

Philippians 2026 Series -Lesson 7
“Preaching The Gospel for Grace or Gain”

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By

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Introduction:

Having committed myself to preach God’s word when I was nine, I was not in great demand to conduct Bible Conferences or Seminars, and being in a Southern Baptist Church, evangelization was the focus of my ministry in those early years. As a part of that I conducted a two week “Revival Meeting” in San Bernardino, California. Most of you have heard bits and pieces of what occurred in that two-week meeting, and will no doubt hear them over again from time to time. I bring it up again today because of its relevance to our study passage in the Epistle to the Philippians.

I titled this study *“Preaching the Gospel for Grace or Gain”* because Paul identifies two types of preachers that God was using to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ during his incarceration. In that two-week meeting I met two pastors that stand out in my mind today, sixty seven years later. It was a great meeting with seventy-eight people publicly accepting Jesus Christ as Savior. As a matter of fact some leaders in the church wanted to continue the services another week, but the pastor rejected that saying I could go my way and He would conduct a follow-up meeting the next weekend. Yes! He is one of the “Preachers” that comes to my mind in this passage. In less than six month he would be in prison for income tax evasion, fraud, and falsifying records with regard to a “Night Club” he secretly owned at the time I was conducting that meeting in a church where he was the pastor. The other preacher that comes to my mind was a Pastor I met who was part of a group of atheists I encountered during that meeting. Yes! He professed to be an atheist but served as pastor of a large Methodist Church. He told me personally he did not believe there was a God but preached the Bible as a means of maintaining some order and morality in society. There were a number of those atheists that were saved during that meeting, but that atheist pastor was not one of them. The gospel was being advanced by both those preachers regardless of their personal objectives.

Paul wants us to understand that God is involved in all our circumstances, and he presents three specific examples that the gospel was being greatly advanced by his incarceration: (1). There was a direct witness in the house of Caesar; (2). Apathy and complacency had been replaced by boldness among the majority of the brothers; (3). and

the gospel was being advanced by two groups of preachers. These two groups of preachers were introduced in verse 15. Our expanded translation of that verse from the Greek text says,

“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.”

These statements in verse 15 introduce the statements in verses 16 and 17

- Some preachers were motivated by envy and were preaching the gospel hoping to add to Paul’s affliction.
- Other preachers were motivated by love and were preaching the gospel out of goodwill.

Verses 16 and 17 further define these two groups of preachers. However, there are a number of problems with the King James translation, and we need to get an accurate 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”*

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.”*

The first thing we note in the Greek text is that verses 16 and 17 are inverted - that is verse 17 in the King James text is verse 16 of the Greek text.

Verse 17 in the King James is actually verse 16 in the Greek and continues the thought which Paul presented at the end of verse 15, *“..., and some also are motivated by a gracious purpose.”*

So, we will study it first.

Let's look at verse 17 which comes first in the original text:

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

1. Paul states that there is a group of preachers preaching the Gospel motivated by love.

“love” (ex)(a-ga-pes) = motivated out from the source of self-sacrificial love that manifests itself in giving and is not dependent upon a response

Noun - thing

Ablative Case - case of separation – out from

Feminine Gender - a response

This love is a feminine word and therefore a response to a need, and while it is a response it is not dependent upon the response of the object loved to continue but is a response to a need.

Our service to God should be rendered from the motivation of self-sacrificial love and remain continuous regardless of the result or the response.

- Result Orientation Will Interfere with Continuous Service
- Response Orientation Will Interfere with Continuous Service

2. Paul states that the group motivated by love is advancing the gospel with boldness, knowing that Paul is set for the defense of the gospel.

“knowing” (ei-don-tes) = seeing completely

Participle - principle

Perfect Tense - completed action with continuous result

Active Voice - subject knows (those motivated by love know)

These understand completely Paul’s circumstances and purpose.

“set” (ke-mai) = I am continuously participating in my placement

Verb- expression of action

Indicative Mood - mood of reality

Present Tense - continuous

Middle Voice- Subject participates in his placement

“defence” (a-pol-o-gian) = to provide a verbal answer or defense

Noun- thing

Accusative Case - establishes limits and boundaries

Feminine Gender - response

“of the gospel”

Expanded Translation of Verse 16 of The Greek Text:

“On the one hand we have these who are motivated by a self-sacrificial love, that manifests its self in giving and continues to love regardless of the response, understanding completely

that I am continuously participating in my placement to provide a verbal answer or defense of the gospel.”

Praise God! There are those who proclaim Christ out of a motivation of love. But there is another group of preachers. Look at verse 17 in the Greek text. (Remember, this is verse 16 in the King James Text.)

Verse 17 In The Greek Text

“The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:”

Let's look at some key words in the text...

In this verse Paul says,

“On the other hand, there are those who proclaim Christ...”

This statement introduces another group of preachers. This other group of preachers are proclaiming Christ, but they have a different reason for preaching Christ...

“out of contention” (ex)(eri-theias) = **out of a motivation of a spirit of rivalry and self-serving ambition ...**

Noun - thing

Genitive Case - case of interest

Feminine Gender - response (to envy or jealousy)

These are hirelings - they are in the preaching business to make gain...

“not sincerely” (ouk)(hag-nos) = **not motivated by pure, unadulterated motives**

No! Their motives are not pure. They are motivated by ego, materialism, or sensuality. The Pastor of the Church in San Bernadino where I held the meeting was apparently motivated by ego and materialism while the atheist preacher was apparently motivated by sensuality with a dominant area of strength to do good and help society.

I John 2:15-16 says,

15 “Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

There is a group of preachers that are of this world and they can be found in three categories:

- those motivated by ego
- those motivated by materialism

- those motivated by sensuality

Paul then states their objective..

“seeking to”..... imagining to

“add affliction” (th-lu-sin) = aggravate my situation by adding pressure

“to my bonds” (tois)(des-mois)(mous) to my present circumstances in chains....

Expanded Translation of Verse 17 From The Greek Text:

“On the other hand, those motivated by a spirit of rivalry and self-serving ambition, the Christ proclaim, not motivated by pure unadulterated intentions, imagining to aggravate my situation by adding pressure to my existing circumstances in chains.”

Do you see what this group of preachers is up to? They are motivated by envy and by their lust for praise and power, or by materialism, or by sensuality, and want to take advantage of Paul’s incarceration.

Verse 18 From The King James Text:

“What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”

“What then?” (Ti)(gar) = What is my attitude in view of these things?

This is an interrogative Pronominal Adjective that raises a question, what is my attitude in view of these things?

This is the question Paul asks. And, he answers it in the rest of the verse....

“notwithstanding” (plaen) = regardless...

Hyperordinating Conjunction expressing the motivation does not negate the result.

“every way” (pan-ti)(tro-poh) = in every situation...

Adjective in the Dative Case = dative of reception.

So, in every situation Paul rejoices because of the advantage given to the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

“whether in pretence” (ei-te)(pro-pha-sei) = whether they have assumed this position in order to hide their real motives...

“or in truth” (ei-te)(a-lae-theia) = or whether it is in the sphere of truth...

“Christ” (Christos) = Christ

No definite article used here emphasizes the character and qualities of Christ beyond the person of Christ - The gospel message is being preached.

“is preached” (kat-an-gel-le-tai) = **keeps on receiving proclamation**

Verb- action

Indicative Mood - mood of reality

Present Tense- continuous action

Passive Voice - subject (Christ) receives the action of being proclaimed

“and” (kai) **and**

Coordinating Conjunction – because the gospel message is being preached...

“therein” (ehn)(tou-toh) = **in this...**

“I do rejoice” (chai-roh) = **I continue rejoicing...**

Verb - expresses action

Indicative Mood - expresses reality

Active Voice - subject (Paul) produces the action

“yea” (alla) = **yet....**

Coordinating Conjunction

“and” (kai) = **also**

Adverb - qualifies the verb (I will rejoice)

“will rejoice” (cha-raes-o-mai) = **I will be caused to rejoice**

Verb - expresses action

Indicative Mood - expresses reality

Future Tense - in the future

Passive Voice - subject (Paul) will be caused to rejoice

Not only was Paul rejoicing at that time, but he says, in the future he will be caused to rejoice. This future passive verb indicates Paul is speaking of the future when he will be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ for his ministry - this advancement of the gospel as a result of the events we have discussed here will contribute to his reward. Paul was incarcerated but would receive some credit for the advancement of the Gospel because his incarceration was advancing the gospel. Circumstances that seemed to be so negative were actually part of God's divine design, as are ours.

Expanded Translation of Verse 18:

“What is my attitude in view of these things? Regardless, in every situation, whether they have assumed this position in order to hide their real motives, or whether they operate in the sphere of truth, Christ keeps on receiving proclamation, and in this I continue to rejoice. Yet, also I will be caused to rejoice.”

Conclusion:

- As far as Paul is concerned, the motives of these two groups of preachers do not concern him. Because, regardless of their motives, Christ (His character and qualities) is being proclaimed.
- Although Paul is not rejoicing about the preachers - he is rejoicing that Christ is being proclaimed.
- However, note Galatians 1:8-9
 - 8 *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*
 - 9 *As we said before, so say I now again, If any [man] preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”*

God’s work will be advanced regardless of the motive of the preacher if Christ is being proclaimed, but those who preach another doctrine other than Christ are to be accursed.

Paul’s incarceration seemed so negative but was part of God’s design. Likewise all of our circumstances are designed by God through His Directive Will, or His Permissive Will, or His Over-Ruling Will. Let us give Him thanks.

But it 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)