

22S08 Philippians 1:12-18 Christ is Preached

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today I want to continue our study of Philippians with Philippians 1:12-18.

Before we start, let us remember this short letter was most likely written by the Apostle Paul while he was in prison in Rome. Paul had first visited Philippi during his second missionary journey and he has great affection for the church in Philippi. This letter is sometimes called “the Joy Epistle” because of thankful and joyful tone. But remember Paul is in prison in Rome, not very happy circumstances.

I’m reading from the New King James version (NKJV) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Let’s read Philippians 1:12-18 (NKJV) *¹²But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, ¹³so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; ¹⁴and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. ¹⁵Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: ¹⁶The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; ¹⁷but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁸What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice*

Let’s pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your word from Philippians, help us see why Paul is so thankful and joyful despite his situation. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

So, before we start studying today. This section in many of our bibles has a heading. Of course, these headings are not part of the original letter Paul sent. But I do find these interesting. I like to see what the many translations say to round my understanding and prepare me for the text, Like this title “Christ is Preached” (NKJV), or “the Advance of the Gospel” (ESV) or “Paul’s Joy the Christ is Preached” (NLT) or “Paul’s Trials Advance the Gospel” (KJV). Regardless of your translation title, Paul is going to share something very important with us.

So, let’s break these verse down a little more. Starting with just verse 12 Philippians 1:12 (NKJV) *¹²But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,.*” I don’t want us to miss what Paul is saying here. Paul is in prison, that’s the things which happened to him. He’s in a bad place. Then he says, this bad thing happening to me has turned out to be good.

The gospel of Jesus is advancing despite and because of Paul's situation. I remember the words of Joseph when his brothers come to him in Egypt during the famine. "you meant this for evil but God used this bad situation for good" God's plans don't always include our comfort. I have to state the obvious, God's plan is often advanced while we are in bad situations, persecution, disease, hardships. Our problems often result in opportunities to share Jesus with people who need to hear and see our witness. So, take heart when you face troubles in this life, they might just be the exact thing necessary for someone else to come to Christ.

Now see what Paul says next with *¹³so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; ¹⁴and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.* (Philippians 1:4-5 NKJV). Because of Paul's situation even the palace guard are learning about Jesus. And others seeing Paul's example are more confident to speak out for Jesus. Paul's hardship is making a difference for many.

Paul continues with *¹⁵Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: ¹⁶The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; ¹⁷but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁸What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice* (Philippians 1:15-18 NKJV).

I want us to really take in what Paul is telling the Philippians. Paul is talking about people who go into ministry for all the wrong reasons. Those with selfish ambitions and insincerity. This hurts Paul but he accepts that God is in control. As long as the true Jesus is preached, he will rejoice. And this is tough for us too. When we see preachers and teachers only interested in money or fame or prestige. But if Christ is preached, then we should rejoice and trust God with the situation.

Ultimately, we don't know what is in men's hearts or what motivates them, so I will choose to trust God.

Let's review.

- 1) What is Paul surprised by.? Well, he is in prison but his hardship is furthering the Gospel of Jesus in ways Paul could not have imagined. So much so, that the Palace guard is coming to know Jesus.
- 2) What else is happening because Paul is in chains? Other people are becoming bold for Christ. Despite his chains, Paul is preaching Jesus to anyone who will listen even the guards. And Jesus is working through these extreme situations to reach people.
- 3) Why is Paul frustrated? Other people are trying to take over his ministry for selfish reasons. These people are making Paul hurt even worse than just being in prison. But Paul understands, it's not about him or them, it is about Jesus. So regardless of the motives, Paul will rejoice if Jesus is preached.

Let me leave you with this. It is easy to get jealous of people especially when you feel like they are doing things for the wrong reasons. We have to remember it's not about you, it's about Jesus. We are not in control, Jesus is. Give control over to God and do what Jesus asks you to do, Then don't worry about what others are doing, let Jesus handle those other people. You do what is right, you say what is right. Then leave the rest up to Jesus Amen.

Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for this letter from Paul. Help us to read and meditate on this letter so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you Lord. Help us to do what you ask and not worry about what others are doing. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

I hope you will join us for the rest of our study of Philippians. Please email me comments or feedback. Thank you for joining me today. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.