

Philippians

DEVOTIONAL SERIES

“I LOVE IT WHEN A PLAN COMES TOGETHER!”

Monday, April 20th 2020

Philippians 1:12-18

“Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear. It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice.”

This famous quote from an old US tv-series, which I used for a title, came to my mind as I read today's passage.

How can a man go through all Paul is going through and still experience joy? So far in the first 11 verses we have seen these two reasons: first, he rejoices in the faithfulness of his friends and their continual, spiritual growth; second, Paul rejoices that the Lord will continue his work in them.

But now we read he even considers the adverse circumstances themselves to be yet another reason for joy. How is that possible?

If I was in his shoes, I would be busy telling God how ineffective it is to put me - as his apostle - in prison rather than having me plant churches or preach. Maybe I'd even be eagerly praying for God to convict those hypocrites that preach Christ out of selfish ambitions.

Paul, however, has his priorities set differently. His greatest goal is for as many people as possible to hear about the saving and life-changing power of Jesus, regardless of the means.

He can rejoice in the fact that the entire palace guard knows why he is in chains; it's for Christ. Moreover, most Christians in town are moved to preach the gospel on the streets more courageously and fearlessly! Yes, he even rejoices over those who only mean to cause him more trouble by their “preaching”, for by doing so they unknowingly contribute to Paul's greater goal.

How significant must the spreading of this message be to Paul! My desire is for us to share his joy in proclaiming the gospel so that in every circumstance we may say with a satisfied smile on our faces, “I love it when HIS plan comes together!”

Prayer: *Father, how easily we are distracted through our external circumstances and don't see what you want to do or even what you are already doing. Show us ways to share the joyful message of the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, with those around us. Let it become a priority in our lives.*

-Silas Leng-

