

LOCKED UP - PHILIPPIANS 1:12-18

¹²⁻¹³ I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

- Acts 28:16ff. Now, is this where Paul wrote the letter? We're not sure, but if it was in Rome like many think, here's what that looked like.
 - The imperial guard was made up of 9,000-10,000 men. Imagine watching over Paul, rotating in and out, as he spoke to others about Jesus.
- Why is this passage so powerful? Can we acknowledge the obvious. If you're like me I forget to stop and consider the power of such passages. It's just "understood", but many times over time we forget even though we "know." Why is Paul in prison? We may not know the specifics of this imprisonment, but we've read enough to have a good idea. Preaching Christ. Living "The Way".
 - So many good men who spoke of God and cared for others. Whether it was Joseph who cared for those in prison with him (though he did nothing wrong) or the zeal of John the Baptist who spoke with zeal without apology about Jesus. Who himself was found in custody . . . and lost his life . . . for standing by God and truth.
- Our problems tend to stifle the gospel when it needs to be advanced. Why? Because, if we're being honest, we many times forget the power of the message and our goal. Our goal is to give glory to God. One fundamental way of doing so is sharing the news about Him. We struggle advancing our own goals or kingdom instead of the Lord's.
- So, it's good for others to know what we're about. Why we do what we do. Where we're willing to go. Why we'll go to the certain lengths. Whether or not they join us on the path - it's good for others to know why we endure. What's our fuel. What's it all about. What makes us different? Christ. It's really not about us . . . it's about Him. Do yo talk about that?

¹⁴ And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

- So Paul had an impact. The strength of others strengthens us. What is it that keeps you from spreading the gospel? What fear? What have you seen that gives confidence? Well, typically when you see others persecuted it will cause others to run. But, for those truly seeking, it reminds them of their duty. They armor up and speak up.
- Remember Peter and the apostles in Acts 5:17-21? What motivated them? Well, on one hand, the arrest of Jesus seemed to cause them to flee. It's not what they had planned. It's not in our plans. However, once they realized God's plan in Jesus Christ through His resurrection - it left them with confidence. It left them with belief. And so, instead of seeing Peter following at a close distance (Luke 22:54) like he did after the garden scene, he was now speaking boldly among those who could have him killed. Belief. Confident belief. Not thinking we believe, but spreading the belief.

- You don't have to be in prison to do this. We say we're thankful for opportunities and that's right. But I wonder if many times we would make the opportunities and we shy away?
- "When have you experienced a sense of sharing in the ministry of the gospel (Phil 1:5, 7, 27)? Have you ever witnessed the gospel advancing in the middle of failure or hardship (Phil 1:12)?"
- "How do you connect with Christ's work in the world? What obstacles do you encounter as you strive for the gospel (Phil 1:27)? If you've never been involved in spreading the gospel, what steps might you take to change that? What challenges would you likely face?"

¹⁵⁻¹⁷ Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.

- Jealousy is the fear of losing what you already have while envy occurs when you want something someone else has.
- How unfortunate. We don't have the details, but the motive was off. How many times do we talk about our motive? People can be so selfish and self-centered. We're competitive. We want praise and recognition. We want to be top-dogs.

¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

- It's important that we understand this passage. He's not saying that Christ being preached along with error is okay - just as long as Christ is in there. I've heard other reference this before. That's not the context. He's saying that no matter the motive, he's at least glad that Christ is preached. That truth is preached.
- Again, Paul learned how to kill his ego. So much easier said than done for people.

Final thoughts: The ultimate rejection of God by the Jews was a refusal to accept Jesus. You can say all day long you're a Jehovah follower, but when you don't follow Jesus you clearly don't follow God. What about our confessing of Jesus? If we're ashamed of Him . . . do we really believe in Him?