
ALL THINGS WORK FOR GOOD

Hello! I hope this week of studying and learning more of God's word has been fruitful! After yesterday's lesson I think I was on somewhat of a spiritual high! You know that joyous, nothing can bring you down feeling you get after something amazing happens? The downside to a spiritual high is that there is always something that brings you back to reality. There is always some circumstance or sin that reminds you that you're not invincible. The amazing thing about God is that He uses all things for our good, even the circumstances that bring us back to reality! Today, that is what we will be learning about. Let's start by reading our verses for today.

Philippians 1:12-14 says, "now, I want you to know brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear."

The verses we completed yesterday, ending with verse eleven, are the end of Paul's introduction. Verse twelve begins the next part of his letter. He starts by informing the Philippians that his imprisonment and circumstances have furthered the gospel. As we've seen throughout the letter, Paul's tone is one of joy and encouragement. He continues that here in verse twelve.

In human terms it could be frustrating to be put in jail at the height of his ministry, but instead of being negative, Paul trusts that God is in control. God has better plans! Paul reassures the Philippians that his imprisonment is not a negative, but is actually furthering the spread of the

gospel. (We saw this last week in our introduction! Acts 15:36-16:-40) Paul wants the Philippians to see the Romans 8:28 in his situation.

Look up and read Romans 8:28, even if you have it memorized. What is the promise?

Write down one situation in your life where God fulfilled this promise.

It's amazing firstly, that God loves us enough to work all things to our good! That includes our mess ups, our failures and the things that He allows to take place in our lives. All circumstances are worked for our good by God!

It's amazing secondly, that God is able to work all things to our good! With so many believers and circumstances, what an unbelievable God we have, who is able to accomplish such a feat. He is truly sovereign and all powerful!

Let's not forget to thank God for all of our circumstances. When we are relying on the promise of Romans 8:28, even the unpleasant circumstances should lead us to God in joy and thanksgiving.

Now read James 1:2-4. What is the promise we find here? What does it take to get to the result of that promise?

Thanking God through all circumstances is often hard to do; however, the promise of Romans 8:28 and the result of James 1:2-4 give us hope. So many passages in the Bible remind us of who God is and how He loves us.

Look up 1 Thessalonians 5:18 and write down the command found there.

When we look at our circumstances through the promises of Romans 8:28 and James 1:2-4, we can trust that God will take care of us in all things. We are even commanded to thank Him for what we are going through! If we would truly focus on what we are grateful for in every situation, our mindset would change drastically!

Think about a difficult situation happening in your life. Can you write down anything you are thankful for about that circumstance?

Let's move on to verses 13-15. In these verses Paul gives examples of those who have been impacted by his imprisonment. He starts by saying his imprisonment is "in the cause of Christ," or in the sphere of Christ. It is God's will, through Christ Jesus, that he is in jail. The evidence of this is manifested by the people that have heard and accepted the gospel because of Paul.

The first group is the Praetorian Guard. According to Acts 28:16, Paul was forced to be chained to a Roman guard at all times. These guards changed every four hours. Paul's opportunities to spread the gospel among the soldiers was great!

Paul's imprisonment not only affected the Praetorian Guard, but "everyone else." This included prisoners, those who visited the jail, such as Roman officials, and the household of Caesar.

In verse 14 Paul says that his imprisonment also affected believers. It gave them greater confidence to spread the gospel without fear. Often times it takes the courage of one person to spark change in others. As a result of Paul's imprisonment, the believers trusted God with greater confidence and did not fear the results of spreading of the gospel.

Are we willing to speak out about our faith and live righteously no matter the results? Usually we fear embarrassment or ridicule rather than prison, but those fears can be just as paralyzing.

Read Matthew 25:23. How have you been a faithful servant of God? Write your answer here. If you haven't, pray that God would change your heart and give you a boldness to proclaim His gospel. Write your prayer here.

REVIEW

~All things work for our good: No matter the circumstances God is working all things for our good. Do we believe that promise, find joy, and give thanks in all things? Romans 8:28, James 1:2-4, 1 Thessalonians 5:18

~Paul's Romans 8:28: His imprisonment affected both the Romans and other believers. Are we willing to be faithful servants of God despite the circumstances? Matthew 25:23