

## INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE WILL CONTINUE MAKING OUR WAY THROUGH PAUL'S REPORT FROM prison, ~ which forms the second major section of his letter to the church at Philippi.

▶▶ As we have said, ~ Paul knew that the believers in Philippi were concerned for his welfare since he was their founding apostle, ~ so he provided them with an update on his situation.

THIS A.M., ~ WE'LL COVER VERSES 18b-20.

▶▶ As a quick side note here, ~ I hope you all read [Acts 21-28](#) in preparation for these verses, ~ to get the historical background as to why Paul was in prison in Rome; ~~ 17

▷▷ so that you will now have a better handle on what Paul is talking about here in verses.

AS WE SAID LAST TIME, ~ IN VERSE 18a PAUL REJOICED BECAUSE THE GOSPEL was advancing.

PEOPLE WERE BEING RESCUED FROM THE DOMAIN OF DARKNESS AND TRANSFERRED to the kingdom of God's beloved Son.

▶▶ And because of that, ~ Paul expressed joy regardless of believers' motives for proclaiming the gospel.

BUT HIS REJOICING DOESN'T STOP THERE. ~~ IN VERSES 18b-19, ~ PAUL GIVES ANOTHER REASON WHY HE'S REJOICING.

AND WE'LL GET TO THAT IN A MINUTE.

▶▶ But before that, ~ we again should mention the backdrop to all of this rejoicing that Paul's doing.

▷▷ He's in prison, ~ some believers' motives for proclaiming the gospel are far from honorable. ~~ And yet Paul rejoices.

▷▷ Again, ~ he was able to maintain his joy because it was rooted in his relationship with Jesus and not in his circumstances. ~~ [Acts 16](#) ... ~~ "praying and singing hymns ..."

▷▷ Paul rejoiced despite his circumstances because his joy rooted in Jesus.

▷▷ Circumstance-based joy flees at the first sign of trouble. 17 1/7

▷▷ As we noted in a couple of earlier messages on Phil., ~ the joy that is rooted in our relationship with Jesus will burn brightly and will withstand anything thrown at it.

▷▷ Perhaps we should once again ask this of ourselves. ~~ "Is my joy grounded in my circumstances or in my relationship with Jesus?"

OK, ~ IN VERSES 18b-19, ~ AS WE NOTED, ~ PAUL GIVES ANOTHER REASON FOR rejoicing.

▶▶ "for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance."

▶▶ In addition to the gospel being preached and advancing, ~ Paul rejoices because he expects the authorities to release him.

▶▶ Some translations have the word "salvation." ~~ It's better translated as "deliverance."

▷▷ The primary meaning of the word is deliverance from impending death.

▷▷ It was plausible that Paul could be found guilty and martyred as a Roman criminal. ~~ In spite of this, ~ the apostle anticipated being released.

↪↪ We see this in [Phil. 2:24](#) . . . .

↪↪ And in the very brief letter to Philemon, ~ which he also wrote during this imprisonment, ~ Paul asked Philemon to prepare a guest room for him.

▷▷ Why this expectation? ~~ Well, ~ to jump ahead, ~ Paul point to why in [Phil. 1:24-25](#).

NOW, ~ WE NEED TO CONSIDER SOMETHING HERE.

▶▶ Although Paul expected to be released, ~ he did still hold the thought that it might not go the way he anticipated.

▷▷ Alludes to this in [2:17](#) . . . . ~~ And again in [2:23](#) . . . .

▷▷ Also seems to be an allusion to this in Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian elders.

▶▶ So we're not dealing with a direct prophecy or word from the Lord, ~ but Paul's estimation of the situation.

▶▶ Although Paul doesn't express it, ~ the conclusion we can draw is that Paul was allowing for the will of God. ~~ Reminded here of what James says. ~~ [James 4:13-15](#) . . . . 📖 2/7

THAT PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT WAS GOING TO END ONE WAY OR THE OTHER REMINDS us that, ~ for the believer, ~ all suffering is temporary.

▶▶ In 1 Pet. 1:6, ~ Peter writes, ~ "In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials."

▷▷ When Peter says that trials are "for a little while," ~ he is not promising that suffering on this earth will be brief. ~ He's comparing them to future glory.

↳↳ The suffering is brief when compared to future glory, ~ but suffering may endure for a lifetime, ~ but only for a lifetime.

→→ Suffering does not follow us into eternity.

▶▶ In 2 Cor. 4:17-18, ~ Paul writes, ~ "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ~ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. ~ For the things that are seen are transient, ~ but the things that are unseen are eternal."

▷▷ Paul is not minimizing the pain of suffering. ~ Rather, ~ it is a matter of perspective.

↳↳ Suffering, ~ real though it is, ~ is short-lived, ~ because it belongs to age, ~ which is temporary, ~ in contrast with the age to come, ~ which is eternal.

→→ The trials and suffering of this life will last only until death or Jesus' return.

▶▶ In addition to having our joy grounded in Jesus, ~ this is another reason why Paul was and all believers are able to rejoice despite our outward circumstances.

▷▷ Because we know that our sufferings are only "for a little while," ~ and that we have a glorious eternal future waiting for us.

▶▶ And think about this. ~ Believers can stand anything because of what we are able to look forward to.

▷▷ At the end of things, ~ there is for us a magnificent eternal future.

↳↳ At the end of things, ~ there is for us everlasting life and joy with our Savior.

▷▷ For believers, ~ persecution, ~ trouble, ~ and affliction are not the end.

▷▷ Beyond these, ~ there lies eternal glory. ~ And in the sure, ~ certain, ~ and real hope of that glory, ~ believers can endure anything that this world throws at us. 📖 3/7

▷▷ It seems to be one of the basic facts of life that a person can endure anything so long as they have something to look forward to.

▷▷ And those who have confessed with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in their heart that . . . have more to look forward to than anybody.

OK, ~ LET'S NOW COME BACK TO PHIL. 1:19 AND THE REASON WHY PAUL WILL continue

▶▶ Notice the means by which his release will occur: ~~ "through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."

▶▶ Observe that Paul does not mention that it will be through Caesar or the Roman judicial system.

▷▷ It is God the Holy Spirit working through the prayers of His people that will be the deciding factor in the outcome of Paul's situation, ~ not Caesar or the Roman judicial system.

↳↳ And Paul expected God to superintend events to work it out in a way that Paul would be found not guilty of any crime and released.

▷▷ Even here, ~ Paul is declaring the absolute sovereignty of God over all of history and all of life.

▷▷ In Prov. 21:1, ~ Solomon says, ~ "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will ~ [i.e., ~ God guides the king's heart wherever he pleases]."

↳↳ It might appear that kings, ~ rulers, ~ presidents, ~ and judicial systems hold absolute sway.

→→ They might even believe that they possess such power, ~ yet they are "in the hand of the LORD." ~ I.e., ~ they are under the absolute control of God.

▷▷ The Bible is filled with instances of such control by the Lord over the hearts of rulers, ~ predominantly as they deal with His people.

↳↳ We see it in Pilate's conversation with Jesus. ~ Jn. 19:10-11a.

→→ "10 So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" 11a Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above."

↪↪ We also see it in [Acts 7:9-10](#).

→→<sup>9</sup> And the patriarchs, because they were jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt. And God was with him, <sup>10</sup> and rescued him from all his afflictions and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And he appointed him ruler over Egypt and all his household."

↪↪ And as a final example, ~ [Dan. 2:20-21](#).

→→<sup>20</sup> Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. <sup>21</sup> He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding."

▷▷ Only the God of heaven, ~ our God, ~ is absolute in His control. ~~ And He "removes kings and sets up kings" and guides them wherever He pleases.

▷▷ In this discussion, ~ we should include [Prov. 21:30](#). ~~ [NIV](#) ~ "There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the Lord."

▷▷ And as we noted a few weeks ago, ~ our awesome God is superintending events, ~ all events good and bad, ~ in our lives and in the universe to work together for our good ~ and to fulfill His purposes, ~ and ultimately to bring Him glory. ~~ Be encouraged . . . .

**BACK TO PHIL. 1:18-b19 AND THE MEANS BY WHICH PAUL'S RELEASE FROM PRISON will occur.**

▶▶ It is through the prayers of the Philippians "and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."

▷▷ Obviously, ~ the Holy Spirit could do it without our assistance, ~ but God gives us the privilege of working with Him. ~~ This shows that prayer is important.

▷▷ Some might think that we don't need to pray since God doesn't really need us ~ or has already determined what He will do.

▷▷ Those who think this way fail to understand that the Lord has chosen to work through the prayers of His people.

↪↪ Paul told Philemon, ~ in [Phile. 22](#), ~ "At the same time also, prepare a guest room for me, for I hope that through your prayers I will be restored to you."

↪↪ And we see in [Acts 12](#) that Peter's release from Herod's prison was brought about through the earnest prayer for him by the local church. ~~ [Acts 12:1-11](#) . . . . ↵ 5/7

▷▷ The Lord has chosen to work through the prayers of His people.

↳↳ Now, ~ how this all works, ~ I haven't a clue. ~~ It's a mystery. ~~ And we'll never fully understand it.

↳↳ But we do know and can understand that the Lord has given us, ~ His people, ~ the great privilege of working with Him.

→→ And for that we should rejoice, ~ be eternally grateful, ~ not take it for granted, ~ and be involved in prayer.

→→ Furthermore, ~ we should always remember that it's His power, ~ not our own, ~ working through us.

↳↳ Zech. 4:6b. ~~ "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts."

**IN VERSE 20, ~ PAUL VOICES HIS CONCERN FOR WHEN HE STANDS BEFORE THE Roman authorities.**

"AS IT IS MY EAGER EXPECTATION AND HOPE that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death."

▶▶ Even though Paul expects a favorable outcome, ~ there was always the possibility that it might go against him. ~~ As we've already noted.

▷▷ That's most likely why he uses the phrase "whether by life or by death" in verse 20.

▶▶ Paul's concern was that he would continue to be bold for Christ, ~ as he had been in the past, ~ and that his life would bring honor to Jesus, ~ no matter the outcome.

▷▷ The outcome of his trial didn't matter to Paul. ~~ What mattered to him was the kind of testimony he would leave. ~~ He wanted it to be one that would glorify Jesus.

▶▶ Interesting that Paul thought this through beforehand.

▷▷ Perhaps it would be good for all of us to ponder what kind of testimony are we leaving in people's eyes at present.

▷▷ And perhaps it would be good to think through in advance about what kind of testimony we want to leave with unbelievers, ~ our church family, ~ our children, ~ our grandkids.

## CONCLUSION.

WELL, ~ PAUL HAS GIVEN US MUCH TO THINK ABOUT IN THESE THREE VERSES.

▶▶I encourage everyone to ponder all of these things we've discussed this morning.

▶▶Continue reading . . . . .

LET'S PRAY . . . . . 7/7