

“Though in Chains”

Philippians 1:12-18

***What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me
– practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9)***

I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. (Philippians 1:12-13)

And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. (Philippians 1:14)

Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. (Philippians 1:15)

The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. (Philippians 1:16-17)

What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. (Philippians 1:18)

1. Paul chose to _____ his circumstances through the lens of God’s _____ and _____. (Romans 8:28, NIV, Philippians 1:12)

2. God used what most considered an _____ to accomplish _____ than even Paul had _____. (Philippians 1:13-14)

3. Paul didn’t allow himself to be _____ from _____ by worrying about the _____ of others.
(Philippians 1:15-18, I Peter 2:23, I Samuel 17:47, Philippians 4:22)

“Though in Chains”

Philippians 1:12-18

***What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me
– practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9)***

I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. (Philippians 1:12-13)

And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. (Philippians 1:14)

Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. (Philippians 1:15)

The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. (Philippians 1:16-17)

What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. (Philippians 1:18)

- 1. Paul chose to evaluate his circumstances through the lens of God’s work and His faithfulness. (Romans 8:28, NIV, Philippians 1:12)**
- 2. God used what most considered an obstacle to accomplish greater things than even Paul had envisioned. (Philippians 1:13-14)**
- 3. Paul didn’t allow himself to be sidetracked from his mission by worrying about the motives of others. (Philippians 1:15-18, I Peter 2:23, I Samuel 17:47, Philippians 4:22)**

1. Paul viewed his imprisonment through the lens of what God was doing rather than simply through what was happening to him. What circumstances in your life are easiest to view as obstacles, disappointments, or setbacks? How might your perspective change if you began asking, “*What might God be doing through this?*”
2. The sermon emphasized that we cannot control everything that happens, but we can choose the story we tell about what happens. What does that idea mean to you? Can you think of a situation where your interpretation of circumstances has affected your joy, faith, or response?
3. Paul discovered that God was using his imprisonment in ways he could not have anticipated — including encouraging other believers to become more courageous. When have you experienced God bringing something unexpected or meaningful out of a circumstance that initially seemed like a setback?
4. The sermon encourages us, when things don't make sense, to move from asking “How could you let this happen, God?” to asking “What is it that God might be doing through this?” What makes that shift difficult? What might it look like practically in the midst of a difficult season?
5. Paul knew that some people were preaching Christ with good motives, while others were motivated by envy, rivalry, or selfish ambition. Yet he refused to let their motives derail him from his mission. How do other people's attitudes, criticism, competition, or motives sometimes distract us from what God has called us to do?
6. Paul could rejoice that Christ was proclaimed despite the motives of others, because he trusted God and knew that God's mission did not depend entirely on him. What are some things you find yourself trying to control or “fix” that you may need to entrust more fully to God? What might that actually look like?
7. If you were to imitate Paul in the way he responded to hardship, uncertainty, and difficult people, what is one specific change you might make this week? How might that allow you to be more focused on God using you in that situation?