

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE

SERMON OUTLINE

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#-3 Series: Philippians – “Christ-The Believers Joy”

Today’s Message:

“The Gospel First – The Spread Of The Scriptures”

Philippians 1:12-18

The old saying, "Your trials will either make you better or they will make you bitter," is certainly a true statement. Paul is a good example of a man who became a **BETTER** servant through his trials. The Apostle Paul was outstanding in maintaining serenity and steadfastness in the face of sorrow and suffering.

Paul wanted to go to Rome as a *preacher*, but instead he went as a *prisoner*! He could have written a long letter about that experience alone. Instead, he sums it all up as “*the things which happened unto me*” (*Phil. 1:12*). The record of these things is given in *Acts 21:17-28:31*.

Though in a Roman prison, Paul's situation did not bring him to despair and defeat. Because he kept his eyes on Christ and His work, Paul was able to rejoice in his situation. So, we learn in this passage that the heart-beat of Paul was: “**THE GOSPEL FIRST – THE SPREAD OF THE SCRIPTURES**”.

I. THE SPREAD OF THE SCRIPTURES - Through The Furtherance Of The Gospel Vs.12-13

He was experiencing the Sovereign Hand of God in the affairs of men. We call this Divine Providence. We do not live by **CHANCE** or by **LUCK**, but under the sovereign direction of God. In the word, **SOVEREIGN**, we see the word **REIGN**.

Layton Talbert in his book *Not By Chance - Learning to trust a Sovereign God* says; “*The sovereignty of God, simply stated, refers to His undisputed authority and rule over every aspect of His creation.*” The word “**PROVIDENCE**” is from two words, *pro or before* and *video*. Providence then involves God’s capacity to see (*and consequently to act*) beforehand.

The word “**furtherance**” is an interesting word. It carries the idea of “*pioneering*.” It was a word used of cutting a path through a brush thicket so others could follow. The “palace guard” or imperial guard, known as “*Praetorian*”.

II. THE SPREAD OF THE SCRIPTURES - Through The Fruit Of The Brethren V-14

The gospel advanced into paganism, and it likewise made an advance in the Christian community. The way Paul responded to his trials greatly stirred and strengthened the other believers at Philippi. The word “**bold**” carries the idea of being “*courageous*.”

III. THE SPREAD OF THE SCRIPTURES - Through The Foolishness Of The Enemy Vs. 15-18

There were actually two groups of preachers in the church who proclaimed Christ but from different motives V-15. The word “**contention**” in v-16, means “*to canvass for office, to get people to support you.*”

It is a matter of historic record that the two great English evangelists, John Wesley and George Whitefield, disagreed on doctrinal matters. It is reported that somebody asked Wesley if he expected to see Whitefield in heaven, and the evangelist replied . . .

Thus, there were two opposing groups in Rome who preached the gospel. We understand those who did it out of love. But who were those who did it from ill will? For starters, they were not heretics or apostates. Paul’s detractors were preaching the Biblical Jesus. They were not *anti-Christ* but *anti-Paul*.

So, the centrality of the gospel is the great question and challenge for us. Is the gospel first and foremost in our lives and in our church? The answer will determine our future. When the gospel is no longer the main thing, when it becomes assumed, the next generation may be lost.

Life will have its ups and downs for all of us. There will be times when we will feel metaphorically chained by the circumstances of life - misunderstood, maligned, ignored, spitefully used. But if the gospel is first in our life, we will be able to say with Paul in *V-18*