

Philippians 2026 Series -Lesson 6
“Advance of The Gospel Through Circumstances”
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Introduction:

Most of the complaints that we humans have are related to circumstances. If we could just control the circumstances, life would be so much better. That universal complaint is due to our lack of faith – a lack of faith in the character and the promises of God.

In Lesson five of our study of Philippians we looked at “The Romans 8:28 of Philippians 1:12.” Most of those who knew the work that the Apostle had been doing questioned why God would allow Paul to be imprisoned and not allowed to continue the spread of the Gospel. No doubt we too have raised that question. Paul himself may have asked the question. However, we must remember that Paul is the one who wrote Romans 8:28 which says, *“And we know that God causes everything to work together for good to them who love the Lord to those who are called according to His purpose.”* Did you notice the first phrase of that statement? *“...And we know...”* The Greek word *“know”* in Romans 8:28 is the word *“oida”* which is based on the root word *“eidon”* which means *“to see.”* *“oida”* is the perfect tense which means a completed act of seeing in the past with the seeing continuing through present time – *we have seen in the past and do know that God causes all things to work together for good to them that love the Lord, to those who are called according to His purpose.”*

Why do you think we have the stories of miraculous occurrences throughout the Bible? They are given to show us God can and God will work all things together for our good. To experience peace in the midst of circumstances we might otherwise question, we must remember God’s ways are not our ways neither His thoughts our thoughts. But we must also remember, *“...as the heavens are higher than the earth even so His ways and His thoughts are higher than ours.”* (Isaiah 55:8-9)

The objective of our study here in Philippians is to challenge you to rest in the promises and have joy in the midst of all your circumstances. We can, if we “know” God causes all things to work together for our good. Let’s look at these examples of the Gospel being advanced as a result of Paul’s imprisonment. In this epistle to the Philippians Paul wants them to see how God is working his circumstances for the good of them as believers.

I. A Witness Among The Household of Caesar:

The first thing Paul cites is that his imprisonment has resulted in a tremendous public relations promotion that money could not buy. There was no television, there were no radios, there were no newspapers, there were not even cell phones, but information about Paul and his gospel message had penetrated the Roman palace and spread through the Roman Empire.

Verse 13:

“So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other [places];”

“So that my bonds” (ho-ste)(tous)(des-mous)(mou)

(ho-ste) = So that...

This is a hyperordinating conjunction that is used to enlarge upon, or illustrate the statement of verse 12, that the gospel is being advanced greater due to Paul's imprisonment

(tous)(des-mous)(mou) = **the things which bind me.....**

“in Christ” (ehn)(Christoh) = **in the sphere of Christ**

It is important to understand that Paul views his imprisonment to be a part of God's will, concerning his position in Christ. Likewise, if we are to have peace and contentment in our own lives we must identify with the will of God.

- Directive Will
- Permissive Will
- Overruling Will

Peace and contentment result from our understanding and acceptance of God's interest and personal design for our lives.

So Paul sets the record straight - The Roman government has not incarcerated him- The Lord Jesus Christ has incarcerated him. A result of this is that Paul's circumstances...

“are manifest in all the palace, and in all other [places];”

“manifest” (pha-ne-rous) = **put on display**

“palace” (prai-toh-rioh) **praetorium**

This word is used to identify Caesar's court, the Roman Praetorium Guard. Look at Acts 28:16:

Acts 28:16

“And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered (allowed) to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.”

Paul was chained to a Praetorium Guard, and these men were Roman patricians, members of Caesar’s household.

When Paul was converted Ananias was instructed by the Lord to go to Saul, but when he protested that Saul was there to arrest Christians, The Lord told Ananias, “....Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:”

So, now we have Paul chained to members of the household of Caesar. These guards were changed every four hours. Being chained to Paul they were constantly exposed to his direct ministry and were observant of his communication and contact with others, even the writing of this epistle. Many of them did become Christians. Tertullian wrote about the concern of the Roman government when it was discovered that some Romans in positions of government were Christians and as a result some of them were even put to death.

“And in all other places” (kia)(tois)(loi-pois)(pasin) = and among all the rest...

This statement reveals that it was not only to the Roman Praetorium Guard that witness was being given but to the rest of the household.

Paul had long desired to minister in Rome but was previously hindered, now he had access to the very core of the household of Caesar.

II. Boldness Among Other Believers:

In addition to the witness that was now being given to the household of Caesar, Paul states that a further result of his imprisonment was that the gospel was being advanced greater through other believers who were becoming bolder because of his circumstances.

The development of boldness often originates in the arena of bondage. We have observed that out of bondage spiritual faith is born - out of spiritual faith great courage is developed - through the development of great courage - liberty is achieved. There is something about being threatened about circumstances that generates an urgency of courage. Did we not see this during the fabricated covid crisis? Perhaps we need a few more such prohibitions by government to generate that urgency and courage today.

Verse 14 continues...

Verse 14:

“And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”

*“And many of the brethren” (kai)(tous)((plei-o-nas)(tohn)(-del-phohn)
= and the majority of the brothers.....*

The majority of the Christian brothers were having the same reaction to Paul’s situation.

“in the Lord” (ehn)(ku-ri-oh) = in (the) Lord

The use of the preposition (ehn) establishes those operating in the sphere of the Lord - the position of the believer in Christ (the top circle).

The absence of the article (the) in the Greek text is to emphasize the characteristics or qualities of Christ.

- His Person
- His Presence
- His Promises
- His Provision

*“waxing confident” (pe-poi-tho-tas) made it a matter of principle to come into
a position of settled confidence with the
result that they continue to be confident
and thus have continuing...*

Participle - establishes a principle

Perfect tense- completed action with continuing result

Active Voice- subject produces the action

Accusative Case- case which establishes limits and boundaries

Masculine Gender- initiator of action

Plural- more than one

The majority of the brethren developed confidence and courage as a result of Paul’s situation and continued to be confident as Paul wrote this epistle.

“by my bonds” (tois)(des-mois)(mou) = advantaged by my bonds

Dative Case - this use of the dative case identifies advantage

The dative case is used by Paul to emphasize an advantage of his imprisonment is the confidence the majority of the brothers have developed.

“are much more” (pe-ris-so-te-rohs) = more exceedingly...

This word is a comparative adverb used to indicate that the majority of the Christian brothers had developed greater boldness to speak.

“bold” (tolman) = making it their purpose to dare...

infinitive - denotes purpose

Present Tense - continuous action

Active Voice - they perform the action

“to speak” (la-lein) = to continually speak

infinitive - denotes purpose

Present tense- continuous action

Active Voice- subject produces the action

“the word” (ton)(logon) = The Word....

Noun - thing

Accusative Case - case that establishes limits and boundaries -The Word of God is what they speak!

“of God” (tou) (theou) = of the God...

The King James Text omits this phrase **...of the God....** but it is in the oldest Greek Texts.

“without fear” (a-pho-bohs) = fearlessly!

Adverb- in the emphatic position in the Greek

More exceedingly they dare, fearlessly the Word of God to Speak! Don't miss this reference to their fearlessness because it emphasizes the confident courage, they had to proclaim the gospel.

III. Paul's Imprisonment Advances The Gospel Through Two Type of Preachers:

In verses 15 through 17 Paul identifies two types of preachers that were advancing the gospel as a result of his own imprisonment:

- Some are motivated by envy and preach the gospel hoping to add to Paul's affliction
- Some are motivated by love and preach the gospel because of goodwill

Verses 15

15 **“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:”**

The Greek word order reads a little different. It says;

Some indeed even because of envy and strife, but some also because of goodwill they Christ preach.

So this verse establishes these two types of preachers. Let's look at them.

“Some indeed because of envy and strife”

Paul tells us here that some of the preachers were preaching motivated by envy of the attention Paul was getting and strife.

“because of” (dia) = (because of) = motivated by

The motivation of these preachers is envy and strife

“envy” (ph-tho-non) = the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others...

This word always has an evil connotation attached.

“strife” (erin) = outward expression of enmity (hostility)...

Some preachers were motivated by envy and were manifesting it outwardly.

“some also of good will”

Paul tells us here that there were some preachers who were preaching motivated by a gracious purpose.

“also” (dia) = (because of) = motivated by.....

“good will” (eu-dokian) = gracious purpose

Verses 16 and 17 further define the actions of these two groups of preacher. However, there are a number of problems with the King James translation, and we need to get a correct translation.

The King James text says,

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”*

A literal translation from the Greek text says,

16 *“On the one hand these motivated by love, knowing that for the defense of the gospel I am set*

17 *On the other hand those motivated by self-seeking ambition proclaim the Christ not sincerely thinking to increase my affliction.”*

We will examine these verses next time when we have adequate time to clarify

Conclusion:

Let me summarize today’s study by presenting an expanded translation of verses 13 through 15.

“So that the things which bind me in the sphere of Christ are put on display in the Praetorium and among all the rest,

And the majority of the brothers in the Lord made it a principle to come into a position of settled confidence with the result that they continue to be confident, advantaged by my bonds, more exceedingly making it their purpose to dare to continually speak the Word of God fearlessly!

Some indeed are motivated by a feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others, and some also are motivated by a gracious purpose.”

It is important for us to see that God’s involvement in Paul’s circumstances is no different than His involvement with our own circumstances. Once we truly realize God’s involvement with our own circumstances, we can truly experience the joy and inner happiness designed for us.

Our joy is uniquely tied to our circumstances. Unfortunately, most of us do not realize that, especially when the circumstances are not according to our liking. Our lack of joy and inner happiness is clear evidence that we have not acquired an understanding that things which seem so negative to us are actually being manipulated by a mighty God who is causing all things to work together for our good. Yes! Even when our circumstances are the result of faulty decisions. Yes! Even when we are being disciplined. Remember! Discipline is not punishment! Discipline is “manipulated circumstances” designed to modify our behavior to a way that is more profitable for us. Discipline is not punishment- Christ paid our sin debt on the cross. Discipline is designed for our joy and inner happiness. Therefore, there are no circumstances that should cause us to forfeit our joy and inner happiness – God is causing all things to work together for our good!

It seems so simple. Yet scarcely a day goes by that we do not find something negative to regret or complain about. Why? Two reasons stand out, we don’t believe that God is causing all things to work together for our good, or we don’t like the way He is doing it.

Why don't we believe it? Do we not know? Did He not promise it? Perhaps we have not seen it. We read of His Doings in the Scripture but perhaps we have not seen it in our lives. The Epistle of James tells us to use the biblical principles as we would use the principles of mathematics, "...count it all joy..." Litterally, "...add it up..." a personal review of your own history of circumstances might be in order to see just what God has done in the past with regard to our circumstances. If we look at His work in our lives we will see evidence that He is causing all things to work together for our good.

Then there is the second reason we complain about our circumstances – we don't like the way He is doing it. I hear you! For the most part I never question that He is causing it to work together for my good. I just don't like the way He is doing it.

How absurd it is to declare we don't like the way He is doing it, have we forgotten Isaiah 55:8-9?

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Ah, there is the problem, We have not put on the mind of Christ! So that is the purpose of our study of this epistle, that we might put on the mind of Christ – understand Bible Doctrine, accept it as the norm or standard for our lives, and apply it to our circumstances.

But it all begins at Salvation:

***For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...
The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...
With the heart man believes unto righteousness...
But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...
For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!***

"And your joy no man taketh from you..."

(Luke 16:22)