**December 8, 2022**

**BIBLE STUDY**

**Refuge Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.**

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**"CHRIST IS PREACHED; AND I THEREIN DO REJOICE, YEA, AND WILL REJOICE."**

**Philippians 1:15-30**

***Philippians 1:15-18***

***15 "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:"***

***16 "The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:"***

***17 "But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel."***

***18 "What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."***

In this personal section, Paul transitions from his own heart for the Philippians to a reflection on his own circumstances. Even though Paul referred to his imprisonment and possible danger, this section is void of complaint. Rather, it sets his life and suffering against the backdrop of the gospel. Contrary to expectation, Paul’s chains actually worked for the greater progress of the gospel. In Paul’s view, the mere proclamation of the gospel must mean that it advances. But not all proclaimed the gospel with proper motives. Some were preaching Christ even from envy and strife, hoping they could cause Paul distress in his imprisonment. It is not clear exactly how they intended to cause Paul distress. Perhaps they hoped to create in Paul a sense of frustration and discontent in his restricted circumstances. Sadly, we find the very same thing in our society today. Jesus taught His disciples how to deal with this same issue.

***Luke 9:49-55***

***49 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us.***

***50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.***

***John 10:16 “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”***

The word "contention", here, means intrigue or faction. It seems that these were Judaizers who were causing problems in the church. They did not agree with the good news of the gospel that Paul had brought. In the process of causing problems in the church, they are causing Paul extra problems. Paul will defend the gospel, even at the cost of his own life. Paul is teaching the love of God. The gospel is good news, not bad news. It seems so many of these other teachers were trying to put them back under the law. They really had not shed many of their customs and practices they had before they came to Christ. Paul was very pleased that they were lifting up the name of Jesus, even if they were pretending. Whatever the case is, Jesus is being preached and many are believing. We must learn to accept what God allows. There is power in the name of Jesus. For Paul it only mattered that Christ was proclaimed. When he heard of the proclamation, he found great joy.

***1 Corinthians 1:21 “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”***

***Isaiah 55:8 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.”***

***Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”***

***1 Corinthians 9:21-23***

***21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.***

***22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.***

***23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.***

Notwithstanding, it should be noted that there is a clear distinction between how to deal with those preaching “Christ” and those not preaching Christ but actually “Another Gospel.” Sincere or not, there are some teachings that are dangerous, blasphemous and should not be tolerated.

***Titus 1:10-13***

***10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:***

***11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.***

***12 One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, the Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.***

***13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;***

***Galatians 1:6-9***

***6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:***

***7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.***

***8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.***

***9 As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.***

***1 Timothy 1:18-20***

***18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;***

***19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:***

***20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.***

***Philippians 1:19-20***

***19 "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,"***

***20 "According to my earnest expectation and [my] hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but [that] with all boldness, as always, [so] now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether [it be] by life, or by death."***

From the temporal joy of seeing Christ proclaimed in Rome. Paul moved on to assert his fixed position of joy that rested in assurance of final deliverance. Praying for them will bring the truth. Those who receive the Holy Spirit will be taught of the Spirit, and that will bring them to absolute truth. Paul not only hopes but expects them to come to the full knowledge of Christ. Paul was bold in proclaiming Christ, and it did not matter to him whether he was alive or dead, the message would go forth. As in many cases, it would probably be more accepted after his death. Paul declares that he will be vindicated through the prayers of the saints and help from the Spirit of Jesus Christ despite those working against him. Probably Paul did not have in mind release from chains but, as with Job in the passage to which Paul alluded, he looked forward to deliverance before the only court that mattered: God’s.

***Job 13:16 “He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him.”***

This vindication would happen whether he lived or died and fit well with his eager expectation and hope: that Christ will, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. He says his eager expectation and hope is that he will not be ashamed about anything in his life and ministry but will proclaim Christ with all courage. Because of his love for and commitment to Christ, Paul’s main concern is that Christ will be highly honored, whether by life or by death.

***Philippians 1:21 "For to me to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain."***

Paul summarized and then applied to himself the teaching about his hope in spite of his circumstances. He examined life and death in light of Christ and made the great theological statement: For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. Without a hint of exaggeration or bravado, Paul’s purpose was to glorify Christ, come what may. The Lord Jesus was his all-consuming focus. Paul's life was a proclamation for Christ, and his death was a proclamation, as well. Paul's life would glorify the Lord. His death would glorify Him even more.

***Philippians 1:22-24***

***22 " But if I live in the flesh, this [is] the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not."***

***23 "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:"***

***24 "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh [is] more needful for you."***

Paul’s transparency about his struggle with life in the flesh is a help to all honest Christians. We know from his testimony that learning to deal with the flesh is challenging.

***Romans 7:14-25***

***14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.***

***15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.***

***16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.***

***17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.***

***18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.***

***19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.***

***20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.***

***21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.***

***22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:***

***23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.***

***24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?***

***25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.***

Verse 23 indicates that upon death the soul does not sleep until resurrection but rather goes directly into the presence of God. Paul’s statement, and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both, is difficult. Apparently, he was torn by a win-win situation: the divine commission to preach and the desire to be at home with the Lord. By saying I do not know, he probably meant that he had no specific divine revelation from the Lord regarding these two options. He even admits his desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better than remaining alive in this fallen world. Nevertheless, he knows that to remain in the flesh is more necessary so that he might continue to minister to the Philippian believers. Paul's greatest desire was to be with the Lord in heaven, but he would not be able to bear fruit in heaven. To bear fruit for Jesus, he would have to endure the hardship in the flesh. Paul was needed to teach others of the love of God on this earth. Even those, who had already received Jesus as their Saviour, needed Paul to continue to teach them, so that they would grow into mature Christians. Thus, he was certain that to remain on in the flesh, his continued life, would be a blessing to the Philippians. Second, dying was gain because it meant being with Christ, which is very much better than this current human life. The desire of every true Christian is for the Lord Jesus to hurry His coming back for us. The rewards for Christians are in heaven, not on this earth.

***Philippians 1:25-26***

***25 "And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;"***

***26 "That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again."***

The delay of Paul going to heaven and the delay of the return of the Lord to get all of the Christians today, is not because He is slack, but because He wants everyone saved, who will be saved.

***II Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."***

Paul is willing to stay and continue to teach these who he started with. It is for their benefit he is staying and not for his own benefit. Nevertheless, exercising his own wise love, Paul became convinced that he would continue with the Philippians, and his goal was their growth in Christ. Ministry requires self-sacrifice, and Paul was pleased to contribute to the spiritual growth of others so that their boasting in Christ Jesus could abound. By willingly laying down his life for the Philippians, Paul was simply following in the footsteps of his Master, Jesus Christ.

***Philippians 1:27 "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;"***

Even though Paul became convinced that he would “continue with” the Philippians, at times he might see them, at other times not. Paul wants to make sure these Philippian believers will honor Christ no matter what happens to him whether I come and see you or am absent. He doesn’t know what the future holds for him, but he wants them to be strong and unified in the faith and in the gospel, living courageously for Christ and modeling faith to a watching world despite opposition. He summarizes their calling as living in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Their unity is also crucial to Paul because division can hurt the spread of the gospel. Paul’s hope is to hear of them standing firm in one spirit, in one accord, contending together for the faith of the gospel. This is like a loving parent instructing their children on how they are to act. Paul is reminding them to let everything that comes from their mouth bring glory to the Christ within them. Paul, also, tells them even though he is not with them in person, to follow his teachings and live in the Spirit. This would make him proud to have been the one who led them to the Lord. Paul would like to hear that they are guided by the Spirit of God. He would, also, like to hear that their mind is stayed on Christ.

***Philippians 1:28 "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God."***

Paul is telling them to not be overwhelmed with fear of those who are against them. The enemy will say that they are not even following God, but they will be strong in their salvation.

***I Corinthians 1:23-25***

***23 "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;"***

***24 "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."***

***25 "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."***

Moreover, they were not to be frightened in any way by [their] opponents. Courage is crucial to our gospel witness. Paul says the Philippian Christians’ unashamed witness is a sign of destruction for their opponents but one indicating their own salvation. Of course, all of this is from God, the sovereign King who can embolden failing hearts and eradicate stumbling blocks.

***Philippians 1:29 "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;"***

Paul goes so far as to say that their suffering is a sign of God’s favor: For it has been granted to you on Christ’s behalf not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him. Suffering may appear to be a strange gift, but it’s not. Suffering for the sake of Christ is purposeful, not purposeless. He allows it for our good and for his glory—and that makes all the difference. The very highest calling for a man is that of suffering for Christ. How much do you believe? Do you believe enough that you would be willing to give your life for that belief? Salvation is a gift of God to man. The willingness to suffer for this salvation is, also, a gift from God to man.

***II Timothy 2:12 "If we suffer, we shall also reign with [him]: if we deny [him], he also will deny us:"***

***Philippians 1:30 "Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear [to be] in me."***

Believers in Jesus Christ are called to take a stand for the gospel in love and truth regardless of repercussions, knowing that some people will support us and others will oppose us. That’s to be expected. The goal, whether it leads to life or death, is to make Christ look good and glorify his name. He takes note of everything and will not forget it.” Paul set a good example for those who would follow him. Paul is saying here, you know how I suffered for the furtherance of the gospel. Paul is not saying this to get sympathy from them, but that they might look to his problems and know that they, too, can live through the persecutions. He says, you are experiencing the problems I had. They had seen the way he had been persecuted when he was with them, and now, they hear that he is in chains in Rome.

**Questions**

1. What was the difference in the way Christ was being preached?
2. What was adding to the afflictions of Paul?
3. What does the word "contention" in verse 16, mean?
4. Paul will defend the gospel, even at the \_\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_.
5. In verse 18, Paul is pleased about what?
6. Paul not only hopes, but \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ them to come to the full knowledge of Christ.
7. What was Paul's greatest desire?
8. What would Paul have to do to bear fruit for Jesus?
9. Where are the rewards for Christians?
10. Who is Paul like in verse 27?