



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Joy in Tribulation

MARCH 7, 2012

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The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians (60-62 A.D.), Paul is imprisoned (one of four Prison Letters, the others being Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon) in Rome addressing the established Christian (mostly Gentile) church in Philippi, the first founded by Paul in Europe. In this letter, Paul, having a fondness for the people of the church of Philippi, because of their faithfulness and generous nature, wanted to thank them for their gifts, letting them know why he was returning Epaphroditus to them, sharing his situation in prison, urging unity in church, and warning them against false teachers. While false doctrine had started to plague many of the churches, he wanted to provide encouragement for practical living and support for sound doctrine. While much of the letter deals with spiritual growth, the tone throughout is that there is joy in Christ and that his joy is not related to worldly circumstances. (Php 1:12-18 NASB)

“Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,” (1:12)

God used Paul’s circumstance. Just after thanking and greeting the Philippian church in the opening verses, Paul tells the brethren, his brothers and sisters in the faith, that he has something that he wants them to know; it’s very important. He shares that his circumstance succeeded in furthering the gospel; things have turned out for good. Contrary to the notion that being in prison would slow or halt the sharing of the gospel of salvation, it did just the opposite and increased the forward movement of the salvation message. How did that happen?

“so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,” (1:13)

Paul was chained 24/7 to the praetorian guards. Paul was jailed for sharing the gospel and subsequently chained 24/7 to the praetorian guards. The praetorian guards were a special group of bodyguards selected from the Roman army to protect and guard a Roman official. In this case they appeared to be the bodyguards of Caesar’s household that were assigned to guard Paul. The guards, chained to Paul, rotated guard shifts every 3-4 hours. This ‘closeness’ gave Paul extended time to share his faith and the gospel message to those who guarded him. As a result, ‘the whole’ or all the praetorian guards knew of the cause of Paul’s imprisonment. Paul shared his joy as a bonds-servant of Christ (1:1) and the gospel of salvation. The ‘everyone else’, mentioned by Paul, were Caesar’s household and others in Rome later noted in the closing of this letter; *“All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household.”(4:22).*

What happen as a result of Paul’s imprisonment?

“and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.” (1:14)

Paul’s witness encouraged others. The local saints, those brothers and sisters in the faith (with the exceptions of those mentioned later in vv. 15 &16) found strength and courage to share the gospel through the example and boldness of Paul’s witness. Most of the brethren saw God faithfulness to His children and in turn taught them not to fear imprisonment when sharing the gospel but rather to trust in God.

“... for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned.” (2 Ti 2:9)

We, like Paul and the Philippian church are to trust and obey.

John H Sammis in 1887, inspired by 1 John 1:7, penned the words to a great hymn: *Trust and Obey*

When we walk with the Lord In the light of his Word, What a glory he sheds on our way!
While we do his good will, He abides with us still, And with all who will trust and obey.
Trust and obey, For there's no other way To be happy in Jesus But to trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise, Not a cloud in the skies, But his smile quickly drives it away,
Not a doubt nor a fear, Not a sigh nor a tear Can abide while we trust and obey.
Trust and obey, For there's no other way To be happy in Jesus But to trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, Not a sorrow we share, But our toil he doth richly repay;
Not a grief nor a loss, Not a frown nor a cross, But is blest if we trust and obey.
Trust and obey, For there's no other way To be happy in Jesus But to trust and obey.

But we never can prove The delights of his love Until all on the altar we lay,
For the favor he shows, And the joy he bestows Are for all who will trust and obey.
Trust and obey, For there's no other way To be happy in Jesus But to trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet We will sit at his feet, Or we'll walk by his side in the way;
What he says we will do, Where he Sends we will go, Never fear, only trust and obey.
Trust and obey, For there's no other way To be happy in Jesus But to trust and obey.

Amen.

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: SESSION OR HEARING WEDNESDAYS AT 7:30AM, STATEHOUSE RM. 44

STAFF, LOBBYISTS AND CAPITOL SQUARE COMMUNITY: WEDNESDAYS AT NOON, STATEHOUSE RM.44