

Philippians 1:12-30

I. Circumstances 1:12-18: Paul's circumstances (assuming he is writing from a Roman prison)

A. For Paul personally the circumstances are poor

- i. His trial is ongoing and the result will be either life or death, with no appeal likely
- ii. Conditions of the prison were poor as J.D. described them.

B. For the advancement of the gospel the circumstances turned out good

i. It was evident throughout the prison that Paul was imprisoned "for Christ" (v. 13). The implication is that his imprisonment was not just a result of his relationship with Christ, but everyone knew he was in prison because of his relationship with Christ. The continuous changing of the guard allowed Paul to claim Christ to a number of the guards.

ii. While imprisoned Paul was able to write letters regarding the gospel. The effect is evident from Philemon 1:10 "*I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains*"

iii. Others were being encouraged by Paul's imprisonment (v. 14). Some of these preached the gospel out of love and good will (v. 15b) with a daringness borne out of Paul's example. Others preached out of envy and rivalry (v. 15a). Perhaps these were now able to promote themselves with Paul in prison. But it didn't matter – either way Christ was preached (v. 18)

C. And Paul rejoiced – despite his circumstances.

II. Deliverance – to life or to death (Christ or gain) (v. 19-26)

A. Deliverance from current circumstances.

i. Paul's expectation is that he will likely be released (v. 25 and also 2:24).

ii. His assurance is based on the prayers of the Philippians and by the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Jesus Christ)

iii. Irrespective of the outcome of the trial (assuming that is what he is referring to) Paul's expectation is that he will accept his fate with courage through the help of the Holy Spirit, and in so doing Christ would be exalted in his body

B. Ultimate Deliverance – To live is Christ to die is gain

i. Paul's statement in Galatian's 2:20 reflects that he is spiritually united with Christ. His purpose and objective in life is to preach Christ crucified (1st Corinthians 2:2). Dying would mean three things for Paul. 1) He would be with Christ – the ultimate reward, 2) because of the way he was living his life, his death would very likely be for the advancement of the gospel, 3) his death would be the end of persecution and suffering.

ii. Living would also be beneficial. He would be able to continue to labor for the Lord. For Paul this would be a hard life (1st Corinthians 4:9-13), but he counts it all as joy.

iii. Paul's preference is to be with Christ, but he knows it is better to remain and continue his labor. His conviction was that there was still a considerable need for his apostolic ministry which greatly outweighed his own need/desire to be with Christ.

III. The Exhortation – v. 27-30

A. Behavior

i. Paul's primary encouragement is for the Philippians to behave in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. This behavior will manifest itself in unity of spirit (like minded with Christ) and unity of action (contending as one for the advancement and protection of the gospel)

ii. They are to act without fear. Their confidence should come from the nobility of their cause and the fact that they labored for Christ who would take care of them (Romans 8:31 "*...If God is for us, who can be against us*"). The result of a lack of fear would eventually lead the failure of their enemies (v. 28)

B. Privilege

i. The behavior described above comes from an awareness and an understanding that serving God is a privilege.

ii. Even suffering is a privilege as God uses suffering to accomplish His purposes both in His son (Hebrews 2:10 *“In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.”*) and in believers (1st Peter 1:6,7 *“⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”*).

iii. Paul reminds them that their suffering is the same as what they saw him go through, and that he is currently experiencing. He counts it all as joy, and is implicitly encouraging them to do the same.