

**New Hope Missionary Baptist Church - Southfield, Michigan**  
**Dr. Aaron L. Chapman, Pastor**  
**#hope in the field**

**Bible Study Series: Philippians**  
**Unified Hope: Loving Christ as we Love One Another**

**“Paul’s Chains Advance the Gospel” - Philippians 1:12-30**

**Reflection Questions**

A. If there was ever a law passed that prohibited the practice of the Christian faith in America, would you be indicted and arrested for breaking such a law?

---

---

---

B. If you were arrested for practicing Christianity, what would you do to encourage others in the faith while incarcerated?

---

---

---

**Key Terms:**

- Believers
- Christ
- Circumstances
- Confinement
- Contention
- Courage
- Death
- Faith
- Gospel
- Holy Spirit

- Imprisonment
- Jesus
- Joy
- Life
- Motives
- Prayer
- Praetorian guard
- Preach

- Pretense
- Proclaim
- Reputation
- Salvation
- Selfish Ambition
- Strife
- Suffering
- Truth

## **Introduction**

Paul explained to the Philippians that they should not despair over his imprisonment because what had happened to him was helping to spread the gospel. Paul's example encouraged many believers to willingly take a stand for Christ and preach the Good News regardless of the consequences. Paul himself never stopped preaching, even in his confinement. The soldiers guarding Paul heard the gospel and they learned that he was in prison not for being a criminal, but for being a Christian.

## **Important Emphasis**

**In Philippians he identifies himself simply as a servant (Phil.1:1). Indeed the very concept of apostleship, though implicit in his authoritative instructions.**

**Makes impassioned plea for Christian unity. Paul writes while a prisoner in Roman custody ( 1:7, 13-17; 4:22)**

**The truth is that the Christians in this city were going through severe crisis – fear, division, discontent- and the apostle does not hesitate to rebuke them even while encourages them.**

**Paul's indirect uses of the OT in this letter demonstrate clearly that even when the apostle does not give a formal quotation. Paul statement what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance... which reproduces Job 13:16 LXX verbatim.**

**The apostle specifically ties in his adversity with his deliverance: it is not merely that he will be delivered, but that his adversity will result in his deliverance.**

## **Lesson Outline**

- I. Paul Daringly Preached Christ (1:12-14)
- II. Paul Deliberately Preached Christ (1:15-19)
- III. Paul Dauntlessly Preached Christ (1:20-26)
- IV. Paul Decidedly Preached Christ (1:27-30)

## Exploring the Text

### I. Paul Daringly Preached Christ (1:12-14)

*12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, 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 praetorian guard and to everyone else, 14 and that most of the brothers and sisters, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. (NASB)*

Paul was **undeterred** in preaching Christ. (1:12)

The Philippians were concerned for Paul's well-being (expressed by their financial gift), but they were also concerned that Paul's imprisonment had slowed down the spread of the gospel. By the time of this writing, Paul had been in prison for about two years. However, Paul came to understand, and he wanted the Philippians to know beyond any doubt, that everything that had happened had actually helped to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_. Although one of Christianity's most tireless missionaries had been imprisoned, God's work could not be \_\_\_\_\_.

Paul was **unfettered** in preaching Christ. (1:13)

Paul's long arrest had allowed him to share the gospel with the very soldiers who guarded him. As a result, all the soldiers in the palace guard (the elite troops housed in the emperor's palace) and everyone else knew that Paul was in chains only because of his \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ and teaching of the Good News, not for being a criminal.

Paul's example, fervent love for Christ, and manner of life, even in prison, had allowed others to see the gospel in a whole new light. The custom of the time was for a prisoner to be guarded by a soldier who would be replaced every four hours. These soldiers certainly heard Paul's words to those who visited, as well as his message spoken to them personally. Paul was confident that the message of the gospel was \_\_\_\_\_ the Roman army and the palace itself.

Paul and other true believers were **unshakable** in preaching Christ. (1:14)

Not only was the gospel being spread by Paul through his contacts in prison, but his efforts were being multiplied outside the prison. Paul's faith, confidence, and patience in spite of his imprisonment helped his fellow believers gain confidence. Whatever the reason for their lack of confidence before—whether they had been afraid to speak up, whether they left all the mission work to Paul because they

lacked his boldness, or whether they wondered if faith in God was worth the price—they saw Paul's faith and it \_\_\_\_\_ their own.

The Philippian believers became more \_\_\_\_\_ in telling others about Christ. With more and more believers gaining boldness in telling the gospel of Jesus Christ, more and more people heard the message and had the opportunity to accept it. This gave Paul \_\_\_\_\_. He passed this good news on to his friends in Philippi, that they might know how God was working through his difficult situation.

### Understanding the Text

1. How was Paul's ministry affected by his bondage?

---

---

2. Why was Paul being talked about?

---

---

3. How did Paul's incarceration affect the testimony of others?

---

---

### Exploring the Text

II. Paul Deliberately Preached Christ (1:15-19)

*15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from goodwill; 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 that they are causing me distress in my imprisonment. 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice. But not only that, I also will rejoice, 19 for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,... (NASB)*

Paul had been made aware that some of the brothers and sisters who had been newly emboldened to speak about Christ were doing so out of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. But others were preaching Christ with \_\_\_\_\_ or goodwill. They wanted to help others to embrace the Christian faith and they wanted to glorify God. This comment by Paul provides an

interesting look into people's motives. All of those who preached Christ were sincere believers—they had the right doctrine and they acted upon it by sharing it with others. While the end result might be the same (people hearing the Good News), some actually had \_\_\_\_\_ motives in their preaching.

Now that the great missionary Paul had been virtually silenced in prison, some of these brothers were hoping to make a name for themselves in the vacuum that Paul left. Perhaps they hoped for great notoriety, trying to turn people's eyes away from Paul and toward themselves. These people had no personal love for Paul. They even hoped that their planting of churches and gaining converts would upset Paul and make his imprisonment even more frustrating.

Those who preached Christ “with pure motives” (1:15) did so because of their love for Paul. They knew Paul was in prison, not because of any criminal act, but because the Lord brought him there to \_\_\_\_\_ the Good News. Paul had landed in prison because of his devotion to Christ and his zeal to spread the gospel. Yet his fellow believers in Rome, some of whom may have been his spiritual children, fearlessly picked up where he left off, continuing and expanding his ministry.

Those who were preaching Christ “out of jealousy and rivalry” (1:15) were doing so because of their own \_\_\_\_\_, making their motives less than pure. These preachers were not so much interested in their message as they were in their reputation. Apparently their doctrine was sound—these were not false teachers—Paul never tolerated any kind of false teaching (see 2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 1:6-9). The error was in \_\_\_\_\_, not in content.

These self-seeking opportunists hoped that Paul would be angered at the notoriety of new and powerful preachers who took his place while he was in prison. These men did not understand Paul's sincere love for God and his single-minded focus on spreading the gospel.

Paul \_\_\_\_\_ that whether or not their motives were pure . . . the message about Christ was being preached. Some Christians serve for the wrong reasons. Paul wouldn't condone, nor does God excuse, their motives, but we should be glad if God uses their message, regardless of their motives. Paul had no concern for his own reputation or success; he had \_\_\_\_\_ his life to glorifying God. He understood that God was being glorified even as he sat in chains; thus, Paul could rejoice. Paul had been able to rejoice during his two years in prison, could rejoice that good results could come from preachers with bad motives, and would continue

to rejoice no matter how long he would remain in prison or how long he would live.

Paul knew that all that had happened (resulting in his imprisonment, would end in his \_\_\_\_\_). Paul depended upon the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, who makes Christ's presence real in true believers. The prayers of the church and the support of the Holy Spirit sustained Paul through a difficult trial and, in the end, no matter what the outcome, Paul would ultimately be "\_\_\_\_\_."

### Understanding the Text

4. Why did some people preach Christ out of envy and strife?

---

---

5. Why did some people preach Christ out of love?

---

---

6. What made Paul rejoice?

---

---

7. Why did Paul expect to be delivered from his predicament?

---

---

### Exploring the Text

III. Paul **Dauntlessly** Preached Christ (1:20-26)

*20 ...according to my eager expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will 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. 22 But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. 23 But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; 24 yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sakes. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that your pride in Christ Jesus may be abundant because of me by my coming to you again. (NASB)*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are linked together. Paul looked forward to the final fulfillment. He was not concerned about the verdict of his trial, but for the testimony he would leave. Paul hoped he would never do anything that would cause him shame. He was not worried about his own humiliation, but he prayed for \_\_\_\_\_ to be bold for Christ and to always honor Christ. When standing trial, Paul wanted to speak God's truth courageously and not be timid or ashamed. The words, whether I live or I die, reveal that Paul was uncertain about the outcome of his trial. He faced the possibility of execution.

Paul poured out his heart to his friends in Philippi. If the verdict should go for Paul and he should be released, that would mean more \_\_\_\_\_ service for Christ—further missionary travels, more churches planted, more converts, the strengthening of fellow believers. Certainly, that would be a happy result. Yet if the decision to either live or die were up to him, he wouldn't know which is better. How many of us are so dedicated to God that if the choice were given, we would choose to be in God's presence?

Paul was prepared and ready to die at any moment for his faith, and he actually looked forward to death because of the certainty of being with the Lord forever. But he knew that his personal desires had to be \_\_\_\_\_ to God's will. Paul felt that his ministry on earth was not yet complete and that he needed to live to help the churches grow and solidify. Paul placed his fellow believers' needs above his own desires.

### **Understanding the Test**

8. What did Paul want to do when he stood trial?

---

---

9. What would it mean if Paul were to be released?

---

---

10. Why did Paul feel that he needed to live?

---

---

## Exploring the Text

### IV. Paul **Decidedly** Preached Christ (1:27-30)

*27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one [n]mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 28 and in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and this too, from God. 29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer on His behalf, 30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me. (NASB)*

Paul hoped to return to the Philippian church, if he didn't, he would inevitably hear about the believers there, and he wanted to hear that they were standing side by side. The Holy Spirit unites Christians into one spiritual group. If they can stand side by side in the Spirit, they can \_\_\_\_\_ small differences among individual members and work forcefully toward a common goal—to withstand external persecution.

Paul also wanted to hear that the believers were fighting together for the \_\_\_\_\_. Like athletes on a team, they were to work together with one mind focused on one goal—to help advance the faith that comes through the preaching of the gospel. In order to face opposition, they needed to be unhindered by internal dissension, jealousies, and rivalries.

Paul and the Philippians faced the same great struggle—suffering for spreading the gospel. The Philippian believers had encouraged Paul through his suffering; Paul wanted to encourage them in the same manner. Paul had faced that struggle in Philippi on his first visit there (Acts 16:12, 19; 1 Thessalonians 2:2), and he still faced it in his imprisonment.

Like the Philippians, we are in conflict with anyone who would discredit the saving message of Christ. All true believers are in this fight together, uniting against the same enemy for a common cause—deciding to proclaim the Good News!



**Understanding the Text**

11. What did Paul want to hear about the Philippian believers?

---

---

12. What was the one goal that Paul desired for the Philippian believers?

---

---

13. In order to face opposition, by what did the Philippian believers need to be unhindered?

---

---

14. All true believers are in a fight uniting together against what common cause?

---

---

**Life Application**

- Are you a “fearless” Christian ready to defend the faith?
- If yes, how do you show it?
- If no, what are you willing to do to become a “fearless” Christian?

---

---

---

---

[Resources: Life Application New Testament Commentary, Barnes Commentary, Adult LessonMaker Question Series (Logos/WordSearch)]