

## Philippians 1:12–14

“Emboldened by Knowing that Christ Always Furthers His Gospel”

***Why, and what, does the apostle want us “to know”?** Pastor leads his family in today’s “Hopewell @Home” passage. In these three verses, we hear how the apostle viewed his life (as he did the Philippians’) as part of Christ’s work in furthering the gospel. He shows how this was true of his chains, reports how the soldiers knew this, and how the church in Rome were emboldened by knowing this, desiring that the church in Philippi would also be emboldened by knowing it. We too may be emboldened to speak the Word by the knowledge that the Lord is always advancing the Gospel.*

### Friday, February 19, 2021 • Read Philippians 1:12–14

<sup>12</sup> But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, <sup>13</sup> so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; <sup>14</sup> and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Questions from the Scripture text: What does the apostle want (v12)? What does he call them? What resulted from what happened to him? What has become evident (v13b)? To whom (v13a)? What has happened to most of the brethren (v14)?

There’s something marvelous about a Christian who is able to see his own circumstances as a little part in the whole of what Christ is doing in the world. The apostle had viewed the Philippians’ conversion and spiritual growth and ministry that way (cf. v5–7), and we now see him encouraging them to have the same view of his own situation: “I want you to know” (v12).

There’s a lot of “knowing” in the Christian life. And one of the most important things to know is that Christ is always furthering His kingdom, furthering His gospel (v12)—and that the circumstances of our lives are part of that unfolding history.

For Paul, he got to be right on the bleeding edge of it. “Furtherance” is a military word like “advance,” and that’s exactly where the gospel had been advancing. The palace (praetorian) guard of v13 were elite soldiers. There aren’t many sound and godly ministers invited to be embedded with elite soldiers. So, while others might have seen the apostle’s chains as a setback (cf. v16), he himself saw it as an advance.

The soldiers would have rotated “Paul duty,” taking turns being chained to him while he was under house arrest in Rome (cf. Ac 28:16). And what would this soldier have told the others, when he was coming off his shift? “You should have heard him praying for those Philippians again—always with so much joy and thanksgiving, that they would grow in love and be filled with fruits of righteousness from Jesus Christ.” Indubitably, Paul would have also been telling these soldiers about Christ. And, the result was that many of the palace guard saw that Paul wasn’t in chains for being a criminal, but because he was enlisted in the service of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who had sent the apostle there for them.

How the Philippian church would have rejoiced! Philippi, after all, was a colony settled largely by retired Roman soldiers. Paul’s ministry to the “special forces secret service” of Rome had encouraged and emboldened the brethren in the church there to evangelize (v14), and he is eager that it would have the same effect upon his brethren back in Philippi.

And oughtn’t it have the same effect upon us? When we see our circumstances as part of Christ’s program for advancing His kingdom, we are no longer discouraged by them. Instead, we look to Him to grow us and make us effective wherever we are in whatever He has given us to do. And, we learn to sympathize with suffering brethren not in a downcast or despairing way, but alongside prayers for their ultimate deliverance, praying that they would be sustained by grace in this believing attitude, and that they would get to see effectual fruit from their service.

What difficult circumstances in your or others’ lives have got your attention right now? How does this passage teach you to think about them? What might you do differently if you saw them as part of Christ’s advance? How can you act on the Spirit’s/apostle’s desire for “you to know”?

Suggested songs: ARP46 “God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength” or TPH539 “Am I a Soldier of the Cross”

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**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via [tinysa.com/hopewellarp](http://tinysa.com/hopewellarp))**

Philippians chapter 1 verses 12 through 14. But I want you to know brethren that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel. So that it has become evident to the whole palace guard and to all the rest that my chains are in Christ.

And most of the brethren in the Lord having become confident by my chains are much more bold to speak the word without fear. So far the reading of God’s inspired and inherent word.

So it is important to know things in the Christian life the Lord teaches us a lot. The. What he tells us in the Bible it contains not just a record of events and promises about future events but a system of theology. What we are to believe concerning him and how this controls how we understand the events of the history of the Bible the events of the future the events of our lives.

Knowledge true and accurate theological knowledge is important as that the apostle begins in verse 12 saying I want you to know. This is one of the reasons why it’s so important that you pay attention and you think while we’re used while we’re reading the Bible and that you meditate upon what we hear from the Bible and that you understand how different parts of Scripture help you understand the other parts of Scripture, which we call systematic theology understanding that all of the Bible is the word of God and says scripture interpret scripture and so forth.

Because it is important that we know so he says I want you to know what part of theology does he especially want them to know and that is that. God is using even difficult circumstances to bring the or to advance to use the word in this passage to advance his kingdom to advance specifically the gospel.

Because he says I want you to know brethren that the things which have happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance. Of the gospel. Is very important for us and the Christian life to know that Jesus is always ruling always reigning and even the most difficult things always turn out for the furtherance of the gospel that is for instance the main theme of a book that many people think is very difficult but there's an apocryphal story probably never happened of janitor who is reading his Bible on number on his break at a church and, Pastor comes in and finds him sitting on the upside down bucket reading his Bible and pastor says what you're reading and he says revelation the passages, oh that's a hard one, let me know if you figure it out haha and janitor says all that's easy pastor.

Jesus wins. The Lord is always reigning and everything that happens advancing his kingdom and everything that happens well that's not just important for presidential elections and changes in government and society and wars and great calamities, it's also important in things like personal relationships and people not being what you thought they were and gossiping about you and doing things to you and frustration with a class in school that you're having a hard time getting.

Your frustration with your own heart which grumbles when you know, it shouldn't be against that class in your schooling and and so forth. Want you to know brethren that the things that's happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel. God has always advancing his kingdom and the word advance here is exactly what what we want to think about when we hear the word furtherance because it's a military word and there's military all over this passage there's the what's translated in verse 13, the palace guard the praetorian guard who are the elite special forces who are.

Kind of the secret service of Rome for the immediate service of Caesar, so these are the the special ops guys and Philippi the church to which. The apostle is riding this letter was a retirement colony for Roman soldiers, so they would actually be very interested in what is going on with the special ops guys in the capital and so Paul uses a minute military term the gospel is advancing it's going out now this is not advanced like advancing the military although I guess it could be like for advancing a front or something like that, but it's especially used for.

Seconding. Scouts the initial force that goes somewhere and gathers intelligence and prepares the way and maybe takes out a couple of important people from the from the opposition and that's the picture of Paul in chains in Rome taking out some important opposition gathering some intelligence preparing the way for the full onslaught he is the advance elite force of the gospel as it were.

And he has taken captive for Christ the elite forces of Rome and so there is this very kind of triumphant and victorious idea behind this phrase at the end of verse 12 the furtherance of the gospel and maybe to to I know it's anachronistic but the special forces are the retired from special forces who might have been among the, The church in Philippi when the letter arrives and the reading it in church their elders are preaching from it and they're explaining how they are to understand theologically what the apostle wrote just here to us, you know, they let out a great big huh or something like that for the victory of the gospel in this advanced force, we always ought to see the circumstances of our lives as part of the wise powerful victorious work of the Lord.

Jesus in this world Paul's already said that he sees the circumstances of their lives this way as not what we saw in verse six being confident of this very thing that he who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ and within verses three through six as a whole this was why he always thanked God for them, this is why his praying for them was always with joy because he knew that what was going on in each of.

The Philippian Christians hearts and minds and lives and what was going on in the Philippian church's life as a whole was part of this. Victorious plan and work of the Lord Jesus in his kingdom his kingdom coming. I kingdom come this kingdom was coming and that is probably how verse 13 comes true say that it has become evident to the whole praetorian guard and to all the rest that might change our in Christ we read.

28 of Paul's time in Rome that he was allowed to remain in a house as that expense so long as he was under guard which meant that one of these special ops guys one of these. Praetorian guard soldiers would be changed to Paul 24/7 and when one was coming off duty another one would chain himself to Paul and then the first one would unchain himself and he would go and he'd go back and tell the rest of the unit he wouldn't believe what that little ball.

Jewish got. With. Bad eyesight was doing again. He spent so much time praying and you should hear him pray for the Philippians, you know, where we are gonna go retire one day and the church sits there and how thankful he is and how joyous he is as he prays for them.

They got all these kinds of problems but he's always happy as he praised his God and his God he thinks is God is controlling everything for their good and you should hear how how he is forgiving towards people and in the church who hate him and, Stuff like that and just describing how the faith and love and joy and all the other fruits and spirit loved whippies basins and so forth come out in the way that Paul prays for those Philippians and of course when he's not praying he's probably evangelizing the guy explaining them the gospel.

And so he says, He says it has become evident to the whole palace guard one at a time and then when they go, you know, they're off Paul duty, and they discuss it that might change or in Christ. Now this had a great effect on the church and run because the church in Rome would have been tempted as a persecuted church would be to be discouraged and that's perhaps one of the reasons why you have Romans 9 through 11 kind of crescendoing to the end when all the elect shall be.

Saved all of God's true. Israel will be saved and. You have the apostle towards the end of the letter telling them that God will soon crush Satan under their feet that victory is certain and victory is coming and so forth but one of the things that most encouraged them was after they had had the letter and then God brought Paul and they're like, oh yeah Paul said he was gonna go on this missionary journey into Spain but look how he came to Rome he came as a prisoner.

He's chained up in a house. And then they see the results of his being chained up in the house. That the Praetorian Guard start to understand that Paul's chains are in Christ and perhaps several of them, especially since he tells them later that I forget if it's in this letter yes, it's in this

letter.

All the Saints greet you but especially verse 22 those who are of Caesars household at the end of chapter 4 and that congregation sees what God is doing through Paul. They hear Paul's theology and they're saying, The Lord Jesus rules, unstoppably through everything that happens everywhere and what's the result of their knowing this theology?

List of the brethren and the Lord verse 14 having become confident by my chains my chains were the way that they became confident are much more bold to speak the word without fear, that's the effect that it had on the Christians in the church at Rome the members of that church now he's writing to the Philippians church Philippian church and he says, I want you to know this too because I want you to have the same confidence from my chains that they have had I want you to have the same boldness in speaking the word.

I want you to have the same fear. Lessness in speaking the word and so this helps us not just see the events of our own life as part of this victorious unstoppable work that Jesus is doing but also to think about when we hear about like Pastor Wongi and Jeff Woodkey and some of the others that we're praying for who our persecuted how to pray for them pray that it would be evident that their chains are in Christ pray that they would be confident about what the Lord Jesus is doing through their circumstances, so that as we, Pray for even for their deliverance, it's not wrong to pray for their deliverance, but we don't pray with discouragement and despair we pray with confidence and victory and joy because what we know Christ is doing and as we pray for them in that way and as we pray for ourselves in that way, and as we live with boldness and fearlessness, especially to speak the word then we will have fulfilled the desire of the apostle that he starts verse 12 by describing.

I want you to know. And my dear children. I want you to know it too. No want you to be frustrated and anxious which leads to resentment towards God and irritability towards man and outbursts of anger and all of these other things that are exactly the opposite of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

I want you to know that everything that happens is ultimately for the advance of the gospel for the furtherance of the gospel.

Father help us to love you love your son to love his glory to love the announcement of his kingdom to love his gospel. By which you have saved us and for which we continue to exist in this world. When we pray that you would make us to know that you would give us this theological understanding and way of processing analyzing.

Assessing what is going on in our life what is going on in the church what's going on in the nation so that we might have confidence so that we might have this defense against despair. So that even in hard circumstances we would know it and rejoice. Lord I pray for my children in particular as the world around them is full of occasion for unbelief and anxiety and worry and others have sinned that you would grant them to know that you would make them to remember how you used Paul's chains in the pictorian guard and for the Roman Christians and forth the Philippian Christians.

So that they would be free to do their duty with trust in you and joy over what you will do through them, even if they're particular efforts are frustrated. Please do this for all of us we ask in Christ's name and your children here say amen.