

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

Two World's -- Two Passions

Philippians 1:12-30

2008

Introduction

Summary of keys to Paul's joy and peace as he sat on "Death Row":

1. He was a follower of and bondservant of Jesus Christ
2. He was others' centered even in the midst of his own crisis
3. He accepted his high position and identity in Christ - he was a saint rather than a sinner
4. He understood and rejoiced in the unmerited grace of God
5. He remembered and recited the good in others
6. He made it a practice to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others
7. He was confident in God's power to finish what He had started
8. He openly and transparently loved people
9. He had a lifestyle of interceding in prayer for others

It is refreshing to consider Paul's life and influence -- He was cheerful, optimistic, confident in Christ, and full of joy in the midst of his circumstances.

I Paul's Visionary Outlook

- A. His chains served to **advance** the gospel [Verse 12]

Advance = Prokope = "To drive forward"

Pro = "Forward or toward"

Kope = "To beat the breast in grief"

A nautical term: "To make headway in spite of stiff headwinds"

A military term: "To advance in the face of obstacles, dangers and great opposition"

Note: The gospel was not advancing in spite of Paul's imprisonment, but because of Paul's imprisonment!! And Paul's focus was not his own advancement, but rather the advancement of the gospel!

Application: Nothing is ever wasted with God!

God didn't waste Paul's time or suffering during his Roman imprisonment!

Rom 8:28 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

1. It was clear that he was in chains for Christ: [Verse 13]

- a. The palace guard

The Roman government was sufficiently anxious about Paul to keep him chained to a guard twenty-four hours a day. Roman custom provided for a change in guard every six hours, so Paul would have had four different men chained to

him during the course of a day -- not to mention a constant stream of visiting believers and various curious public officials.

Bottom line: Paul never had even a moment to himself! Yet, instead of being bitter about this invasion of his personal "space" he saw it as an opportunity!

b. Everyone else

Note the progression:

1. The palace guard - Phil 1:13a
2. Caesar's whole household - Phil 4:22
3. Everyone else! - Phil 1:13b
4. Everywhere! - 1 Thess 1:8

“The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia -- your faith in God has become known everywhere.”

Application: Bloom where you are planted (chained)!

B. His chains **encouraged** the brothers: **[Verse 14]**

1. To speak the Word of God more **courageously**

Acts 28:30-31 “For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.”

2. To speak the Word of God more **fearlessly**

Paul overcame his natural fears through the prayers of the saints - Eph 6:19-20

Application: The encouragement and exhortation of Christ

Luke 12:4-5 “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.”

II Paul's Earthly Challenges

A. He acknowledged the **challenges** in ministry **[Verse 15-17]**

1. Some were preaching out of **envy** and rivalry

Note: Paul is not questioning the content, but the motive of their message.

Paul's detractors were jealous of his giftedness and success and were attempting to belittle, devalue, and tear down Paul's reputation and ministry when he was most vulnerable.

Why would Christian leaders do this? Out of envy and rivalry!

Envy and rivalry occur when the attention is shifted from the glory and praise of God to the glory and praise of a man. This is the sin of Satan himself!

Application: Report of a pastor in West Virginia regarding his ministry

“Oh things have been terrible. We've had an awful year. Things have never been worse. Instead of having progress in the church we've had setbacks, we've lost people.” But then he smiled and with a twinkle in his eye said, “But thank God, the Methodists haven't done any better.”

1 Cor 3:1-3 “Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly ... For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?”

- a. Being motivated by **self** ambition

Ambition isn't necessarily bad; its selfish ambition that is the problem!

Phil 2:3 “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.”

James 3:16 “For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”

- b. Hoping to stir up **trouble** for Paul

Trouble = Thlipsis = “Pressure, affliction, anguish”

By attacking his integrity, credibility, faithfulness, and character, they were hoping to cause Paul distress.

2 Thess 1:6-7 “God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well.”

2. Others were preaching out of good will

- a. Being motivated by **love**

- b. Knowing Paul was called to defend the gospel - 2 Tim 1:11

These were evangelists who were a tremendous blessing, a constant encouragement, and source of great joy for Paul!

Application: I thank God for each of you! You make the ministry an absolute joy!

- B. He **rejoiced** that the gospel was being preached: [Verse 18]

1. Whether from **false** motives

2. Whether from **true** motives

Matt 23:13 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.”

Quote: Commentator John Daille (Daille, J. *An Exposition of Philippians*, p. 37).

“While we detest the abominable profaneness of men who so dreadfully abuse the gospel, let us not cease to rejoice in the good effects which God produces by their hands. Let us hold the thorns of such plants in horror, and gather with thanksgiving the roses which the goodness of God causes to spring from them;

and, after the example of the apostle, let us rejoice to see our Christ preached, whatever may be the mind or the hand which presents us His mysteries."

III Paul's Eternal Perspective

A. He was convinced that he would be **delivered**: [Verse 19]

His statement, "I know that has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance" is a quote from Job 13:16 -- a man who had much in common with Paul:

- Like Job, Paul was not guilty of wrongdoing and yet suffered.
- Like Job, he was prepared for and unafraid to die.
- Like Job, he knew that God would deliver him through his circumstances
- Like Job, Paul had the ultimate hope of seeing God - Job 19:26-27

1. Through the Philippians' prayers

Prayers = Deesis = "Petition or supplication"

2 Cor 1:8-11 "We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many."

2. Through the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ

Help = Epichoregia = "Contribution or supply"

Paul's needs were met by the Spirit of God through the prayers of the Philippians!

Zech 4:6 "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty."

B. He was full of expectation and hope: [Verse 20]

1. That he would not be **ashamed**

Ashamed = Aischunomai = "To be disappointed, disillusioned, or disgraced"

Isa 50:7 "Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame."

Ps 34:5 "Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame."

2. That he would have sufficient **courage** so that:

a. Christ would be exalted in his body by **life**

Exalted = Megaluno = "To make great, magnify, show great"

Rom 12:1 "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship."

- b. Christ would be exalted in his body by **death**

In Acts 20:24 we find him saying, “I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.”

Paul’s concern wasn’t his troubles, detractors, or even his possible death, but whether the gospel was advancing and the Lord was being magnified.

Application: On a scale of 1-10, how focused are you on exalting Christ?

3. That he was in a win/win situation [Verse 21]

- a. To live is **Christ**; producing fruitful labor

Illustration: “This is the LIFE!”

This phrase usually involves money, recreation, affluence, buffets, etc. But for Paul, Christ was the focal point of his passion and affection!

Gal 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Application: For the Christian, joy is not the absence of suffering and adversity, but the nearness of God in the midst of our adversity.

- b. To die is **gain**; resulting in union with Christ

Gain = Kerdos = “Lucre”

Paul knew that death was not a defeat to the Christian. It is merely a graduation to glory -- a significant net gain for the Christian.

Note: The world uses negative language when speaking of death:

- “They “lost their battle” to cancer!”
- “I lost my parents or child!”
- “He only has two weeks to live!”

But Paul’s attitude toward death is markedly different. He sees it not as defeat, but as a graduation -- the culmination of all he has been longing for.

2 Cor 5:1-4 “Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.”

Paul's death would be a gain in at least three ways:

1. It would free him from the trials of this life - 2 Cor 11:21-29
2. It would usher Paul into the presence of God - 2 Co 5:6-8; 1 Th 5:9-10
3. It would serve to advance the gospel on earth

Quote: Tertullian - "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church!"

C. He was torn between two passions [Verse 22-26]

Torn = Sunecho = "To be perplexed, afflicted, preoccupied"

1. He preferred to **depart** and be with Christ

Ps 73:24-26 "You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

2 Cor 5:6-9 "Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it."

2. He was convinced that he would **remain** in the body:

a. For their **progress** in the faith

Progress = Prokope = "To drive forward regardless of the obstacles"

Col 1:28-29 "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me."

Application: We should give effort to making progress in our faith

1 Tim 4:15 "Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress [Prokope]."

b. For their joy in the faith

1 Thess 3:2-3 "We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, so that no one would be unsettled by these trials."

c. For their overflowing **joy** in Christ Jesus

Overflowing = Perisseuo = "To super abound or excel"

Joy = Kauchema = "To boast, glory in or rejoice"

John 16:22 "So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy."

IV Paul's Earnest Exhortation

A. He exhorted them regardless of what the future held: [Verse 27-28]

1. To conduct themselves in a manner **worthy** of the gospel
Conduct = Politeuomai = “To behave as a citizen”
 It is a word from which we get our English word "politics" dealing with civil conduct. Paul appeals to the church to remember that we are dual citizens (Eph 2:19) and therefore are expected to represent our heavenly King and His kingdom well:
 - a. Eph 4:1 “... live a life worthy of the calling you have received.”
 - b. Col 1:10 “... live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way...”
 - c. 1 Thess 2:11-12 “... live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.”

2. To stand **firm** in one spirit
Stand firm = Steko = “To remain stationary or firmly anchored”
 Refers to “soldiers who refuse to leave their posts despite personal risk/danger”
 1 Cor 15:58 “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

3. To contend as one man in the faith of the gospel
Contend = Sunathleo [Athletics] = “To wrestle or strive in company with”
 Paul wanted the church to avoid strife, division and petty selfishness and to “wrestle together” for the sake of the gospel and the advancement of God’s Kingdom.

Jude 3 “Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.”

4. To not be **frightened** by those who opposed them
Frightened = Pturo = “To be intimidated or terrified”
Illustration: “The uncontrollable stampede of startled horses.”

Remedy to intimidation and fear?

Prov 29:25 “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.”

- a. It would serve as a sign to them that:
 1. Their enemies would be **destroyed** [eternally damned] - 2 Thess 1:8-9
 2. The believers would be **saved** by God [rescued or delivered] - 1 Peter 4:12-14

B. He reminded them of their calling [Verse 29-30]

1. They had been granted on behalf of Christ:
 - a. To **believe** on Christ
 John 1:12 “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God ...”

- b. To **suffer** for Christ

Suffer = Pascho = “To be vexed or persecuted”

Matt 5:10-12 “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Quote: F.B. Meyer

“Look up and take each throb of pain, each hour of agony, as a gift. Dare to thank Him for it. Look inside the envelope of pain for the message it enfolds. It is a rough packing-case, but there is treasure in it.”

2. They were going through the same struggle = **Agon** (ag-one'): “Agony”

- a. They **saw** Paul suffered

1 Thess 2:2 “We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition.”

- b. They **heard** Paul still suffered

They had seen him suffer in Philippi. They had heard of his suffering in Rome. And now, they were experiencing personally what they had witnessed in Paul.

1 Peter 4:12-16 “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.”

Conclusion

Dave Ramsey: Is what you are doing working for you? Are you financially secure? Are you debt-free? Do you own your house?

If not, then simply follow the simple steps found in Financial Peace University!

The Apostle Paul: Is what you are doing working for you? Do you have joy and peace in your life? Do you know why you are here and where you are going? Are you living a life that is worthy of your high calling as a citizen of God’s eternal kingdom?

If not, then simply follow the modeling the Apostle Paul who followed Jesus Christ!

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