

4. THE ADVANCE OF THE GOSPEL: Philippians 1:12-14

by Brett Baggett on Sunday, June 21st, 2020

Theme: “We are commanded to advance the gospel to every tribe, tongue, and nation. The Lord Jesus will advance His gospel through us.”

I. JESUS ADVANCES THE GOSPEL THROUGH US AS WE SUFFER FOR HIS NAME’S SAKE (v.12-13)

Philippians 1:12-13 **12** 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 (or “chains are”) for Christ.

- **Paul had been a prisoner for perhaps two years at this point.** The Philippians probably feared his time in chains would have hindered the advance of the gospel. Paul removes that fear!

1. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN GETTING PAUL TO ROME.

- **Paul wanted to go to Rome & preach the gospel (Rm1);** Jesus wanted him to as well. But the paths they desired were far different!
- **Paul’s imprisonment “served to advance the gospel” (Phil. 1:12) because every molecule from eternity past to eternity future ultimate serves at the feet of their master, the Lord Jesus Christ!**
- **God has caused, is causing, and will continue to cause** all things to work together for His peoples’ good & His glory!
- **DANIEL 4:35** “all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and [the LORD] does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, ‘What have you done?’”
- **The sovereign God who providentially works “all things according to the counsel of His will” is the pillow a Christian lays their head on at night.**
- **The sovereignty of God assures the success of sinners’ salvation!** It also comforts us as we suffer for His names’ sake.

2. PAUL’S LACK OF COMPLAINING OR PRAYING FOR HIS CIRCUMSTANCES TO CHANGE.

- **Q. What would you want to make sure the church *knew* if you were in prison writing us a letter?**
A. Paul wanted the church at Philippi to know that “the whole imperial guard and to all the rest” heard the gospel and knew that Paul was in chains for Jesus.
- **PHILIPPIANS 1:21** “To live is Christ and to die is gain.”
- **Everything that God is doing is ultimately leading to this one point in history,** when all of the people redeemed by the blood of Jesus will stand around the throne!
- **Revelation 5:9-10,12** “9 And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you... for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” . . . “12 Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”
- **Q. Are you in Christ through faith in Him alone?** If so, rest easy & make your aim to glorify Him in all circumstances.
- **The advancing of armies in substantial military campaigns often comes at great cost to soldiers!** So it is with the gospel.
- **Tertullian was right: “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”** Do not miss that, Beloved. We will suffer for Jesus’ sake. Yet enemy lines will be pushed back as Jesus is proclaimed and He turns sinners into saints!

II. JESUS ADVANCES THE GOSPEL THROUGH US AS WE ARE CONFIDENT IN HIM (v.14a)

Philippians 1:14a “And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”

III. JESUS ADVANCES THE GOSPEL THROUGH US AS WE BOLDLY SPEAK THE WORD OF GOD WITHOUT FEAR (v.14b)

Philippians 1:14b “And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”

Q. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

1. Whatever comes your way, learn to see it not as an obstacle but as an opportunity to proclaim the ultimate value of Christ Jesus!
2. Jesus’ plans are always better than our plans!
3. Suffering with joy as you proclaim the Gospel is the best way to show the magnificent worth of knowing Jesus!
4. Look at the example of others whom Jesus has used to suffer for the sake of the gospel, and become more confident and bold by their example—see how God sustained them to be faithful and worked mightily through them! **Collins. Bunyan.**
5. Good *WORDS* are the seeds and good *WORKS* the fertilizer that we scatter and water; and God causes the growth!

HERCULES COLLINS

- Hercules Collins, was a Calvinistic Baptist pastor who ministered in London in the 17th century.
- “In the light of the deaths of Francis Bampfield and Zachariah Ralphson in the Newgate Prison in 1684, Collins penned one of his more memorable sentences when he said that
- *“communion with God by the Spirit is a good cordial to keep up the heart from fainting in this valley of tears.”*⁷⁰
- This heart-warming sense of the presence of God by His Spirit in the prison cell, though, did not prevent Collins from trying to understand God’s purposes in his—and that of many other godly Dissenters—imprisonment.
- First, drawing from Paul’s affirmation in Philippians 1:12–13, Collins was assured that his time in prison would advance the cause of Christ. His willingness to suffer loss, even to the point of losing his life, was proof to all of his commitment to his Lord.
- *Ultimately a Christian is known, he asserted, “by a patient wearing [of] Christ’s cross.”*⁷¹
- To the very end of his life, Collins was shaped by this conviction.
- *As he wrote in the year of his death, he was “willing to be offered upon the sacrifice and service of the churches’ faith” if it would “strengthen their faith and help them forward to heaven.”*⁷²
- Then such a time of trial makes Christ all the more precious to the believer. What ultimately matters in life—namely, having Christ—is unmistakably brought to the fore as physical freedom and the enjoyment of this world are taken away.⁷³ The believer is enabled to realize powerfully that he must be willing to “suffer the loss of all, so he may win Christ.”⁷⁴
- Such times of trial convince the believer of the value of the ordinances, particularly prayer.⁷⁵ Even mature Christians need the prayers of other believers.⁷⁶ And Collins never forgot how it was God-wrought prayer that played an instrumental role in bringing about the end of the persecution.
- *O what a warm desire was there in the heart for free liberty to preach the gospel! And what a strong persuasion of it was there in the mind. And it was but about three quarters of a year after that we had it. If God doth incline thy heart to pray and believe for a deliverance, or any mercy, it is a sign it is not far off.*⁷⁷
- Persecution is also a means that God uses to sanctify his people.
- *As Collins said, with typical Puritan pithiness, “Better to be preserved in brine, than rot in honey.”*⁷⁸
- This time of persecution left its mark on Collins. In his remarks on Collins’s life at his funeral, John Piggott noted that Collins’s “indispositions were frequent and great.”⁷⁹ These physical challenges that afflicted Collins in his final years may well have been a result of his time of imprisonment. – Haykin, Michael A.G.. *Devoted to the Service of the Temple: Piety, Persecution, and Ministry in the Writings of Hercules Collins*. Reformation Heritage Books. Kindle Edition.

JOHN BUNYAN

In 1661, while preaching in a farmhouse at Lower Samsell, Bunyan was arrested on the charge of preaching without official rights from the king. When told that he would be freed if he no longer preached, he replied, “If I am freed today, I will preach tomorrow.” He was thrown into prison, where he wrote prolifically and made shoelaces to provide some income for twelve and a half years (1660–1672).

way, and then does the p
rors that await the damned following the final judgment. In
1666, the middle of his prison-time, he wrote *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, in which he declared, “The Almighty God being my help and shield, I am determined yet to suffer, if frail life might continue so long, even till the moss shall grow upon my eyebrows, rather than violate my faith and principles.”

ADVANCE = *prokopē* (3x)

- MEANING: (root word means) “drive forward;” progress, furtherance, profit. (often used of military advances, despite opposition and trails)
- CF: PHILIPPIANS 1:25 “Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your *progress* and joy in the faith...” 1 TIMOTHY 4:15 “Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your *progress*.”

IMPERIAL GUARD = (x)

- MEANING: The Gr. word “[imperial]” ...probably refers to the members of the Imperial guard who guarded Paul day and night. Cf. Ac 28:16. **everyone else**. Others in the city of Rome who met and heard Paul (cf. Ac 28:23, 24, 30, 31). - Nelson, Thomas. *The NASB, MacArthur Study Bible, eBook*. Thomas Nelson.