

Prison: Paul's Divine Appointment

Philippians 1:12-21

Paul writes from prison to a church he founded some 10 years earlier in Philippi. In fact He was thrown into jail during the process of preaching & starting the church back then. He points out the fact that God has a divine plan in whatever circumstance we find ourselves in because God uses them for His glory & our rejoicing 19 x's joy/rejoice

12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, 13 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, 14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

12) Paul is not a whiner—not a sympathy letter, *'please feel sorry for me'* He looks for God in every circumstance. His life *'poured out a drink offering'* for Christ—no time to feel sorry for himself. Prison, Paul saw as God's divine appointment & it became a place of ministry—*greater* opportunity for *progress* of the gospel *otherwise* he couldn't just walk into prison among the praetorian guard & preach, no prison ministry. God puts each of us in strategic places to be a witness. We all have a sphere of influence, prison or profession, jail or a job--me surfboards, Rick Irons 'Shout for Joy'.

Circumstances; Paul sees as divine appointments tho they seem bad, are turned to good for gospel sake—fighting the system *appealing* to Caesar, *supreme court* when politicians & those in authority use you for their agenda—following the law but not giving into corrupt leaders.

13) *'Well known'* Paul wasn't silent, shy or intimidated—Billy K evangelism team, train & preach on street – *Huntington beach guys*

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In God's sovereignty Paul preaches to those he'd never have access to except for circumstances he is in. Paul before Praetorian guard (*elite unit of Roman army serving as personal bodyguards & intelligence agents for Roman emperor Nero.*) and *everywhere else*--Paul being persecuted for following Christ and preaching the gospel and his story is getting out.

14) *'Most' not all*—Those preachers, preaching are not drawing back from what they hear is happening to me---to the contrary--they are more bold.

Confidence had come to the followers of Christ as they were seeing & hearing about Paul's situation—they became more outspoken in their witness for Christ. Wickedness of man draws out boldness of true believers. *Stars brightest when night darkest*

15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; 16 the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; 17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

15) *Some* in ministry preach from envy & strife, wanting to make a name for themselves--to outdo Paul's ministry. *NH -fax our office their Easter; Mens conference outside church invite to their church--aggressive - transfer growth—nervous breakdown rival leader. Eric G sign legal paper no church plant in Hawaii. David B and Jim*

There were those who wanted to outdo Paul, shine brighter, be more popular--out of envy they were striving in their work for the Lord...Strive to attain Strive to maintain Always looking over shoulder for who outdo you. Ministry out of jealousy create paranoia. *Shouldn't happen but it does.*

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16) *Good*, preach out of love for Lord & the people, who respect, honor Paul's ministry & calling. *Chuck*-- Devil-*diabolos* slanderer, false accuser; Satan-adversary, one who opposes, prince of demonic world *Danny*, *Bud*

Others are preaching w/ good motives out of love & a pure heart, knowing Paul's ministry is not from ego, fame or selfish motives but wanting the gospel to be preached & defended against false teachers & adversaries.

17) *Envy & strife* preachers have hearts rooted in selfish ambition, Ego, to build their own kingdom—'*He's too ambitious*'--motives not pure for K of G. Want to outdo Paul & cause him *distress*--Project on Paul their own weakness but he not like them – People will misunderstand you & your motives & reasons for doing what you are doing.

18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice.

Good or bad motive is not so much Paul's concern but he rejoices the gospel is being preached. No matter who & what the intent Paul rejoices that Christ is preached, God will deal w/ wrong attitudes & bad motives. But sad when Body of Christ is divided.

19 For I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Paul has faith that in whatever circumstances God brings his way, all will turn out for the good & Gods glory. His *deliverance*-two roads before him- *life & death*, both are seen as God's *deliverance* where Christ is glorified in *Paul's body*.

4

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Life where Paul temporarily continues to preach & minister to the church or death where eternally he will be w/ the Lord. Which Paul says is very much better. *'For to me to live is Christ & to die is gain.'*

A Bank competitor moved to a new location. To show the spirit of good will a rival bank sent a flower arrangement w/ a card. At the florist the cards got mixed up. The card & flowers that went to the bank read *'With our deepest sympathy'*. The florist was sorry & apologized. But then horrified upon realizing the flowers w/ card sent to the funeral home of the deceased read *'Congratulations on your new location'*.

Paul doesn't know if he will live or die when he appears before Caesar Nero. But he tells the church *I can't loose no matter how it turns out. To live on will be fruitful labor....to die I'll move to a new & better location.*