

Philippians 1:15–18

“Rejoicing Always in the Always-Good Lord”

How can we rejoice, despite the occurrence of what is most grievous to us? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. In these four verses, we learn that the apostle was enabled to rejoice because what was most significant to him was what the Lord was doing, and this gave him eyes to see divine good even in the midst of real and grievous human evil.

Friday, February 26, 2021 • Read Philippians 1:15–18

Questions from the Scripture text: What do some do (v15)? From what? And others from what? From what do the former preach Christ (v16)? Supposing to do what? From what do the latter preach Christ (v17)? What did they know? What happened in both ways (v18)? And how does the apostle respond to each?

We should be careful in judging these gospel preachers. Elsewhere, the apostle strongly denounces those who preach another gospel or a different Christ. These are not the “dogs” or “evil workers” of 3:2. However, real gospel preachers are still real sinners—and so are apostles and Philippians.

What if we're trying to rejoice over the good that God is bringing out of a hard situation, and then as we take a closer look, there is more disappointment and discouragement there than we saw at first glance?

When we're determined to see God's wisdom, goodness, and power even in difficult situations, there is a temptation to have too much of our joy wrapped up in the observable evidence of His advancing the gospel, rather than the theological certainty that He is doing so. Surely, this was a temptation that the apostle had faced down and that he now wanted the Philippians to be aware of and avoid.

The apostle very much desired that believers' love would abound more and more (v9). So, even if he was not relationally hurt by the motivations of the “some” who preached Christ “from envy and strife” and “from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to [his] chains,” this would have been a blow to the apostle whose heart and life were invested in seeing exactly the opposite condition of their hearts. This is an important caution to us: that the motivations of our hearts are very deceitful, even when we think we are doing good and maybe even are, outwardly, doing good!

But this brings to the forefront the question: upon which are we primarily focusing—upon what man is doing, or upon what God is doing? If we focus upon what man is doing, then there will inevitably be enough disappointment to sink our spirits. But, if we focus upon what God is doing, we are liberated to take real joy from every particle we see of the goodness and power of His grace!

Are some preaching the true Christ out of mixed and even false motives? Well, then we can rejoice not only over the fact that there are others who are emboldened (v14) out of love for both unbelievers and apostles (v17), but that even some of those who are otherwise motivated are still preaching the true gospel of the true Christ (v18). By focusing upon what the Lord is doing, the apostle is enabled to rejoice always (cf. 4:4), because his rejoicing in the Lord, and the Lord is always doing good!

What is a situation you are discouraged about? What is the Lord doing in it? How can you rejoice in it?

Suggested songs: ARP46 “God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength” or TPH256 “God Moves in a Mysterious Way”

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Philippians chapter one verses 15 through 18, these are God's words. Some indeed preach Christ for even from envy and strife and some also from Goodwill the former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely supposing to add affliction to my chains, but the latter out of love. Knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.

What then only that in every way whether in pretense or in truth? Christ is preached and then this I rejoice yes and will. Rejoice. So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent word.

The apostle Paul is going to tell us later in the book to rejoice in the Lord always and he's already told the Philippians that when he prays for them he makes every request for them with joy. And that joy was in the Lord it was joy because their fellowship in the gospel is that work that Christ that God had begun in them these confident that God who had begun the work would bring it to completion until the day of Christ and God was still doing the work.

And so what we have here is Paul explaining why he's able to rejoice even when some very grievous things are happening and now it's it's not the so grievous for the fact that Paul is being personally offended or injured although he is the Lord saint and the Lord's servant the Lord's apostle and so injury to him is an offense to Christ but even more so because he cares so much that believers would grow in love.

And verse nine when he's talking to the Philippians he says this I pray that your love may abound still more and more and what Paul desired and prayed for the Philippians surely he desired and prayed for the Christians in Rome as well and so there were some who verse 17 out of love were emboldened to preach Christ knowing that he is appointed for the defense of the gospel and they know that the more that the gospel goes out the more that Paul will be glad and so.

It's not just out of love to God and the declaration of his name in the gospel, it's not just out of love to the sinner for whom the hearing of the word of Christ preached is the means by which God brings them to faith faith comes by hearing but even out of love for the apostle that they would advance his cause and his mission this defense of the gospel for which he was appointed verse 17, it's kind of thing that he's praying for verse 9 that he's laboring for wanting them to know verse 12.

That Christ is the one who is at work even in his change even in his chains so that they may be emboldened and fearless verse 14 to preach the word so all that is good, but one of the things that we can sometimes fall into one of the traps we can fall into is when the Lord is doing much that is good we can focus on what man is doing that is bad.

And Paul isn't denying that there's wickedness going on some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife in verse 16 selfish ambition, he's gonna say in the next chapter let nothing be done from selfish ambition and in many places he talks about how envy and strife are works of the flesh and from the devil this is not a small thing, it's a it's a great flaw and something that it was a great grief and yet believers are always able to rejoice in the midst of grief because even greater to us even more.

Significant to us than what what sins people whether believers or neighbors or even enemies are committing even more significant to us as the good that the Lord is doing so he acknowledges that it's not like everything is going on wonderfully and perfectly in in the situation there are those who are preaching Christ now, they are preaching Christ, they're not preaching another gospel if that was the case and Paul would be calling down an, Thon a curse of hell upon them like he does in Galatians chapter 1 and they're not preaching another Christ, which.

Which he notes to the Corinthians that there are some who preaching correctly and therefore the this another Christ and they're not preaching the gospel out of its proper proportions or relations linked to tell them to be aware of the dogs the evil workers the mutilation in chapter three and verse two those who who are still requiring circumcision as a work of the law and so forth so the preaching is accurate.

But it's coming from wicked hearts it's coming from wicked motives and that's not a small thing but he can rejoice in the fact that the reaching is accurate he can rejoice at what the Lord is doing even through those men he wouldn't you know, give a preaching class and seminary and say, you know, so long as you're preaching properly proper doctrine about the gospel and about Christ, it's okay to preach out of envy and strife and selfish ambition, obviously.

You wouldn't do that but he can still rejoice over what the Lord is doing and that's helpful to us. I think and hopefully helpful to the Philippians that we would remember that even in circumstances where there are great evils and great griefs, we can always rejoice over whatever good we see the Lord doing we can even rejoice over the good that we know that the Lord is doing even if we can't see it but here is something that he could see not only those who loved God and the unbeliever and the apostle were preaching.

Christ. Were emboldened to create Christ but even those who thought this was their chance with Paul out of the way to make a name for themselves and the church and the selfish ambition to to say I must increase in Paul must decrease or Paul has decreased so that I can increase the that even in their situation through God's great wisdom and overruling sovereign power, he was causing Christ to be preached even by then.

So that often the Lord magnifies his name extends his kingdom spreads his gospel and even blesses his people by by overruling the opposition of the wicked just as Herod and the Jews and the Romans all pilot can all conspired to do the apostles say exactly what you Lord had ordained the that they would do and that was how Christ was crucified and the Lord's playing of.

Was accomplished and. So also the Lord is always turning every evil to good and these people would end up quite frustrated. I suppose when the letter to the Philippian church finally circled back around to the church in Rome within some months or years as the the Bible was being acknowledged in the time that it was being written which we know that it was because he writes to the Corinthians that those who are do have the gift of prophecy part of their job was to acknowledge that Paul was writing under inspiration of the Holy, Spirit and so the the letter would circle back to the Philippians and some of those who would preach to mixed motives would hear it and they would be ashamed hopefully under conviction of the spirit for the for the heart with which they had preached but they would also see that their aim was completely frustrated right if if it was out of envy and strife and selfish ambition part of their goal would be to make things more miserable for Christ's to supposing to add affliction to my chains he says in verse.

16 in the word for adding affliction comes from a word that means to to chay for to grind into something, you know, trying to rub it rub it in to me you could say and they would get the letter to the Philippines they say, oh. He was rejoicing. And how the Lord had frustrated and turned their aim upon their head my dear children, the Lord is always doing that to the evil and the malice of those men and and spirits and demons as men and demons who hate you he has done it to the devil for some 6,000 years.

And he has continually done it as he works all things together for good not just for us individually but for the glory of his name in which we can originally so we can rejoice truly we can rejoice in the Lord always have an eye for the good that the Lord is doing do not let the grief of the wicked the grievousness of the wicked be too large in your mind and in your heart.

Was it a great grief it was? But it was even as great a grief it was it was much smaller than the fact that God was turning it on its head for Christ to be preached so notice the good things that the Lord is doing let those be the bigger things because those are the things that the Lord is doing.

And rejoice in the Lord always. And pray father he thank you for the way that you worked your own gladness and Christ and gladness rejoicing at the good that you would do even over at the sorrow that awaited him. We pray Lord that you would produce in us the same mind of Christ that you were producing in Paul that we would do nothing out of selfish ambition that we would rejoice over your glory over your work over Christ's glory that he receives for his perfect work give us we pray the presence of mind and heart attended by your spirit to notice the good things that you are doing and to have a greater rejoicing over those even the good.

The grief that we do have over the real real sin and wickedness that there is and we pray oh God that you would help us to recognize even in our own arts when we have mixed motives when we have incorrect desires don't let us justify ourselves in the good that you are doing.

Don't let us justify or even mess and deceive ourselves about sinful desires and motivations in our own hearts, thank you for this portion of your word, we pray that your spirit would continue to make it fruitful within us unto your glory and your church is good you ask him.

Jesus name man.