

The Advance of the Gospel

Philippians 1:12-18

Big Idea: God uses even hardship, opposition, and imperfect circumstances to make Christ known.

Key Verse: “What has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.” (Philippians 1:12)

Sermon Outline

1. The advance of the gospel involves _____ help and personal _____.

- Paul’s chains opened doors: the imperial guard learned that his imprisonment was “for Christ” (vv. 12-13).
- Paul’s suffering strengthened believers to speak the Word without fear (v. 14).
- Gospel advance includes God’s spiritual help and our real gospel effort (Phil. 2:12-13).

2. The advance of the gospel provokes _____ conflict.

- Paul’s imprisonment reminds us that gospel witness often brings resistance (Acts 16; 21-28).
- Some preached from envy, rivalry, selfish ambition, and pretense (vv. 15-17).
- Even imperfect circumstances and impure motives could not stop Christ from being proclaimed.

3. The advance of the gospel produces great _____.

- Paul rejoiced because Christ was proclaimed (v. 18).
- The gospel brings joy to those who believe, those who share, and those who observe God saving sinners.
- Christian joy is rooted not in comfort or control, but in Christ being made known.

Moving Toward Gospel Conversations

Secular Contact	Spiritual Conversation	Gospel Presentation	Personal Invitation	Preliminary Discipleship
Who could I take this next step with?	Who could I take this next step with?	Who could I take this next step with?	Who could I take this next step with?	Who could I take this next step with?

Personal Application

- When was the last time I moved a normal conversation toward a spiritual conversation?
- Who is one unbeliever I am praying for by name this week?
- Am I willing to speak Christ even when it may cost me comfort, approval, or reputation?
- Do I rejoice when Christ is proclaimed, even when the circumstances are imperfect?

Digging Deeper & Taking Action

Key Gospel Words in Philippians 1:12-18

Word	Meaning for Today
Advance	To make progress; to move forward for the better (v. 12).
Preach / Proclaim	To announce Christ publicly and make Him known (vv. 15, 17-18).
Defense	To give an answer for the gospel and stand for its truth (v. 16).
Rejoice	To be glad because Christ is being made known (v. 18).

Paul’s Chains and Gospel Advance

Paul knew opposition personally. Scripture records repeated imprisonment connected to his witness for Christ:

Imprisonment	Reference	Gospel Lesson
Philippi	Acts 16:19-40	Paul and Silas sang; the jailer believed; Christ was made known.
Jerusalem / Roman custody	Acts 21:27-36; 23:10-11	Paul was seized by a mob, protected by Rome, and strengthened by the Lord.
Caesarea	Acts 24:22-27	Paul remained confined for two years, yet continued testifying.
Rome	Acts 28:16, 30-31; Phil. 1:12-14	Under house arrest, Paul proclaimed the kingdom “with all boldness.”
Final Roman imprisonment	2 Tim. 1:8; 2:9; 4:6-18	Paul was chained like a criminal, but “the word of God is not bound.”

Historical Illustration: John Bunyan

- In 1660, Bunyan was imprisoned for preaching without official approval and refused to stop preaching.
- His prison cell became a pulpit: he wrote and ministered while confined.
- The Pilgrim’s Progress reminds us that hardship can become an avenue for gospel advance.

This Week: Share, Pray, Celebrate

Share	Pray	Celebrate
Matt. 4:19; 28:18-20; Acts 1:8 Name: _____	2 Cor. 10:5; Col. 1:9-14 Request: _____	Ps. 126:6; Luke 15:7, 10 Evidence of grace: _____

Closing Prayer: Lord, use my circumstances, my words, and my witness to make Christ known. Give me boldness, humility, and joy in the advance of the gospel. Amen.