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## MAGNIFICATION OF CHRIST

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Ready for another week of study? Our study last week left off with Paul describing those who were hearing the gospel, and those who were sharing the gospel. We saw that some were sharing out of genuine love for Christ, and yet, others were sharing just to make things harder on Paul, no doubt having a negative effect on his physical well-being to some degree. Today, however, we will see Paul respond with what I would see as an unworldly response.

Learning to follow his example is our goal as we look at THE MAGNIFICATION OF CHRIST.

To keep Paul's words in context, please read Philippians 1:12-17 to remind yourself of the scenario. Now, generally, our response to those who are trying to cause us grief would not be what we see next. Look at verse 18.

"What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth,  
Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice" (Nasb)

"and I will rejoice"??? My mind wants to ask, really? That's what I mean by Paul's response being other worldly. It's supernatural. Think about it. We know a bit about Paul, we have seen Paul as Saul, the self-righteous, self-appointed sword of God, who persecuted and condemned believers. We might even think that the reason that he is tolerant of these that are trying to stir up trouble is because he knows what it is to be in their shoes. Saul the trouble maker. But no, he tells us that he responds as he does because HE isn't what's important in the situation. What is important? That Christ is magnified. 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) are still being proclaimed.

Having said that, don't be confused with the thought that the first group will not have to answer for their motive, but it will be to God, not these who are upset about it. Paul is not rejoicing about their motive but rather the result. We must remember that our motive is always as important as what we do. And in Galatians 1:8,9 and James 3:1, we see that consequences will come, but not at the hands of Paul.

**Take a moment to read those texts, and write your thoughts. (Galatians 1:8-9 & James 3:1)**

Judgment will come, and best left up to the One who is the judge of all things.

**Now, read on in Philippians 1:19-20**

I've often heard it said that the three most important words of the verse of Romans 8:28 are: "And we know..." "And we know..." Do we know? Do we know, deep down, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that God is going to "work all things together for our good, to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose?" Do we trust Him THAT much with the circumstances that we are in? Paul knows. Paul has no doubt. Paul, sitting in a prison, having people doing their best to cause him trouble, helpless to correct what is going on outside the prison walls, or to fight back. Paul KNOWS that the promises of God are true. He does not have to be concerned with the circumstances, but rather knows it is going to work out just as God has purposed. He may not know HOW it will work out, but he is ALL IN, and has a sincere trust in God, that is why he rejoices. Perhaps he and James had spoken and he knew the truth of James 1:2-4.

**We looked at these last week but take a moment and read these verses again.**

Joy in the midst of what some might see as a crisis. Paul has peace and rests in the knowledge that God is sovereign and in control. He's looking at this through the lens of Christ and here's how he sees God at work:

Paul sees the magnification of Christ -

1. In his imprisonment, Paul is a witness among the Roman Praetorium
2. Others now experience a boldness to share the gospel
3. The gospel is being advanced through others, albeit by some who are envious of Paul and are preaching for gaining attention to themselves, but still Christ is preached. The ultimate result.

We also see that Paul expects deliverance from his current situation through the prayers of the saints in Philippi, and the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. We'll delve deeper into prayer later in our study, but let's take a quick look at prayer as an effective tool in our arsenal.

1. We are admonished to pray, both by Christ's example and direct command (Luke 6:12, I Thessalonians 5:17)
2. We are to be bold in our prayers (examples: Abraham concerning Sodom **Genesis 18:2-32**, Moses concerning Israel **Exodus 33:12-18; Deuteronomy 9:25**, and on it goes. Story after story of believers asking God boldly. But remember: Boldly we may come to the throne, but may it never be with impertinence. Let us remember Who it is that we are approaching.)
3. We are to intercede on behalf of others (James 5:16)
4. We are to give thanks in everything ( I Thessalonians 5:18)
5. We are to give thanks before taking food (Mark 8:6, I Corinthians 10:30-31)

This is obviously not an exhaustive list, but the result of prayer is that we have our needs supplied by the Spirit, the very Spirit of Jesus Christ. Paul trusted in that, knowing that the Philippian church was praying for him AND the Spirit of Christ was with him.

**Look at v. Philippians 1:20 again.** See the phrase, "my earnest expectation?" The word means, "watching with my head outstretched..." Paul is saying, I'm stretching out to see what

God will do. Is there a prayer you have said that has you watching with your head outstretched to see what God will do?

I love Psalm 5:3, it reads, "In the morning, O Lord, You will hear my voice; in the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch." Oh, that He would hear us pray in the morning, and then have us "eagerly watch..." For what? For His answer, of course.

Most of us have something that we have prayed for, usually someone we have prayed about for a long time. I know it's easy to lose hope, thinking there will never be a change. But when we pray, we are to eagerly watch for God's reply. And I don't mean eagerly watch for Him to answer the way we want Him to answer, but with head outstretched, looking for whatever His reply may be.

As we see in His word, He answers in many ways. At times we find our self in the "reluctantly waiting" crowd. We have no choice when His answer is to "wait". When we truly trust Him though, when we "know" that He will answer. Then we can have His peace and joy in the waiting, making the waiting so much easier to get through.

Paul says, I'm watching, and my hope (the word for hope means, confident expectation) is that I am not going to be shamed in anything. Why? His goal is not to save his own self, or his own reputation. His goal is to proclaim Christ, and nothing can thwart that from happening. Paul's example is that he magnified Christ with boldness, he magnified Him with his body, and some years later, he would even magnify Him in his death.

**The question is, will we magnify Jesus Christ our Lord?**

Think about the word "magnify". When we look at things through a magnifying glass it makes things larger than life, doesn't it? When we magnify Christ in our bodies it means to so enlarge Christ in our lives that He is clearly seen by others. Larger than life, larger than our circumstances, larger than the woes of this world. When our perspective is changed, and when He is magnified above all else, we, too, can rejoice as Paul did.

Our lives are to reflect the reality that Christ is now living in us. His Spirit is freely available to us to provide all we need to accomplish the plans God has for us. Just as John the Baptist said, "I must decrease so that He may increase" (John 3:30).

Our position IN Christ provides all we need to show Him to the world around us. The goal for us, as it was for Paul, should be doing all to the magnification of Christ.

**What does that look like in your day to day living, how can you apply the truth of God's word? Look up these verses and write your thoughts, perhaps even as a prayer to the Lord for help in accomplishing His will.**

**Colossians 4:5-6**

**James 1:19-22**

As we continue in our study this week may we fulfill the words of Psalm 34:3:

"O magnify the Lord with me,  
and let us exalt His name together."

And before we read those words from a strictly intellectual aspect, or hear the choir singing, let me give you a case in point. Let's say, you're tired, you need a nap, you might be feeling nothing but love for that other person that is in your house, but as you lay down, just for a quick nap, that's when they decide to make all kinds of noise. They get ice from the ice maker, they make a phone call, they don't even seem to realize that you are trying to sleep, though they had already come in the room and saw you laying there! How do you respond? Love overflowing? Putting their needs first? Anger? Frustration? Yep, it happens that quick.

We like what we like, and when someone else, whether on purpose or inadvertently messes with that equation, well, 1 John 1:9 must be put to use again. Magnification of the Lord Jesus Christ. Other's before self (of course with the caveat that we do what is best for them). All that to say, may our magnification of Christ not only be in words but in our every action. That is real change takes place. To Him be the glory and praise.

REVIEW

~ Like Paul, let us rejoice even in our circumstances knowing that they are opportunities for Christ to be magnified. And God is at work to change us in them. Philippians 1:18; Romans 8:28, James 1:2-4

~ Pray boldly for each other at all times. They call it a "prayer life" because we should live in prayer mode at all times. Mark 8:6; Luke 6:12; I Corinthians 10:30-31; I Thessalonians 5:17-18; James 5:16

~ Earnestly look for what God is doing. We may not see yet, but He's working on it. Phil. 1:19; Psalms 5:3

~ In all we say and do let us magnify Christ in our bodies for that is the goal. Above all, above self, the goal is the magnification of Christ. Philippians 1:20; Colossians 4:5-6; James 1:19-21