

“ . . .walk worthily . . .” from the Book of Philippians

Scripture Block: Pp 1:12-30

Theme: TO LIVE, IS TO ACCOMPLISH THE PURPOSES OF GOD.

Life verse: Pp 1:27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

Today's passage: Pp 1:12-14

Notes

Interpretation

As we saw in our previous lesson, far from shutting down his ministry, Paul declares his situation has led to the furtherance of the Gospel. Verse 13 gives us an example outside of the Christian community and vs. 14 within.

¹³As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.

1. It is not criminal or subversive behavior for which Paul is under arrest, but the cause of Christ.

2. The “palace guard” is literally the Praetorian, which refers to the special guard of high ranking VIPs. If Paul is in fact in Rome, this is a reference to Emperor Nero’s personal guard, which numbered 9000 men. Although it is unclear how this entire number could personally have known about Paul, what is clear is that Paul took every opportunity to share the Gospel with those assigned to guard him, and no doubt the word spread quickly within this close knit community about the “interesting” religious leader under arrest.

¹⁴Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

Now we see the result of Paul’s imprisonment within the Christian community:

1. The word “encouraged” is in the perfect tense while the verb for speaking is in the present. In other words, many of the believers were first convicted by Paul’s example, and then took ongoing action to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. Both the words “courageously” and “fearlessly” are terms expressive of the courage these believers showed within the hostile environment of Rome and its surroundings.

Now let’s turn to some points of application.

Application

1. Notice how you do not hear a word about Paul's personal rights or personal convenience—he has subordinated them to the advancement of the Gospel.

2. Perhaps we too need to focus a bit more on the “effects” of what God is about; rather than the details about which we are so often prone to complain.

3. In fact we can take this a step further by asking the question, “Is it clear to our own ‘Praetorian Guard’, i.e. those in our daily periphery, that we are focused on advancing the cause of Christ? Keep in mind:

- God turns (or uses) difficult circumstances for good ends (Rm 8:28)—if accomplishing nothing else than to increase our dependence upon Him!
- The result is a transformation of our lives into the attitude and character of our Lord.
- We don't force this to occur; rather, God does it as we maintain our gaze upon Him.
- The Gospel message will not be bound no matter the plans and actions of those who resist it!

4. Is it worth it to keep our focus on spiritual things in the face of present difficulties. Paul did with regard to his jailers and let's peek ahead at Pp 4:21-22: **“The brothers who are with me send greetings. All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.”** How is it that member's of Caesar's household have become members of the household of faith. Could it be that God used the faithfulness of Paul in the face of trials to accomplish his purposes? We can pray that our faithfulness in trial will also result in others becoming members of the family of God!