

Finding Joy

A study of Paul's Letter to the Philippians

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2- Finding Joy over the Spread of the Gospel.....Philippians 1:12-18

Php 1:12-18 *But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; 13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; 14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. 15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. 18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*

What would you be willing to give for the propagation of the gospel? If you knew by giving your life, or that if events unfolded that led to your death, the gospel would be preached to the nation for say one hour, one day or a week would you be excited about being used this way by the Lord?

I often think of the events that took place in December of 2006. On Mount Hood three experienced climbers, Kelly James, James "Mikko" Cooke and Brian Hall were lost and a massive search and rescue effort was launched. During the following couple of weeks the drama unfolded. There was hope, hope dashed, bad weather, a cell phone call to Karen James by her husband. This last call would ultimately lead to them locating his body in a snow cave a week after the drama began. The other two have never been found.

The nation watched, captivated by the drama unfolding. The families came together and spoke through their pastor. One theme that constantly was brought out during this week or so was the fact that these men were believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and that the family, while holding out hope of rescue, also knew they would meet them again in heaven, based on their faith in Christ. I was amazed during this how the big new channels would

cut to the news conferences repeatedly in which the gospel was presented to the world by the spokespersons of the families.

This has caused me to think a lot about what I would give for the gospel to be preached in such an unordinary way to the world. If these men were aware of this being the result of their situation, would they have willingly entered into the same situation knowing the outcome? Another question that rises is, "is it too much for God to ask someone to suffer for the gospel?"

I- Advancement of the Gospel:

Php 1:12 *But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel...*

What were some of the things that had happened to Paul? I am glad you asked. We have his personal testimony of the suffering he did for the gospel in **2 Corinthians 11:23-27** *NASB Are they [Paul called them false apostles] servants of Christ?--I speak as if insane--I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. 24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was*

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shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. 26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; 27 I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

Well I guess that answers the question of God asking us to suffer for the gospel. The Philippians were well aware of the suffering the Apostle endured. Paul tells them not to worry because God had used it to advance the gospel cause. The word translated furtherance in KJV is translated in other bibles as advancement, progress, helped, served among others. The idea is that the gospel spread more because of Paul's suffering.

II- Gospel in the Palace:

The Holy Spirit had told Paul that he was going to Rome. *Act 23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.* He was not told how he would get there. He went as a prisoner of Rome because he appealed to Caesar. *Acts 25:11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.*

When Paul arrived in Rome he was not kept with the other prisoners but was kept chained to a soldier.

Php 1:13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places... The gospel was preached and taught in the presence of these guards of Caesar. The

Jewish leaders came and heard what he had to say as well. The Gospel went into areas that never would have been penetrated if not for the fact that Paul was a prisoner. God opened the door behind the walls of prison. *Acts 28:30* tells us that Paul would spend two years under house arrest preaching and teaching.

III- Backfires in Boldness:

Php 1:14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

The Message translates *Phil 1:12 I want to report to you, friends, that my imprisonment here has had the opposite of its intended effect. Instead of being squelched, the Message has actually prospered.*

The early church prospered in spite of the persecution. The more the persecution the stronger the witness and the resolved they became. Satan would like to have silenced the witness and killed the church before it got going but the more he fought against it the stronger it became. *Acts 5* records when Peter and the others were persecuted and forbidden to preach about Jesus. They were called before the council and put in prison. The angel of the Lord released them. The council then said in *Acts 5:40-41 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.* Still the gospel spread.

Paul is saying to the Philippians that men have been emboldened, encouraged and heartened by his suffering. They saw what he endured and were willing to suffer as well.

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Again the question, what are we willing to endure for the gospel.

IV- Motivation for Preaching Christ:

What motivates someone to teach and preach? Some men have preached a perversion of the gospel because of various reasons. For instance in the modern era a man named Charles Taz Russell taught a gospel without Christ being divine and hell being omitted.

“C. T. Russell...spent most of his early years in Pittsburgh and Allegheny, Pennsylvania... At an early age he rejected the doctrine of eternal torment, probably because of the severe indoctrination he had received as a Congregationalist, and as a result of this act entered upon a long and varied career of denunciation aimed at “Organized Religions.” (*The Kingdom of the Cults (Revised)* Copyright © 1965, 1977, 1985, 1997 The Estate of Walter Martin. Electronic Edition STEP Files Copyright © 1997, Parsons Technology, Inc., PO Box 100, Hiawatha, Iowa.)

Notice the reasons Paul said the gospel was being preached in **Php 1:15 Some indeed preach Christ even of (1) envy and strife; and some also of (2) good will: 16 The one preach Christ of (3) contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 17 But the other of (4) love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.**

Some were preaching Christ for the wrong reason. Some were preaching Christ for the right reason. Some were teaching other versions of the gospel. Remember what Paul said to the Galatians churches. **Gal 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.**

The ones who were preaching for the wrong reasons were attempting to bring Paul down a notch so to speak. Paul had trouble with the group known as the Judaizers, those who claimed you had to convert to Judaism in order to be saved, his entire ministry. They questioned his authority and his apostleship while trying to bring others under bondage of the law.

Those who preached the gospel from love knew Paul was set to defend the gospel of grace and grace alone even with his life.

V-Finding Joy Over the Spread of the Gospel:

Php 1:18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

Any exposure to the gospel for whatever reason is better than none. Even if the Word of God is only reach. Paul found joy in the fact that the gospel was being spread, not always ideally. AT Roberson wrote, “Paul sees clearly through the pious pretence of these Judaizers and rejoices that people get some knowledge of Christ. Some Christ is better than no Christ.”

Beloved, we can rejoice and find joy in the spread of the gospel. We can rejoice that men and women have been willing to pay the price, however great the price, that the gospel would be preached and the good news of Christ would be taught.

I am reminded what God said about His word. **Isa 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.**

Beloved let us rejoice in the spread of the gospel.....and again I say rejoice. **Phil 4:4**