

Christ is Preached: Philippians 1:12-20 Explained

Scriptures for Today

Philippians 1:12-20

But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; 13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; 14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. 15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. 18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. 19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

Introduction — The Book of Philippians

The book of Philippians is written while Paul is in prison. This is not a comfortable situation for Paul, and yet his attitude is not defeat—it's confidence and even joy.

Paul is not focused on his circumstances. He is focused on the gospel. This passage shows how he views suffering, opposition, and even the motives of others. Everything is measured by one standard—what happens to the gospel.

What Happened Before This? (Philippians 1:1-11)

Before this, Paul greets the believers and thanks God for them. He speaks about their fellowship in the gospel and expresses confidence that God will continue the work He started in them.

He also prays that their love would abound and that they would grow in knowledge and judgment. That sets the tone for this passage of Scripture. He wants to see growth, clarity, and a focus on what actually matters.

The Furtherance of the Gospel — Through Hardship

Philippians 1:12

But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

Paul wants them to understand something clearly. What happened to him—his arrest, his imprisonment—did not stop the gospel. It actually advanced it. And you can see his arrest in Acts 21. You can see he is put in prison in Acts 24 for two years. He's then sent to Rome. He's

then in prison even longer, but the Gospel is still spreading. Paul was able to continue preaching the Gospel even when in prison. As long as there's people around, you can preach the Gospel!

What looks like a setback is being used to move the gospel forward. God is not hindered by circumstances. God can work absolutely anywhere as He owns it all. He owns everyone and everything. Always remember that FACT.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

The “good” here is tied to God’s purpose. In this case, the gospel is moving forward. And remember, the Gospel moving forward every day is THE GOOD we want to see here at this church. Pray for the Gospel to always reach more and more in the area. It's absolutely amazing how it has already moved in this area.

The Gospel Reaches New Places

Philippians 1:13

So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;

Paul’s imprisonment made Christ known in places it may not have reached otherwise. The palace—likely referring to Roman authority—heard about Christ because of his situation.

His chains did not silence him. They put him in front of new people. That's how it works with us too. Sometimes you get sent somewhere you didn't want to be, but God works it all for good. And that's the important part and that's we always MUST remember.

Others Grow Bold

Philippians 1:14

And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Instead of discouraging others, Paul’s situation made them bolder. They saw that even imprisonment did not stop him. Nothing will STOP God's Gospel. The Gospel of Jesus Christ will not be slowed down.

And that situation gave them confidence to speak the word without fear. Fear was replaced with boldness. For example, let's say Nathan and I were afraid to go out there and preach the Gospel. That wouldn't help your confidence to go out and preach the Gospel. But, we aren't afraid. We know the Holy Spirit is with us in this 100%. And that helps YOUR confidence.

Acts 4:29

And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

This is the same pattern. When people see truth stand firm, it strengthens others.

Different Motives — Same Message

Philippians 1:15-17

Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

Paul is not saying they are preaching a false gospel. He says they are preaching **Christ**. The message itself is still right, but the reason behind it is not always right.

“Envy and strife... contention... not sincerely.” These are people who see Paul in prison and take advantage of it. They step into the spotlight while he’s locked up. They want influence, attention, or recognition, and they see an opportunity.

They preach Christ, but they’re doing it to compete. They’re thinking—Paul is down, now it’s our turn. That’s why it says they suppose to add affliction to his bonds. They think their actions will make things harder on him.

A simple example would be this. Someone sees a preacher get shut down, attacked, or removed, and instead of standing with the truth, they use that moment to build themselves up. They preach the same message, but the goal is to elevate themselves, not serve Christ.

Now look at the other side. “But the other of love.” These are people who understand what Paul is doing. They know he is set for the defence of the gospel. They are not trying to replace him or compete with him.

They preach Christ because they care about the truth and about people hearing it. They’re aligned with the gospel, not using it for personal gain. You can see a contrast like this elsewhere.

3 John 9

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

That’s the same kind of spirit—someone wanting the position, wanting the influence. That’s envy and strife. They aren’t doing things for Jesus Christ. They are doing it for themselves. Diotrephes right there is an example. And there are many Diotrephes out there. I’ve seen some of them with my very own eyes.

Two people can preach the same truth, but for completely different reasons. One is doing it to serve Christ. The other is doing it to serve themselves. The message can be right while the motive is wrong.

Christ Is Preached – That Is the Focus

Philippians 1:18

What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

Paul does not focus on the motives first. He looks at the message. If Christ is being preached, he rejoices. That does not mean motives don't matter—it means the gospel itself is powerful. The message does not lose its power because of the person delivering it.

The Bible says, "whether in pretence, or in truth." Pretence means a false front. It's someone ACTING like they have the right reason, but they don't. They're using the preaching of Jesus Christ for something else.

They might be looking to gain attention, compete with someone else, or make things harder for Paul. They aren't changing the message, but they are using the message for their own gain. But, still, all glory to God because the Gospel is reaching people! The Gospel never fails no matter what someone's motivation happens to be.

This Will Turn to Salvation

Philippians 1:19

For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Paul is confident about the outcome. "Salvation" here is not about being saved from hell—he is already saved. There are different salvation's in real life. You can be saved out of many different things right here in this life. This isn't speaking of the salvation of his soul from hell.

This is deliverance, help, and preservation through what he is going through. His confidence is tied to two things: 1) The prayers of believers, 2) The supply of the Spirit. God provides what is needed. Your prayers are very important. Maybe, at times, we don't think prayer is important BUT it's HIGHLY important and this verse shows that.

And then we see the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Remember, God is one God in three persons. The Father is God, Jesus is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.

No Shame — Only Boldness

Philippians 1:20

According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

Paul's goal is clear. He does not want to be ashamed. He wants boldness. "Christ shall be magnified in my body." That means Christ is made known, lifted up, and shown through Paul's life that he lives. Paul is not lifted up. CHRIST IS LIFTED UP.

And notice the last part—"whether it be by life, or by death." That is complete commitment. His life is not about preserving himself. It is about magnifying Christ no matter the outcome. Make sure you hear me on that.

Many people don't understand why we are here because they look out for themselves. Why would you be in a dangerous area? They aren't looking out for the things of Christ so they don't understand. Again, the safest place to be is doing what God commanded you to do. We could move to a safer place and get 10 people saved per year. Or, we can be in a dangerous place and get 10 people saved in a day.

"But that with ALL BOLDNESS, as always, so NOW also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by LIFE, or by DEATH."

What This Means in the Bigger Picture

This passage, Philippians 1:12-20, fits the entire New Testament pattern. The gospel moves forward even through opposition. You can see that God moves through all the failures of men throughout the entire Bible. The word of God continues no matter what. Even the death of men and women can't stop God.

2 Timothy 2:9

Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

Paul is bound. The gospel is not. Man is weak. The Gospel is not. We are weak. The Gospel is not. There's something far bigger and far greater than you and I.

Practical Applications

1. Difficult circumstances do not stop God's work. He can use them to move the gospel forward.
2. Boldness comes when people see others stand firm. Your actions affect others.

3. The gospel itself is powerful, even when delivered by imperfect people.
4. Your goal should be that Christ is magnified, no matter what happens in your life.

Conclusion

Paul was in prison, but the gospel was moving forward. People were hearing it, others were preaching it, and Christ was being made known. That was enough for him. That's enough for us. We keep going in the work of God. We do not stop.

The question is not your situation. The question is what is happening with the gospel. Is Christ being magnified? Make sure in your attitude and in your motivation that Jesus Christ is being magnified.

Let's pray.