

THE HIGHER GROUND OF HOLDING FAST

SEEING LIFE FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF THE GRACE AND THE
PROVIDENCE OF GOD AS WE HOLD FAST TO THE WORD AND STAND
TRUE IN THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ...

WHAT A VIEW ...



1. Paul understood his imprisonment to be the grace of God in giving him the opportunity to defend and confirm the gospel.

- (Philippians 1:7b ESV) ... **for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.**
- A. His imprisonment was the will of God carried out through the grace of God.
- B. How is this grace? The privilege of serving God is only possible by the grace of God—so defending and confirming the gospel is by the grace of God.

2. Paul wanted them to know *what* had happened to him and *why* it had happened, 1:12-14.

- (Philippians 1:12–14 ESV) **I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, 13 so that it has become known** throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest **that my imprisonment is for Christ.** 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.**

A. Paul wanted them to know what he knew—that he was in prison by the providence of God for taking his stand for the gospel by holding fast to the word of the truth, the gospel.

- (1 Corinthians 15:1–2 ESV) Now I would remind you, brothers, **of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand,** 2 and by which you are being saved, **if you hold fast to the word I preached to you**—unless you believed in vain.
- (Colossians 1:5 ESV) ... because of **the hope laid up for you in heaven.** Of this you have heard before **in the word of the truth, the gospel.**

B. Paul wanted them to have this same precise, correct insight and perspective by which they could interpret the circumstances of life—his and theirs.

Perspective ... how you interpret the world, make judgments, or form attitudes based on your vantage.

Insight ... the discernment to connect the dots.

C. **Lesson:** Often life is not as much about what happens to us but why it happens.

- What happened: Holding fast to the gospel landed Paul in prison.
- Why it happened: God used the circumstances

of Paul's imprisonment to reveal the working of his providence in the lives of his people.

- Result: It had become clear to Paul why he was imprisoned—the advancement of the gospel.

D. Paul wanted them to know that and to see this as a real-to-life example of how God works all things out for good in our lives.

E. The gospel was advanced because now the whole imperial guard and everyone else knew why Paul was in prison—for Christ.

F. The gospel was advanced by the confidence most of the brothers gained in the Lord.

What was going on with that? As counter intuitive as it may seem it was Paul's imprisonment that persuaded them that God was doing this.

Confident ... *πειθω* [peitho] – persuade; to persuade, i.e. to induce one by words to believe.

MEANT IT FOR GOOD: God used Paul's imprisonment to fill them with confidence—*“having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment (1:14).”*

MEANT IT FOR EVIL: Paul's enemy pretenders wanted to pressure him and rob him and his followers of their confidence with his imprisonment—*“but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment (1:17).”*

G. But God won and the brothers' confidence yielded much more boldness as they spoke the word of God without fear.

Bold ... *τολμάω* [tolmao] – to dare; to be courageous enough to try or do something; not to dread or shun through fear; to bear one's self boldly.

Without fear ... *ἀφόβως* [aphobos] – fearlessly. A phobia is an intense and irrational fear of something.

They were blessed with a "no phobia" attitude which means they did not succumb to the fear of payback—what someone might do to them for their righteous actions and godly behavior.

H. God used Paul's imprisonment to prepare men to preach the gospel as was befitting the gospel—in power and in the Holy Spirit with full conviction.

- (1 Thessalonians 1:5a ESV) **Because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.**
- (1 Corinthians 2:4–5 ESV) **And my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,** 5 so that your faith might **not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.**

3. Paul wanted them to see past the spite and bitter conflict to God's providential will being carried out as Christ was proclaimed, 1:15-18a.

- (Philippians 1:15–18a ESV) **Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry**, but others from good will. 16 **The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.** 17 The former proclaim Christ **out of selfish ambition**, not sincerely **but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.** 18 What then? Only that in every way, **whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.**

A. Some people preach the gospel for the wrong reasons—envy and rivalry—out of selfish ambition, insincerity and to increase the pressure of the mocking threat of failure on the targeted person.

Envy ... φθόνος [phthonos] — spite and resentment directed toward the success of another.

Rivalry ... ἔρις [eris] — contention, strife, wrangling; bitter conflict; often violent dissension.

Afflict ... θλίψις [thlipsis] — pressure; a pressing, pressing together, oppression, tribulation, distress.

B. What does it mean that Paul was "put here"—imprisoned—for the defense of the gospel.

Defense ... ἀπολογία [apologia] – a reasoned statement or argument; a defense; the speech act of attempting to prove some act or belief to be reasonable, necessary, or right.

- This statement is connected with those who preach the gospel out of love.
- They could see that Paul's imprisonment was a strategic move by God in placing him there to reason and prove the truth of the gospel.
- They knew (had correct, precise knowledge) that preaching the gospel in unity with and support of the Apostle Paul was the will of God.
- This was an example of preaching the gospel with pure motives and for the right reason—an understanding of the purpose and providence of God in this circumstance.
- God used the evil intent of the devil to give Paul a broader audience with whom to share his defense of a precise, accurate gospel.
- They saw the providence of God in Paul's imprisonment—God used the evil intent of these unfaithful preachers to accomplish his will.
- They knew that Paul's defense advanced the gospel in clarifying and articulating the gospel.

C. Focus: Firmly understanding this simple truth regarding the differing motives in preaching is just the type of precise, correct knowledge that should guide our relationships in ministry.

D. God in his providence will use the preaching of Christ for good no matter the unfaithful preachers with impure motives.

- (1 Corinthians 1:21–24 ESV) For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, **it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.** 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 **but we preach Christ crucified**, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- (1 Corinthians 2:1–5 ESV) And I, when I came to you, brothers, **did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.** 2 **For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.** 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 **and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,** 5 **so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.**

E. But make no mistake ... These unfaithful preachers will be held accountable for their impure motives that arise from their envy and rivalries.

- (Philippians 1:18 ESV) 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,

Pretense ... πρόφασις [prophasis] – a pretext (alleged reason, pretended cause); for show; a fictitious or mundane reason that is concocted in order to conceal a real or different reason.

Proclaimed ... καταγγέλλω [kataggello] – to announce, declare, make known; to proclaim publicly, publish; to be announced broadly; to be or become known openly and with wide distribution.

- (Romans 14:12 ESV) **So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.**
- (Matthew 16:27 ESV) For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, **and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.**

- (1 Peter 4:4–5 ESV) With respect to this they are surprised **when you do not join them** in the same flood of debauchery, **and they malign you**; 5 **but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead**.

Note: When you do not join them, they will malign you. Malign means to slander, to charge falsely or with malicious intent; attack the good name and reputation of someone.

As we saw earlier in our study, we need to become confident (as did most of the brothers) in the providence of God which yields boldness in holding fast to the gospel. Then we will have courage and not be afraid of the viciousness of the pretenders but fully trust in the goodness of God.

B. He knows this because he trusts in their prayers, the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ and the providence of God to carry out the will of God.

C. It is his eager expectation and hope that he will not be ashamed.

Ashamed ... to be ashamed; to be or become characterized by feelings of shame, guilt, embarrassment, or remorse.

D. It is his eager expectation and hope that with full courage Christ will be honored in his body.

E. His joyful deliverance is that God's will ... will be done whether by his life or by his death.

CONCLUSION: OUR JOYFUL EXPECTATION AND HOPE ...



4. Our joy, expectation and hope is that we will be unashamed and courageous and honor Christ in our bodies whether alive or dead, 1:18b-20.

- (Philippians 1:18b–20 ESV) **Yes, and I will rejoice**, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, 20 **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**.

A. Paul rejoices because no matter the result or consequences he has confidence that he will do the right thing.