JOY IN SPITE OF PEOPLE – Philippians 1:15-18

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CAPITOL COMMISSION

Colorado State Ministry

Paul's life was continually filled with harsh troubles and difficult circumstances and yet he remains a model for us of joy and contentment. Why? His peace was not based on external comforts or freedoms. Rather, his trust was rooted in Jesus Christ and the furtherance of the gospel. His delight and joy was in the fact that the gospel of Jesus Christ was proclaimed. Is that our perspective? Is that our pursuit? Paul had joy in spite of circumstances. But, what about people? People who falsely accused or maligned his ministry? This can be difficult, and what is our response to be? Let's see what Paul says as we continue on in our study.

This week's study will deal with the people that may falsely accuse us in our work, in our ministry. It can be one of the most discouraging experiences for a believer, especially if they are fellow co-workers. We may expect to be accused falsely by unbelievers but not those within the body of Christ. The pain can run deep when our work is misrepresented and unjustly criticized by others. In these next verses of Philippians, we will study Paul's reaction to such people and their slander and see what we can learn and apply to our life. Can we still have joy in spite of people??

I. JOY IN SPITE OF PEOPLE

"Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: the former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice." Philippians 1:15-18

A. THE GOSPEL FURTHERED ENVEY/STRIFE/GOODWILL

"Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill…" Philippians 1:15

In these verses, Paul refers to the motive people have for preaching the gospel. Some people preached the gospel accurately in what they said, but with the wrong motive. And some preached the gospel with the motive of pleasing God.

1. GOSPEL PREACHED FROM ENVY

"Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife…"Philippians 1:15a

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"envy," Greek *"phthonoa,"* meaning one's pain felt at the sight of another's excellence of happiness.

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Some were preaching the gospel from "envy and strife". It wasn't what they said that was wrong, but why they said it. People were actually jealous of Paul's ministry to the point of envy and thus their motive for preaching the gospel was not to glorify God, but hurt Paul.

Paul was gifted, blessed by God and a vessel chosen by God to preach the gospel. (Acts 9:15) Many loved Paul and appreciated his sacrificial ministry on their behalf. The Philippians were such people. But some were jealous of Paul and envious of his ministry. And they saw Paul's imprisonment as a just reward instead of suffering for the gospel's sake.

2. GOSPEL PREACHED FROM STRIFE

"Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife…" Philippians 1:15a

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"strife," Greek *"eris,"* referring to continual contention, hostility and conflict, to wrangle, rivalry.

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These jealous and contentious individuals were Paul's critics. Obviously, they did preach the gospel, but with a sinful motive of envy and strife. They were envious of Paul's apostolic authority and his godly example. They were hostile towards Paul and they were secretly pleased that Paul was in prison for defending the gospel of Jesus Christ. Talk about hostility and contention! That's hard to swallow, but we will look at Paul's view towards these folks.

3. GOSPEL PREACHED FROM GOODWILL

"Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill…" Philippians 1:15

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"goodwill," Greek *"eudokia,"* referring to motive, desiring what is best for another.

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Paul said that some preached the gospel out of a motivation to please God, with a godly view and purpose in mind and not selfish. These preachers of the truth of God's Word were supporters of Paul and referred to in Philippians 1:14 as *"more bold to speak the word without fear"* because of Paul's chains. They preached the salvation message so others might be saved.

B. THE GOSPEL FURTHERED IN SPITE OF MOTIVE

"the former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel." Philippians 1:16-17

1. THE GOSPEL PREACHED WITH SELFISH MOTIVES

"selfish ambition" Greek word, *"eritheia"* meaning someone who will work for hire for selfish reasons, who seeks their own, one who is susceptible of being bribed or corrupted.

In Philippians 1:16, Paul states that the reason the preachers preach from envy and strife is for selfish ambition. This word is also use in Romans 2:8 to speak of *"those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth."* This gives insight into what Paul is trying to say. These were people who were secretly pleased that Paul was in prison for doing what was right in defending the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now they would be able to steal away the people's affections and gain for themselves a better reputation by blasting Paul in prison, *"supposing to add affliction to my chains…"* This is truly a tragedy. Paul is in prison for the sake of Christ and these men are seeking their own selfish aims. They used the occasion of Paul's jail confinement to promote themselves. Even the Praetorian guards knew better than these believers with evil motives, for they believed Paul's message knowing him to be a man who was selfless.

Paul's only passion was for the cause of Christ. Often the same is true today. Christians who are willing to speak the truth and have no selfish ambitions are the ones who are maligned, misunderstood and paraded around as heretics. Yet, they are the ones unwilling to compromise the gospel even for the sake of their own comfort. They are motivated by Christ and do not seek their own gain

Matthew Henry's Commentary on Philippians says, *"It is sad that there should be men who profess the gospel, especially who preach it, who are governed by such principles as these, who should preach Christ in spite to Paul, and to increase the affliction of his bonds."*

2. THE GOSPEL PREACHED WITH *SELFLESS* MOTIVES

Those who preached Jesus Christ out of goodwill, desiring what was best for others, joined Paul in the furtherance of the gospel. That was genuine *"agape"* love. It was these who brought Paul much joy and comfort. They preached the truth because they knew it was what the people needed to hear, not necessarily what the people wanted to hear. That's love and through Paul's chains, they gained boldness and preached the Word without fear. (Philippians 1:14) The believers, who preached with divine love, honored God and supported Paul in his affliction.

"love" Greek word, "agape" meaning selfless, unconditional, sacrificial love for another. Giving the one loved what they need not what they want.

C. THE GOSPEL FURTHERED, PAUL'S PASSION

"What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice." Philippians 1:18

"pretense" Greek word, "prophasis" meaning a cloke, signifies the assuming of something to disguise one's real motive.

Paul begins this verse with *"What then?"* It is another way of saying, *"With all of that, here is the real issue."* This is what is most important. Paul is saying not to be focused on his circumstances, chains, false friends, critics or slanderers. Don't be focused even on the impure motives that others may have for the gospel. It is God's job to judge the principles men act upon and it is out of our hands. Paul shows the opposite of bitterness in this verse. We might think Paul has the right to be angry, but he's not.

Paul's sole passion was that Christ was exalted and the gospel preached. Paul states the offenses knowing we will have to deal with them, but not be *affected* by them. While God does not honor those who preach the truth out of pretense, He honors the message. Therefore, Paul could rejoice. Paul's whole motivation was for the furtherance of the gospel and he reminds the Philippians of what is most important. Paul grasped the greater issue, *"Christ is preached"*. Our passion must be that Christ is exalted and the gospel preached. We must leave the rest up to our sovereign God. Paul did and he rejoiced!!

Let us close by reading 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bible Studies

- ***Legislators, Governor & Spouses:*** Tuesday, 7:15 AM, Capitol Basement, Room 0109, Breakfast Served
- ***Staff, Lobbyists, Journalists & Sergeants:*** Tuesdays at Noon, SSB, 1525 Sherman, RM #603, Across Colfax from Capitol