**Philippians 1b**

**LAST WEEK - PAUL’S PRISON MINISTRY**

12  But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,

* **WHAT THINGS?**
	+ He was called a liar by envious religious leaders.
	+ His message was rejected by mobs of angry pagans…
	+ …who then beat him & buried him in rocks once.
	+ He was arrested – sometimes just to save him from being killed.
	+ He was deserted by close friends.
	+ Some of his converts were backsliding…
	+ He often was low on funds, food, and friends.
	+ He survived a two weeklong hurricane at sea.
	+ And a couple of times the ship he was traveling on… sunk. In Paul’s day the first thing a ship captain did when the ship was going down was to kill the prisoners. Paul survived even that… But then was bitten by a snake when he reached shore…
		- **It’s a wonder ANYBODY EVER went on a second trip with him**!
* **SO… Paul says, “Look on the bright side… “People are getting saved here in prison!” Attendance is up! The acoustics here are great for worship! I choose to rejoice rather than to grumble.**

**CHANGED BY CHAINS**

13  so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; 14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

* Something about the attitude of the Apostle changed the very Roman guards that he was chained to.
* He wrote to the Romans that “we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.” **Romans 8:28**

15  Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, **(the Judaizers)** and some also from goodwill:

16  The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; 17  **but the latter out of love,** knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.

* It was a burden to the Apostle Paul that some preachers were talking about Jesus, but they were REALLY more concerned with themselves and looking religious.
* They are still doing this today - the religious-robed professionals. SO…

**REJOICE**

18  **What then?** Only *that* in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, **(A choice)** yes, and will rejoice.

* It sounds like Paul would have befriended most of the preachers in ANY town – So long as they were preaching about Jesus. *(Me too)*

19  For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20  according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, **but with all boldness**, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

* Paul was eager and even excited to be able to share the Gospel in any way he could.
* His sufferings became sermons… His scars were his street creds… And now his prison was his pulpit…
* How devoted was he? Listen…

**21  For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.**

* Paul is contemplating his fate here. He doesn’t know if once he gets before Caesar – Caesar won’t listen for a moment… and then give the thumbs down motion.
	+ IF that happened here, and we don’t know IF it did… Paul would have only the time it took to drag him outside to live. The soldiers would execute him and throw his body into the heap of other bodies. Paul says, “If that happens, TO DIE IS GAIN!”
	+ Some historical documents imply that Paul lives for a few more years after his initial appearance before Caesar… “To live is Christ.”
	+ THEN Caesar ordered him to be beheaded. “To die is gain.”

22  But if *I* live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23  For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better.

* **Chuck Smith** – “Notice that Paul **DOES NOT** say, “I have a desire to depart and be asleep until the Lord comes for the Church.”
* **Paul is NOT looking for a nap…** He is looking for JESUS!
* Who else besides me is looking forward to being with Jesus?
* 2 Corinthians 5:8 tells us that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (paraphrase)

24  Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you.

* WE WOULD SAY: “Ima stay here a while!” But… just for you.

25  And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, 26  that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

* He loves the Philippians so much he wants to visit and fellowship with them again!

**HERE IS A GOOD GODSEND FOR US TODAY**

27  Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, 28  and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.

29  For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30  having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear *is* in me.

* **NLT** - For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him. 30  We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it.

CCSV – In heaven Paul is wanting to hear about the faithfulness of our fellowship! Let’s NOT let him down!