



"A Christian Perspective For Life" (Part 1) (Philippians 1:1-14)

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Intro: First church established in Europe; No rebukes in this letter; No doctrinal discussions; Very personal letter; One of the “prison epistles” (others are Ephesians, Colossians, & Philemon); Paul wrote while under house arrest, most likely from Rome. Summarize Acts 16:13-40; Lydia, slave girl, Philippian jailer...

I. PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THIS CHURCH (vv.9-11)

II. PAUL & THIS CHURCH'S PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL (vv.3-6)

A. Through Prayer

B. Through Giving \$

* Although poor, this church was among those who gave to help the poor saints in Jerusalem (II Cor.8:1-5). They more than once sent financial gifts to Paul (Phil.4:16). They had recently sent a financial gift through one of their own, a man named Epaphroditus (Phil.4:18).

* Your best investment in life is an investment in the ministry of the gospel.

* Thank you for your investment in this ministry! Thanks for your continued giving to Phase III. We are partners...

III. PAUL'S PERSPECTIVE CONCERNING HIS CHAINS (vv.13-14)

A. We see Paul's perspective in life from verse 12 to the end of the chapter, and in two weeks we will look at more particulars of his perspective. But for today, we focus on one that is most important for us to understand.

B. The Purpose Behind Paul's Chains

1. To encourage other Christians to be courageous and fearless

2. To advance the gospel

* v.13 - The praetorian guard was a band of 10,000 hand picked troops. They were bad dudes! Paul was chained to one of these Roman soldiers pretty much around the clock. The shifts changed every six hours, which meant Paul could witness to at least four of them one on one every day! (A captive audience indeed). Through being a prisoner, Paul had the privilege of personally sharing the gospel with the finest regiment in the Roman army! Read Phil.4:21-22.

* Acts 9: 15 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before *the Gentiles* and *their kings* and before *the people of Israel*. 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

* Acts 13-20, Cyprus, Pisisian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi.

* Acts 24ff. Governor Felix, Festus, Herod, & then Caesar himself.

* Note: Acts 23:11-24

C. Examples Of God Furthering His Cause & Advancing His Kingdom Through Painful & Perplexing Circumstances.

1. Jail/prison

* Paul

- Stood before Herod, Felix, even Caesar himself, and saw people saved during the entire journey!

* Paul & Silas (Philippians jailor & his family),

* Joseph

- Gen.45: 7 But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8 "So then, *it was not you who sent me here, but God*. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.

2. A fiery furnace (Daniel 3, note vv.28-29)

* Hananiah, Azariah, Mischael

3. A lion's den (Daniel 6, note vv.25-27)

4. Physical illness

* At six weeks of age, Fanny Crosby was blinded, but even as a youngster she determined not to be confined by the chains of blindness. Over time, she became a mighty force for the kingdom of God through her hymns and gospel songs.

* A diving accident in 1967 left Joni Eareckson Tada a quadriplegic in a wheelchair. Today, she is an internationally known mouth artist, a talented vocalist, a radio host, an author of 17 books

* Gal.4: 13 As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you.

5. A closed door

* Taking the gospel to Philippi had not been Paul's idea (See Acts 16:6-12).

6. An "accident"

* See Acts 27-28a

7. Persecution

* King Charles chased the Puritans out of England, but they landed at Plymouth Rock and founded the greatest Christian commonwealth across the Atlantic!

* Acts 8:1 And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. 2 Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. 3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison. 4 ***Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.***

8. Death

* Stephen (Acts 8:1; 26:14)

* Lazarus

- John 11: 41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

CONCLUSION

* Some of us need a spiritual perspective of the purpose behind our circumstances...

* God is working out perplexing, painful circumstances for our good, His glory, and the cause of the kingdom.