 - 3) F. F. Bruce, *What matters is the content of the preaching.*
 - b. Paul's joy was that the good news of Jesus Christ reach the unsaved.
 - 1) Even imprisonment did not decrease his joy if the Gospel was being proclaimed.

- 2) Robert Lightner, *He did not rejoice because there was a faction among members of Christ's body, for this brought him grief. Instead, it was the preaching of Christ that brought him joy.*
 - 3) D. A. Carson, *Put the advance of the gospel at the center of your aspirations.*
2. The proclamation of the Gospel will achieve its purpose.
 - a. God is sovereign and works despite the pettiness of the vessel,
 - b. Max Anders, *Even wrong motives could result in actions that let people come to know Jesus. So Paul emphasized the results, not the reasons, and rejoiced.*
 - c. Romans 1:16, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*
 3. J. Alec Motyer, *Paul relates his experiences with such a light touch that we might be deceived into thinking that what is easily told was easily accomplished. But why should it have been any easier for Paul than it is for us to leave the path of self-pity, to talk more of Christ than of our complaints and to accept each and every circumstance as the place of duty he has appointed? Such notoriously difficult attitudes of mind and heart are brought about only by practice, by hard-won choices in the very heat of that tribulation which works patience.*

PERSONAL NOTES, PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26 (Part 3, 19-26)
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- A. Paul was confident that he would be delivered from his imprisonment (19-21)
 1. His belief in deliverance was based on the power of God working through the prayers of the Philippian believers (19), *for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance,*
 - a. *this* refers to his imprisonment.
 - b. *my deliverance*
 - 1) Some think Paul is referring to release from prison but I believe it is deeper than that.
 - 2) The word for *deliverance* normally refers to salvation.
 - 3) Paul is probably looking at the bigger picture as he did in Philippians 1:6, *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*
 - 4) Thomas Constable, *Probably Paul meant that his prison experiences and the consequent furtherance of the gospel were all part of God's completing the good work that He had begun in him.*
 - c. The means of Paul's deliverance
 - 1) The prayers of the Philippians
 - a) It is amazing that God allows us to partner with Him in ministry to others.
 - b) Paul assumed that the Philippians were praying for him.
 - c) It is a wonderful thought that others are praying for us and not praying just for themselves.
 - d) If the Apostle Paul coveted the prayers of others, so should we.
 - 2) The working of the Holy Spirit
 - a) There is a connection between prayer and the enablement of the Holy Spirit.
 - b) The Spirit that rested on Jesus is our Helper, as well, Luke 4:18, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,*
 - c) The working of the Holy Spirit is available for all believers, *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*
 2. His hope was that Christ would be honored in him whether his deliverance was in life or death (20), *as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.*
 - a. Paul is certain that he will not be ashamed at the coming of the Lord.
 - 1) He had the prayers of fellow Christians.
 - 2) He had the working of the Spirit of God in his life.
 - 3) He trusted God who would complete what began in his life.
 - b. His confidence is that Christ will be honored by his life or death.
 - 1) While on earth Paul wanted to honor the Lord with a strong testimony of faithful service.
 - 2) He was willing for martyrdom if it would advance the cause of Christ.

- 3) D. A. Carson, ... *Paul's driving concern is not that he should be released from jail or that, if he must die, he should have a relatively painless departure, but that he should do nothing of which he would some day be ashamed.*
- c. He knew such commitment to Christ demands full courage.
 - 1) *courage* is primarily boldness in speech.
 - 2) *full courage* is boldness in speech that demands unwavering commitment to truth regardless of the response of the listeners.
 - 3) Paul was most concerned with what God thought of his ministry and not what others thought.
 - 4) H. D. M. Spence, *Boldness of speech was to be his part, the glory should be Christ's.*
3. Paul lived for Christ in this life and looked forward to living with Christ in the next (21), ***For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.***
 - a. Thomas Constable, *Jesus' work on the cross had become the reason for all that Paul did. Appreciation for Christ motivated all that he did. His present enablement through the Spirit was the source of his strength. The prospect of seeing Jesus Christ and standing before Him one day drew him and constituted the goal for all he did.*
 - b. Charles Swindoll, *Many people today, if they were honest, would have to say that for them to live is money, fame, happiness, family, or any of a multitude of idols.*
 - c. Charles Spurgeon clearly portrays what it meant for Paul *to live is Christ, ...to know Christ more, to imitate Christ more, to preach Christ more, and to enjoy Christ more.*
- B. He was torn between earthly service and heavenly residence (22-24)
 1. Paul did not know what would be best as he considered the future (22), ***If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.***
 - a. The Apostle Paul struggled with difficulties even as we do.
 - b. It appears that he did what we should do when we are faced with a difficult decision, evaluate, pray, meditate on God's Word.
 - c. Of course, such a decision was not up to Paul but it was in the hands of a faithful God.
 - d. It is good to step back and evaluate a situation but don't sweat what is not up to us when faith is demanded, not answers.
 2. He weighed the options between remaining on earth or going to heaven (23), ***I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.***
 - a. Charles Spurgeon, *The apostle was confined in the guard room of the Praetorium. It is very probable that he had a soldier chained to his right hand, and another to his left, and it is very possible that this position suggested to him the expression, "I am hard pressed between the two."*
 - b. Paul was at a fork in the road.
 - 1) A few more years of ministry would enable him to serve the Philippians in particular, and the church in general.
 - 2) Absence from this body would mean presence with the Lord.
 - a) What a glorious thought that at death, full life begins.
 - b) Thomas Constable, *If Paul had believed in purgatory or soul sleep, he would hardly have said he regarded death as a preferable alternative to life...Note that Paul did not mention that life was preferable because he could avoid the pain and suffering of death. He did not refer to separation from his loved ones or from what he had worked so hard to accumulate either. These are reasons many people give for not wanting to die.*

3. Paul turned his thoughts from what would be best for him to what would be best for others (24), *But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.*
 - a. Robert Lightner, *Paul was distressed. He was hard-pressed to know which would bring the most glory to God and therefore be to everyone's advantage in the long run.*
 - b. D. A. Carson, *What is striking about Paul's evaluation is how deeply it is tied to the well-being of other believers, rather than to his own.*
 - c. He was motivated by a love for God evidenced in serving others.

- C. He determined it would be better to remain longer so he could minister again to the spiritual needs of the Philippians (25-26), *Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.*
 1. He sensed he would be with them again.
 - a. Early church writings indicate that Emperor Nero released Paul in 62 A.D.
 - b. He resumed his ministry in Macedonia and probably in Philippi.
 - c. Paul was arrested again in 68 A.D. and executed as a martyr.

 2. It was a choice to remain and serve.
 - a. He was convinced by the importance of serving others.
 - b. He wanted to be a part of their *progress* (in spiritual maturity).
 - c. Their joy would increase as their faith deepened.
 - d. His desire would be that the Philippians would glory in Christ Jesus because of his return to them for faithful ministry.
 - 1) *glory* in verse 26 means *the reason for being proud.*
 - 2) Robert Lightner, *They would exult because the one who had taught them about Christ would be with them again.*

CONCLUSION

- A. The priority for every Christian is to proclaim the Gospel through word and deed.
- B. The Gospel proclaimed with accomplish its purpose despite wrong motives of the preacher.
- C. Make spiritual choices based on what is best for others, Mark 10:45, *For even the Son of Man came not to be serve but to serve...*