

The Furtherance of the Gospel *Philippians 1:9-14*

Good morning.

Forrest McCann wrote about the origins of the old Hymn, "*It Is Well With My Soul*", which was written by Horatio Spafford.

Horatio Spafford went through several trials and losses during a very specific period of his life.

First, the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 ruined him financially because as a successful lawyer, he had invested in a lot of property in Chicago that was damaged by the great fire.

Then he lost more money during the economic downturn of 1873. He then planned to travel to England with his family to help with D.L. Moody's evangelistic campaigns.

But Horatio Spafford sent the family ahead, while he stayed behind, to take care of some business.

While crossing the ocean, the ship the family was on sank, after a collision with a sea vessel, and all four of Spafford's daughters died. Spafford's wife Anna, sent him a telegram, "*Saved alone*".

He traveled to meet his grieving wife, and there he wrote that Hymn as his ship passed near where his daughters had died. In this midst of tragedy, a Hymn that encouraged many was born.

Please open your Bibles to *Philippians 1*, as we continue in our verse-by-verse study of Paul's Epistle to the Church at Philippi.

Last time, we studied where Paul expressed his thankfulness for the Philippian saints' fellowship with him and their fellowship with the work of the Gospel.

While Paul was under house arrest waiting to be executed, he was focused on others and not himself.

As Paul remembered all that the Philippian Christians had done for him, he was very thankful to the Lord who had worked through them. *“I thank God upon every remembrance of you.”*

Paul referenced his feelings of joy, even though he was awaiting his execution.

The Philippians *“partnered”* with Paul to spread the Gospel through prayer, their friendship, and their financial support.

Then we learned how Jesus finishes what He starts. Paul was confident that the grace of God could finish the *good work* Jesus began through these believers.

It amazes me how the Lord has called His followers into a **partnership** with Him.

We also learned Paul was Chained for the sake of the Gospel.

We ended by saying, *“From grateful hearts, the redeemed ones of the Lord should serve the Lord with our time, talents, and treasures as we partner in the ministry of the Gospel.”*

Today, as Paul continues in his prayer for the Philippians, he will communicate that the Gospel being shared, is more important than the trials of this life.

I. Knowledge and discernment.

Read *Philippians 1:9*

The Beatles have a famous song, “*All You Need Is Love.*”

Part of the lyrics read, “*Nothing you can know that isn't known (love). Nothing you can see that isn't shown (love).*”

There's nowhere you can be that isn't where you're meant to be, it's easy, all you need is love.

Today, some people use their own explanation for the word *love*, even within their parenting styles. Unfortunately, the word *love* has been watered down by some, with its current meaning.

The Apostle Paul was not telling the *Philippians* to have a blind *love* but rather a *love* based upon the standards of God.

The word Paul used here in *Philippians 1:9* for *love* is the word *agape*, which is charity, an unconditional, or a perfect *love* that expects nothing in return.

Paul prayed that the Philippians would mature, and their maturity would be evident, demonstrated through their *love*, growing more and more through *knowledge* and *discernment*.

Let’s find out what Paul was referring to here in this verse.

The word **knowledge** means *precise and correct knowledge and it is used in the New Testament for the **knowledge** of things ethical and **divine**. (Strong's G1922 – epignōsis)*

According to Christianity.com, “*In the Bible, “knowledge” refers to examples, truths, and commands that God wants us to know, believe, and heed.*”

The Lord gives His followers **knowledge** as a gift, and He expects us to live according to the **knowledge** He has given us.

The Lord’s **knowledge** comes with godly wisdom as well.

James said in **James 1:5** *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. NKJV*

It has been said that **knowledge** is knowing that a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is knowing not to put it in a fruit salad.

Paul instructed his protégé Timothy about godly knowledge.

1 Timothy 6:20 *O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge —*

1 Timothy 6:21 *by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. NKJV*

How does a Christian determine what godly knowledge is?

Discernment, which is speaking of moral **discernment** in ethical matters. “*To distinguish, to separate, to examine.*”

Discernment is being able to “distinguish the things that differ.”

According to gotquestions.org, “*A discerning person will acknowledge the worth of God’s Word*”.

So, a discerning Christian realizes where ungodly things conflict with the Word of God.

Proverbs 8:8 All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; nothing crooked or perverse is in them.

Proverbs 8:9 They are all plain to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge. NKJV.

II. Sincerity without offense.

Read ***Philippians 1:10-11***

Paul said biblical *love*, is a *love* that has ***knowledge and all discernment***, so it can ***approve of the things that are excellent***.

Excellent means more valuable or different than.

Notice Paul said ***that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.***

You hear people using *love* as an excuse not to speak the truth so we will not offend those who disagree with the Bible.

Paul says I am praying for you to have ***knowledge and all discernment***, to ***approve of the things that are excellent*** so ***that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.***

Warren Wiersbe said, “*Christian love is not blind! The heart and mind work together so that we have discerning love and loving discernment.*”

“*Paul wanted his friends to grow in discernment, in being able to “distinguish the things that differ.” The ability to distinguish is a mark of maturity.*” (Warren Wiersbe)

Then Paul said, “*being filled with the fruits of righteousness.*”

When we speak about the *fruits of righteousness* of course we need to mention the Fruit of the Spirit found in *Galatians*.

Galatians 5:22 the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Galatians 5:23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Galatians 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. NKJV

And we also know that we cannot produce this fruit on our own.

John 15:5 He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. NKJV

Adam Clarke said, “*Every genuine follower of God has His glory in view by all that he does, says, or intends. He loves to glorify God...*”

“And he glorifies Him by showing forth in his conversion the glorious working of the glorious power of the Lord.”

III. Paul’s arrest furthered the Gospel.

Read *Philippians 1:12*

There is aberrant teaching within Christian circles that tells people that suffering and trials, come from either a lack of faith or from unrepented sin within the life of a believer.

These verses from the Apostle Paul refute that kind of thinking.

There is the age-old question of *“Why do bad things happen to good people?”*

First, as Paul said in *Romans 7:18, For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. NKJV*

Second of all, being obedient to the Lord and answering His call for your life doesn’t mean life will always be easy.

We live in a fallen world, so bad things happen because sin entered the world. The better question to ask is, *why does God allow any good things to happen in the world?*

The third reason for bad things is that the Lord uses all things in the life of His believers to His glory and for our good.

As we obediently follow Jesus’ will for our life, we realize He has a plan, even during the trials and desert moments of life.

Why does Jesus allow His followers to go through trials?

- The Lord allows trials in our lives to **mature** us spiritually.

You can know all scriptures and promises of God, but they are not fully known by us until, we have to trust and rely on them.

The Lord knows, before the trial occurs, whether or not our faith will stand but, He also knows we need to be reassured at times.

Trials can cause us to rely on Him and that will cause maturity.

- The Lord allows trials in our lives to **strengthen** us.

All throughout Church history, the church was only on fire when it was facing adversity. Without adversity in the Church, the Church was apathetic.

Human nature reverts back to reliance upon self until something that is too big for us to handle occurs.

Once something happens that we cannot handle, we have to rely on the Lord again as He strengthens us.

- The Lord allows trials in our lives to **prove** Himself faithful.

If we never went through trials, we would never find out that His promises are true. And then on the other side of trials, we realize what Paul said was true in ***Romans 8:28***.

Romans 8:28 we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. NKJV

God is in control and there are no accidents. He is faithful.

- The Lord's purpose for us during trials is to **conform** us into the image of Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. NKJV

We look at the here and now, but the Lord sees the big picture.

Trials and suffering can be used by God to prepare us for a special task. God may be getting you ready for something.

That was the case with Joseph as the Lord was preparing him to be a great world leader. At the end of ***Genesis***, his brothers were sure he was going to kill them for all the things they did to him.

Genesis 50:19 Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?"

Genesis 50:20 But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. NKJV

The Lord knows every tear we cry and will never waste one moment of trial or suffering His Children experience.

Part of trusting the Lord is trusting Him during the trials and suffering in our lives. Sometimes the Lord removes the trial from our lives, but sometimes He allows them to teach us.

God uses these experiences in life to transform us. Even Jesus suffering served the Father's purposes.

Hebrews 5:8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Hebrews 5:9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, NKJV

Re-read ***Philippians 1:12***

The Philippians were probably wondering why the Lord allowed Paul to be imprisoned and eventually executed so, Paul wanted them to know that God's blessing was still with him.

Paul was not out of the will of God, rather he was fulfilling God's sovereign will while in prison. He was not out of the will of God, and God's work still continued in Paul during the trials.

When Paul was in Philippi in ***Acts 16***, the Holy Spirit broke him out of prison so, God is able. While in jail in ***Philippians 1***, the Lord had Paul write ***Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians.***

IV. Jailhouse Gospel.

Read ***Philippians 1:13-14***

To better understand what was happening, we need to review how Paul ended up under arrest in the beginning.

Paul wanted to head to Jerusalem to visit the Christians there but also, to deliver a **financial** gift that different churches had collected for the church in Jerusalem.

Once Paul was in Jerusalem he went into the Temple, where people from Asia Minor recognized him and accused him of opposing Judaism, causing division, and breaking Jewish Law.

A riot broke out in the Temple and the Jews began beating Paul.

The Roman guards came in and took Paul into custody for causing the upheaval.

The Roman soldiers took him into the Antonia Fortress, interrogated him, and brought Paul back to the Jewish ruling council, in order to ascertain what the accusations were.

Paul gave a defense before the Jewish leaders, and the Sanhedrin was divided after hearing Paul's defense of the Gospel.

Eventually, they sent Paul to Governor Felix.

After Paul defended the Gospel in front of the governor, Paul appealed to Caesar, which was his right as a Roman citizen.

Paul then spoke before King Agrippa and eventually, the King sent him to Caesar. In *Philippians 1:13-14*, Paul is under house arrest, waiting to have an audience before Caesar.

Paul's chains enabled him to **reach** people he could never have reached if he were not under house arrest.

Paul was chained to a Roman guard twenty-four hours a day, with six-hour shifts, with four different soldiers a day.

Imagine having four different pagan non-believers, having to hear Paul pray, share the Gospel, and read the Word of God.

Paul said it had become *evident to the whole palace guard*.

These guards were a captive audience and Paul would have never had this **opportunity** if he wasn't under house arrest.

There was also another group of people Paul was able to reach because of his arrest, the Roman **officials** in Caesar's court.

Warren Wiersbe said, *“The Roman government was going to determine the official status of this new “Christian” sect.*

Was it merely another sect of the Jews? Or was it something new and possibly dangerous?

“Imagine how pleased Paul must have been knowing that the court officials were forced to study the doctrines of the Christian faith.”

Paul was able to put his personal trials and needs aside, as he saw the bigger picture of furthering the Gospel.

*Notice **Philippians 1:14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. NKJV***

Paul's boldness to preach the Gospel while under arrest, gave the other Christians around him **confidence** and boldness to speak about Jesus as well.

When I am around someone who is bold in their faith, it always encourages me to be *more bold* in my faith.

The Christians around him, saw Paul having joy, during this trial.

The Christians around him, saw the Lord taking care of Paul, during this trial.

They saw that God could still use Paul for His Glory, during this trial.

So, after seeing all of these things, the other believers were spurred on to good works.

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works. NKJV

V. Practical application.

Paul continued in his prayer and communicated that the Gospel being shared, was more important than the trials of this life.

Jay Adams said in his book, "*How To Handle Trouble*", "So, throughout these verses, we encounter not a Paul who is passively languishing in prison,

but an active, alert, working missionary who has carved out a new and exciting ministry in the midst of great trouble.

“Here is not a person who has given up, but one who is hard at the Lord's work and eagerly laying plans for new, ongoing ministries in the future. Paul was on top of his trouble.”

According to the Greek Lexicon, the word **all** means, *each, every, any, all, the whole, everyone, all things, everything.*

So, when I say **all** means **all** and that's **all, all** means, I am correct. So, what does **all** mean when we read verses like...

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. NKJV

God can manage every aspect of our lives as He works all things together for the good of those who love Him, even though we face suffering during this present time.

Psalm 56:8 You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book?

Psalm 56:9 When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; this I know, because God is for me. NKJV

God can make even our suffering work together for our good and His glory because the Lord manages the affairs of our lives because we are called according to His purpose.

Part of our problem with believing that ***God works all things together for good*** is that we are short-sided, and we have a different meaning of ***good*** than the Lord does.

As Christians, we are left on earth to represent the Gospel and to fulfill the call of Jesus.

Some questions for us this morning: *What would you be willing to "give up" if it resulted in the furtherance of the gospel?*

What would you be willing to endure if it resulted in the good news of Jesus Christ being advanced? How important is the Gospel being spread to you?

Is spreading the Gospel more important than our being comfortable?

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. NKJV

God has already prepared the works He has for us, and He did it with the purpose that we should ***walk in them***.

So, it is not us, that somehow prepared the good works, but God has already prepared them for us.

Our part now is to ***walk in them***, in other words, discover what those callings are and by the power of the Holy Spirit, do them.

If you are a true believer in Jesus Christ, you have been given Spiritual gifts as well as certain natural abilities to fulfill our call