

The Advance of the Gospel; Philippians 1:12-18

- I. What Has Happened
 - A. Our lives (years, months, days) are made up of events
 - B. We are either directly involved in these events or maybe just affected by them
 - C. We categorize these events as either “good” or “bad”
 1. We answer questions based on these events; “How are you?” “How is your day going?” etc.
 2. Our answer is either “good” or “bad”
 - D. Paul evaluates these events differently
 - E. We ought to use the same criteria Paul uses
- II. Advance
 - A. Philippians 1:12–13; 12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.
 - B. “Advance” - a military term for the advance of troops through rough terrain by means of the advance scouts removing barriers
 - C. There are many stories of the advance of the American Army after landing on the beaches of Normandy; of selfless men removing obstacles from the path of the advance
 1. Lt. Sidney Salomon and his battalion landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day
 2. Lt. Salomon of the 2nd Ranger Battalion was leading the remnants of his battalion... His column, marching in combat formation, began taking well-placed artillery shells. To his right, Salomon could see a Norman church, its steeple the only high point around. He was certain the Germans had an observer spotting for their artillery in that steeple. Behind Salomon a Sherman tank chugged up, the only American tank to be seen. It was buttoned up. Salomon wanted it to elevate its 75mm cannon and blast that steeple, but he couldn't get the crew's attention, not even when he knocked on the side of the tank with the butt of his carbine. "So I ultimately stood in the middle of the road directly in front of the tank, waving my arms, and pointing in the direction of the church." That produced results. After a couple of shots from the cannon and several bursts from the .50-caliber machine gun, the artillery spotter was no more." worldwar2history.info
 - D. It was also used by Greek philosophers (Stoics) as a catchword for the difficult path to wisdom
 - E. Paul faced many difficulties from the very beginning of his conversion to the very last thing we read about him
 1. Acts 9:20–25; 20 And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” 21 And all who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?” 22 But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ. 23 When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, 24 but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, 25 but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.
 2. Acts 28:17; After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, “Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

- F. Our Christian life is an “advance;” moving through rough terrain and removing obstacles in our and others’ way
- G. Paul says as much to Timothy
- H. 1 Timothy 4:11–16; 11 Command and teach these things. 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.
- I. Anyone that came into contact with Paul heard the Gospel
 - 1. “Paul, although blessed with some liberty, was nevertheless chained to a Roman soldier at all times, his captor being changed several times a day, and thus providing Paul with a captive audience which included, in time, practically the whole praetorian guard, a body of troops assigned to the person of the emperor.” Coffman
 - 2. “And to all the rest”
- J. This Advance of the Gospel had an amazing result

III. Bold

- A. Philippians 1:14; And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.
- B. “Confident” - to obey, with the connotation of being persuaded that the course of action is correct
- C. Paul’s preaching while in prison had persuaded and emboldened the others to “speak the word without fear”
 - 1. Imprisonment is designed to have the opposite effect
 - 2. Those who are in prison serve as an example of what not to do
- D. The way we respond, our demeanor, our attitude, our actions during times of stress and pressure can serve as a source of great encouragement to other Christians
- E. How do we respond when confronted with names like, “bigot,” “homophobe,” “narrow minded,” and you can add whatever other names you have experienced
- F. Stephen responded with God’s word
 - 1. Acts 6:11–14; 11 Then they secretly instigated men who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” 12 And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, 13 and they set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, 14 for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.”
 - 2. Acts 7:57–58; 57 But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. 58 Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.
- G. Peter and John (and likely the rest of the apostles)
 - 1. Acts 4:5–12; 5 On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, 6 with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, 9 if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the

people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

2. The High Priest and the rest threatened John and Peter
3. Acts 4:19–20; 19 But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, 20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

H. Paul endured many things

- I. 2 Corinthians 11:23–27; 23 Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. 24 Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

J. This is how we endure hardship! As an obstacle in the way of the advance of the Gospel!

IV. Christ is Proclaimed

- A. Philippians 1:15–18; 15 Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. 16 The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

B. At issue here is the motive, not the message

1. Paul has some very sharp rebukes for false teachers
2. Galatians 2:11–14; 11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. 13 And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”
3. Some gospel preachers are more concerned with their standing among others
4. Paul is more concerned that the message of Christ is preached than with the motives behind the preaching
5. Some may have thought that the motives were an obstacle to the message
6. Whatever the motivation, as long as Christ is preached we should rejoice
7. “There is a toleration in Paul's words here which would bless the whole world if more widely imitated.” Coffman

C. The message of Christ is what this “advance” is all about!

- D. Acts 2:22–24; 22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24

God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

E. 1 Corinthians 15:3–4; 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

F. 1 Peter 2:24; He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

V. Advance of the Gospel

A. What has happened to us is neither “good” nor “bad” but serves to advance the Gospel

B. The suffering of faithful Christians should embolden us to preach the Gospel

C. We should rejoice at the preaching of the Gospel, regardless of the motivation of the preacher

D. Because the Gospel is the world’s salvation