



8/26/26

Paul wrote in the book of Romans, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." And he wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:18, "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." The thing is, he had not yet been imprisoned for his stand on the gospel when he wrote these books. When he wrote Philippians and several other letters, he put his money where his mouth was because he wrote them from prison, proving that he absolutely was not ashamed of the gospel and trusted God's power more than the power of men. This is a reason to rehearse the gospel to ourselves daily. The gospel motivates us to take a stand regardless of the cost because we understand that Jesus took a stand for us, regardless of the cost. Amen!

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Philippians 1:12-21 ~

Paul is an amazing leader and example for what a Kingdom Outpost church, with all its individual members, can look like. His unshakable faith in the Lord inspires me to keep trusting the Lord regardless of my circumstances... I pray that God will help me to have a faith like Paul's, a fallible man who faithfully served the Lord with no regard for the cost because his love for the Lord was undeniable. I want that. I recognize that having that kind of faith comes at a cost... but what cost is too high to pay for the one who saved my soul? Paul said in Philippians 3:8, "Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." I pray that our Kingdom Outpost church called Summit Point will be filled with people who genuinely proclaim that there is nothing better than knowing Jesus.

What blows me away when I see the joy Paul had in writing this letter is that he wrote it from prison. God sovereignly put him there to give him ample time to write this letter and many others. Plus... Paul dictated these letters. He didn't write them with his own hand. So... while he dictated to whoever wrote, all the other prisoners and the soldiers guarding him were hearing the gospel!!! He was both encouraging the churches AND evangelizing the prisoners and guards.

That's just so cool. So what did Paul want to teach us about being Kingdom Outpost believers in a Kingdom Outpost church?

Vs. 12-13 ~ Paul said about his imprisonment, "I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ."

What would I say if I were in his shoes? Without the grace of God strengthening me, I would definitely not say what he said. I can promise you that! He loved Jesus so much that he viewed anything he walked through as an opportunity to worship Him and serve Him.

I was going through some scripture that I pray for my family from Joshua 24:14-15, when the Israelites were getting ready to go into the Promised Land. Joshua told them to make choice... to either choose to serve foreign gods or to serve the Lord. I realized as I was praying through this that serving the Lord IS worship. The outcome of a heart of worship IS serving. Paul clearly served the Lord, and his location didn't change that. He knew that by being in prison for the name of Jesus, the gospel would be advanced. Is the gospel important enough to me that I'm willing to see any circumstance of my life as an avenue the Lord uses to advance the gospel? Am I willing to cooperate with Him in His plan even when it costs me? O Lord, please make it so.

In Paul's case, the whole imperial guard and the prisoners with him and all who knew about his imprisonment were also very aware of the reason for his imprisonment. I'm sure many authorities wanted to spin the narrative to make Paul look bad, but the gospel cannot be stopped. And it has spread even to this day. I would say his imprisonment served to advance the gospel in farther reaching ways than he could have imagined.

O Lord, I'm not in prison, but I pray that You will use any struggle I face to advance the gospel. I understand that it won't be easy and sometimes it will feel like it's more than I can handle... but it's never more than You can handle, and You promise never to leave me alone in it.

Vs. 14-17 ~ "And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." O Lord, I've seen this happen in real time. I saw when Charlie Kirk was assassinated how closet Christians became bold to speak out their faith in You. I see this in the lives of Christians around the world who are being persecuted for their faith. O Lord, please help us never to let the temporary afflictions of this world, no matter how difficult, stop us from being bold for You. Help us to remember the hope we have in You, that You have saved our souls from the eternal condemnation we deserve. Help us to remember the gospel and keep it at the forefront of our minds and hearts, so that we never become discouraged or overwhelmed by our circumstances.

"Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment."

There were people who were literally preaching the gospel to make things worse for Paul, as if their efforts could crush the gospel. And Paul knew what they were doing!!! He was thankful for the boldness and love of believers who would not let his imprisonment stop them from obeying the call of Jesus to spread the gospel and make disciples. And he was not afraid of the selfish, insincere liars who spoke in order to hurt him. Maybe they thought that people would run from Jesus if they saw what it might cost them. But they didn't understand how powerful the truth is.

I would think Paul would be so angry that cruel people were trying to hurt him more. I would also think he would be questioning the goodness of God for letting him go to prison when he was being so faithful to the Lord. But Paul, who had once done what these selfish people were doing and worse, understood how merciful God was for saving his soul. He called himself "the chief of sinners" and "the least of all the saints." In Philippians 3:12 he said, "I press to make it (this completeness in Christ) my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own." So instead of complaining, this is what he said in vs. 18, "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice..."

Not only did Paul not complain or get angry, but he actually celebrated that God was spreading the gospel regardless of the motives of the speakers!!! This kind of crazy devotion to the Lord and the gospel can only come from a divine strength by the Holy Spirit. Paul took the words of 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 to heart. He knew that by keeping his heart turned to the Lord and keeping his eyes fixed on Jesus, the Holy Spirit made him so free that no chains could dissuade his focus, and the Holy Spirit was transforming him to be like Jesus so completely that no persecution could distract his mission.

O Lord, I have faced NOTHING like what Paul went through, and I so easily complain and question Your goodness. I don't say, "What then? I just want the gospel to be proclaimed." Father, please change my heart so that it wholeheartedly beats for Jesus no matter what. Let any suffering I endure be because I am faithful to You and not because I'm not. Help me to see all my suffering through the lens of the gospel. Help me to remember what Jesus suffered for me while I was a weak, ungodly, sinful enemy of Yours... and the incredible suffering He experienced as He who knew no sin became sin for me and endured the cross because of the joy set before Him in bringing many to salvation. No amount of suffering I experience can even be a drop in the ocean compared to the suffering Jesus went through for me.

Paul continued in vs. 19 -20, "Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance..." Oh, so he's thinking he's going to be released from prison. NOPE. Not necessarily. At least, not the way I would expect. He continued, "as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death." Paul understood that God would either deliver him from prison by being released on earth or in heaven. In 2 Timothy 4:18, when he was in prison at a later time, he said to Timothy in this last letter he ever wrote before his execution, "The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory

forever and ever. Amen." Paul just wanted to honor Christ no matter where the Lord took him. Is that true for me? O Lord, please make it true!!!

Paul explained why he wanted to honor God no matter what, whether by life or by death. He said in vs. 21, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." If he lived, he wanted to live for Christ, for His glory. And if he died, he considered it gain. In fact, in vs. 23 he said his desire was to go and be with Jesus, but he knew that to remain on earth meant fruitful labor for the Lord. O Lord, I want this to be my mindset!!!

Whatever it takes, Lord, as long as I am on this earth, please transform me so much that I live every day, not for myself but for You. Andrew Murray says, "There is no other choice... we must either deny self or deny Christ." O Lord, I want to deny SELF! And when the day comes that You're ready to take me home, please make me ready so that, if at all possible, I may run into Your arms with joy. For You to die was my gain, and to live was my hope. Let Your Kingdom Outpost church be filled with people who have the same mindset as Paul... recognizing the priceless value of the gospel, unashamed to speak it, unafraid of the cost, unwilling to live any other way than to say, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."