

**Paul in Chains:
Free to Be a Slave
November 6, 2016
Philippians 1:12-18**

Introduction

Peter reminds the recipients of his letter that suffering and trials reveal the “genuine” saints from the fake ones.

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
1 Peter 1:6-7

This is when God gets the Glory; when a person suffers and endures trials and still worships. They see Him as the greatest treasure of all!

The weight of His worth is unmeasurable.

- God wants us to follow Him because He is beautiful and worthy of all our attention.
- Let’s go a step further: He wants not only for us to see His beauty, but for others to witness you finding beauty in Him!

1. Handicapped for the Gospel.

But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel.
Philippians 1:12

Paul says that in times of being handicapped:

- It actually results in the advancement of the Gospel.
- The opposite is true and his ministry is THRIVING!
- Although he is in bondage, he is not really in bondage!

Paul had a heavenly perspective of every situation in his life and he trusted in the divine providence of God.

- I don’t have to see everything; I just need to trust the one who can. This is the essence of Faith.
- He reminds his readers that all the bad situations in life are opportunities for the Gospel to be on trial to an unbelieving world

2. The Gospel was making a pioneer advancement (vs. 12)

“The word “furtherance” is from a Greek word which means “to cut before,” and is thought to have been used of an army of pioneer wood cutters which precedes the regular army, cutting a road through an impenetrable forest, thus making possible the pioneer advance of the latter into regions where otherwise it could have not gone...Our

God-ordained or God-permitted circumstances are used of God to provide for a pioneer advance of the gospel in our Christian service." ~ **Kenneth Wuest**

God had **planned** for Paul to be in prison. Now take a moment and let that sink in!

- Prisoners were hearing the Gospel.
- Prison guards were being witnessed to.
- My struggles and trials of this life are God's divine appointments to advance the Gospel of Grace

God was **on the move** in Paul's life and He is on the move in your life!

3. Paul was in chains, but he was bound by no man.

"So that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ." **Philippians 1:13**

- In his letters, Paul identified himself as a "bondslave to Christ".
- Two meanings to the word "bondservant" referring to a person in slavery:
 - We are born into sin, resulting in being a slave to Satan.
 - The other refers to a person born into the Family of God (born again).
 - Paul is saying he has a new Master!

We who believe in the Lord Jesus as our Savior, were once bound to Satan in the bonds of sin. We were his bondslaves. Now we are bound to our Lord Jesus by the bonds of eternal life. Again, this slave is in a permanent relationship to his master which only death can break. We were in permanent relationship to Satan until by our identification with Christ in His death, those bonds were broken. Now we are in permanent relationship to, Jesus Christ, a relationship which only death could break. But praise God, because He lives, we live, and since He never dies, we will never die. We are His bondslaves forever."

~ Kenneth Wuest

Paul goes from a highly respected Pharisee to the lowest place in society and takes on the form of an inmate to proclaim the Gospel. Who does that sound like? Jesus!

"Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation (emptied Himself), taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men." **Philippians 2:6**

Jesus does not ask us to do anything that He has not already done!

Prayer and Response

- Trust God that He is in control and that He knows what is best for me in my life.
- Allowing God to lead me when I do not know where or why.
- Phil. 3:10 says, "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, BEING CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH"