

The Advance Of The Gospel

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[0 : 00] The following sermon is made available by Lakeside Bible Church in Cornelius, North Carolina.

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I want to invite you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Philippians. Philippians chapter 1. But I would that you should understand, brethren, that the things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel or the advancement of the gospel, so that my bonds in Christ are manifest or made known in all the palace and in all other places.

And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife.

[1 : 18] And some also of goodwill. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds. But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel.

What then? Or so what, Paul says. I think a helpful synopsis of this particular passage in the title for our message today is simply the advance of the gospel.

The advance of the gospel. As we study through the book of Philippians, we must keep in mind that this book is God's word having been delivered to us in the form of an actual letter.

It's a real letter, a real historical event, a real historical moment that was written by a real person named Paul to a real church in a real city called Philippi.

It's easy for us, if you're like me, it's easy to get caught up in the stories that we enjoy. It's easy to get caught up in the entertainment that we enjoy. And when we come to the word, we have a hard time distinguishing the difference between the fictional things that surround our lives and the truth of the scriptures.

[2 : 39] And sometimes we come to a book like Philippians and we will read it acknowledging at least verbally that this is God's word. But in the back of our minds, we're not processing that this is actual truth. This is a real person writing to a real group of people.

And so it's helpful for us to remember that as we study this book, this is a real letter written by a real person. The Philippian church was concerned for the welfare of the apostle Paul.

And so they sent a man named Epaphroditus to visit Paul in Rome. He delivered a particular financial gift to assist with Paul's ministry there.

He spent time comforting and encouraging Paul as he was in prison there. And then he was tasked with the purpose of reporting back to the church about what was going on in Paul's life.

So in these first 11 verses, we see this partnership that Paul references that he has with this Philippian church. And then in this next thing, we see that we start to see the fullness of what's actually happening.

- [3 : 38] That Epaphroditus has come because this church and their partnership was concerned for Paul. He's in prison there. They hadn't heard much from him and they hadn't heard much about the ministry and they were concerned about their friend.

Now, most scholars date this particular book, this writing to AD 61 or 62. And towards the end of Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, the believers there in Philippi obviously were concerned about Paul's circumstances.

But we can see as we read through these verses and as we'll study them this morning, that it wasn't just Paul's circumstances that gave them concern. They were concerned about the advancement of the gospel.

All of them had been impacted in a tremendous way by Paul coming to the city of Philippi and preaching the truth about Jesus, marking the first time that the gospel of Jesus had ever actually made its way to the continent of Europe.

This was a significant church. This was a people that were greatly impacted by him. Impacted by the message that he brought. And naturally, they cared for that message to go throughout the whole world, just like we would care.

- [4 : 44] We want this gospel message of Jesus to go all through Cornelius and Davidson and hundreds of people on throughout the world. That's why we're involving ourselves in gospel partnerships all around the world. We desire that.

We want that. This church wanted that too. And so when they hear that the man that has impacted them so greatly that the Lord had used so greatly in these other cities is put in prison and he's been in prison now for four years, their concern is that the gospel is not going to advance.

What's going to happen with the gospel? What's going to happen with this good news that Paul's been sharing all across the world? This good news that has changed our lives radically? This good news that we desire to change the lives of everyone else as well?

So Paul uses these verses, 12 through 18, as a means of comfort for the troubled Philippians. And in these verses, he provides both an encouragement and an exhortation as it relates to the advancement of the gospel, as well as our perspective of various life circumstances.

Now, I hope that you were able to grab one of those scripture journals when you came in. If you didn't, we'll get you one at the end of the service and you can keep notes. I only have two particular notes I'm going to have you write down. What I'm about to tell you is not on the screen, but I'm going to mention it to you.

- [5 : 59] And it may would be helpful for you to write it down to reference back later in your own study. The first thing that we see as far as this encouragement, remember there's an encouragement and an exhortation that overshadows this whole section of verses.

The encouragement is this, that God's gospel purposes cannot be stopped. God's gospel purposes cannot be stopped.

For 2,000 years now, God's gospel purposes have been attempted to be thwarted by many, many, many people. Attack after attack for thousands of years has come against the church of Christ.

It has come against the inerrancy of the scripture. It has come against the gospel of Jesus Christ. But God's gospel purposes cannot be stopped. That is an overwhelming encouragement in these few verses here.

The scriptures teach us this glorious truth that God is sovereignly at work in every circumstance of our lives. In order that, his gospel purposes might be accomplished in us first and then through us and in the lives of others.

[7 : 11] Let me give you just a couple of other examples. Do you remember Joseph in the book of Genesis? His own brothers beat him up, threw him in a pit, and sold him into slavery.

And leaving the comforts of his own home and of his own family, he is taken to Egypt to live in a land that he's never been to, to learn a language that he's never spoken, and he becomes a slave.

And at the end of that story, you can read it in the end of the book of Genesis. At the end of that story, when God's purposes are actually revealed, and we see all that happens with Joseph's life. Joseph's brothers, after his dad dies, Joseph's brothers come back to him, and they're scared for their life.

They're scared that Joseph is going to get his revenge now that dad's dead. And Joseph looks at him in Genesis chapter 50, and he says, you guys don't understand. You meant this for evil, but God meant this for good in order to save much people alive.

Sure, it was Joseph's brothers that threw him in the pit. It was the action of their doing that sold him into slavery. But God was in sovereign control of all of those events in order that he might accomplish his purposes in Joseph's lives, and then to save a lot of people alive during a very, very sore famine in the land of Egypt and around the world.

[8 : 26] Then we see in Paul's own testimony, remembering the testimony of how he started this church in Philippi. He thought maybe he was going to die in Philippi on that journey.

He leads a girl to the Lord. He cast out a demon out of a slave girl, and he gets in trouble for it. He's beaten nearly to death, stripped of his clothes in public in front of all the other people in Philippi, cast into prison, thinking that he's going to be executed the next morning.

Yet God used that experience and that event in his life to bring about the conversion of the jailer that had actually thrown him into prison. And that's the backdrop of what he writes in Philippians chapter 2 and verse 13 when he says, It is God which works in you.

It's God that works in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. And we can go story after story and passage after passage. And the overwhelming truth of the Bible is that our God actually is God.

And he acts as God. He controls as God. He works in every situation in our lives to accomplish his purposes in us and then to accomplish his purposes through us. So when we look at Paul's situation in Rome as he's in prison, when we see the worry of the Philippian church, Paul easily writes back to them and says, Don't worry, God's got this.

[9 : 45] And he's going to take care of this. And he's doing this for his glory. Paul's imprisonment was all about the gospel. Your reason for being here today has a gospel purpose.

Either you need to be impacted by the gospel or you need to be encouraged in the impact that you're sharing with others about the gospel. And what we understand as we study verses like this and verses like 2 Peter 3, 9, is that God in his overwhelming love and grace, his capacity for forgiveness for us is relentless.

And he knows everyone that's going to be saved from now until the end of time. And he will not stop his plan until each of those people have come to faith in Christ.

There's nobody that he knows will be saved that he'll just decide before they ever get that opportunity that he's going to call it quits and just take us on home to heaven. And he relentlessly pursues that through us.

So that when Paul goes to prison, he understands, Well, God's got me here because there's people here that need to be saved that otherwise I wouldn't be able to share the gospel with. And we begin to see this unfolded in these verses, this wonderful truth.

[10 : 59] God can't be prevented. That's the encouragement that overshadows these verses. Here's the exhortation that because of that truth, believers must stay focused on the gospel.

We, Lakeside Bible Church, must stay focused on the gospel. Paul uses these verses to warn the Philippians of becoming distracted.

Hardship and persecution can easily cause us to take our focus off the gospel. And this passage serves as an instruction for us to view every circumstance of our life through the lens of God's gospel purposes.

We must remain focused if we are to persevere and to please the Lord. All of this is summed up in Paul's statement in verse number 12. Would you look at it with me again?

But I would that you would understand, brothers. In other words, I want you to know, brethren in Christ, I want you to know that the things that have happened to me have served the purpose of advancing the gospel.

[12 : 08] Verse 12 is the point of the passage. Verses 13 through 18 is the explanation of verse number 12. So everything that's happening is happening for the advancement of the gospel.

Now let's talk about the two ways that he demonstrates that. The first one is this. Write this down. The gospel advances in spite of difficult circumstances. The gospel advances in spite of difficult circumstances.

Acts chapter 21 through 28. In fact, write that in the margins. You can reference that later. Acts chapter 21 through 28 give a detailed description of the events leading up to Paul's writing of this letter.

What you'll find happening there is Paul makes his way to Jerusalem in Acts chapter 21. The Jews there did not like that he was preaching the gospel of Christ, so they had him arrested.

He was taken into custody there, and he was passed back and forth through various legal proceedings as he was there in Jerusalem. And eventually, he's sent to Caesarea or Caesarea, however you want to say it.

[13 : 07] He's sent to Caesarea, and he's put under house arrest there until they were willing to reopen his case. Now, here's the thing about it. There was no criminal charge against him. That's one of the issues here.

There was no criminal charge against him. He had done nothing wrong. This was simply a group of Jews that hated the gospel message of Jesus Christ. The Romans at that time that had ruled Jerusalem were afraid that insurrectionists was going to happen within the Jewish culture and sect there in Jerusalem.

And so they went along with it, and so they sent him to Caesarea. Here's the problem. He didn't have his case reopened for two years. He sits under house arrest, chained to a Roman guard for two years for no reason.

That's his circumstance. Finally, after two years, a man named Festus opens up his case again. And in that process, Paul, being a Roman, appeals to Caesar, which in Roman law meant that he had to go to Rome, and he would have his day in court, so to speak, in front of the emperor.

So he makes this journey to Rome. The gospel advancing throughout the entire process. He's shipwrecked as a part of that process. People are saved even through the shipwrecking. I mean, this guy has gone through it.

[14 : 24] And he gets to Rome. Caesar's not ready to see him. So they keep him on house arrest for another two years. When Paul writes this letter, he has now been in prison for four years for no reason.

Paul's situation was difficult, to say the least. But he was not defeated. He understood that God was using his imprisonment for the advance of the gospel. And he gives two specific proofs of that in these verses.

The first one is this. In verse number 13, we see that Paul's imprisonment produced a unique opportunity. It produced a unique opportunity. Look with me at verse 13. If you're using one of the church Bibles, you'll see at the end of verse 13, *places* is actually in italics.

That means it was added by the translators later. It's not actually in the text. So when we read this particular verse, we can read it as it is made known in all of the palace or the praetorian guard and in all others is really what it's a reference to there.

Because he was Roman by birth and because there was really no real criminal charge against him, Paul wasn't subjected to a typical jail cell or dungeon type experience.

[15 : 46] When he says my bonds in verse 13, he's referencing this house arrest. In God's providence, Paul was given a place to live where his companions could come and go as they pleased to see him and to minister to him.

But a part of this house arrest was that he was chained 24 hours a day to a Roman guard. That's where the word *palace* comes in in verse number 13.

This is a reference to the praetorian guard or the imperial guard is what it is. This was an elite group of soldiers in the Roman Empire. They were the best of the best. 10,000 of them lived in Rome and they were so powerful that at one time in history, they were even responsible for setting up and empowering the emperor of Rome.

This was a powerful group of men. 24 hours a day, Paul was chained to one of those men. They went in six hour shifts is what history tells us. And every six hours, Paul would have a unique opportunity to share the gospel with another person.

So if we're just considering the two years that Paul's in Rome, think about this. There is the potential that in his imprisonment, four soldiers a day for two years, Paul had the potential of sharing the gospel with nearly 3,000 of these men that were responsible for ruling the world at that time.

[17 : 15] That's in God's providence. When Paul looked at his condition, when we think of Paul's difficult circumstance, he didn't view it as a difficult circumstance.

He viewed it as God's way of advancing the gospel because four times a day, he had fresh meat, so to speak, that would come in, that would switch out the chains. And he knew, God knew that those men were never coming to any of Paul's evangelistic talks.

They weren't coming to 10 o'clock worship service at Cornelius Elementary School, okay? They weren't going there for that. They didn't have time for that. God knew they weren't going to come, but God had a gospel purpose in some of their lives.

So God put Paul in a place where they had to come to him. It meant imprisonment for four years for Paul, but it meant the radical life change of some of these men. And that gospel message spread because of Paul's imprisonment all throughout Rome.

So at the end of verse 13, it was known not only to all the Praetorian Guard, all 10,000 of these men, but it was known in all others in Rome too. Paul stuck in a room for four years, yet the gospel spreads like wildfire.

[18 : 20] That is in God's providence. So when you see your circumstance today, we don't view it as a woe is me. We view it as a God is good, and it doesn't matter what my circumstance is.

God has a purpose for this, and it's not just a purpose in me. It's a purpose in others around me. So when you see your difficulty and you see your struggle, look for God's gospel purposes in your struggle.

Think of the conversations these men would have heard. I would imagine, as bold as Paul was, each one that came in probably got a straightforward gospel presentation. May have been the first thing that he did.

I mean, might as well get it out of the way. You're going to be here for six hours. But one of the unique things about God's providence in this house arrest is Paul's companions could come and go.

He couldn't come and go, but his companions could. Epaphroditus shows up from Philippi, and he comes and he sits down in the house. Imagine the conversation that that Roman guard heard that day.

[19 : 20] This Roman guard is used to a society that's a dog-eat-dog world. He comes in this day. He's sitting probably as far away from Paul as he can sit.

And he hears this conversation between Paul and Epaphroditus. And Epaphroditus is talking about love. Paul, we love you so much. We're just, we're concerned about you.

By the way, here's some money. You know, we don't have much, but we just want to be a blessing to you. However this can help the gospel purposes here, here it is. Everything that was opposite of that Roman soldier was demonstrated in that conversation, most likely.

Imagine the prayers that they heard Paul pray. Lord, thank you for this imprisonment. I know you're using it. And thank you for my friend Epaphroditus that has come to encourage me today.

And thank you for my friends in Philippi. And thank you for this praetorian guard that's heard our full conversation today, that's heard your gospel. And thank you for the guy that came before him that heard it too.

[20 : 25] Imagine the impact. All because Paul viewed his circumstance, not as a woe is me, I got to get out of this as soon as I can. But as a God has me here for a reason.

And that reason is the advancement of the gospel. And so when we look at this difficult circumstance, we don't see Paul's circumstance. We see that God is sovereignly in control. And that his gospel purpose will not be stopped.

He couldn't have gone to them. So God put them in a circumstance that they'd have to come to Paul. And we see once again that God's ultimate purpose is not our comfort and happiness.

Don't believe any preacher that will tell you that when you get saved and you come to faith in Christ, your life will get better. Because that's not necessarily true. Because God's primary concern is not your comfort, your happiness.

God's primary concern is his glory through the gospel. In you first and then through you. Which means there could be an imprisonment of sorts ahead for you and for me.

[21 : 28] And when that happens, do we step back like Paul and say, God's using this. And I will witness the gospel because that's why God has put me here. Not only did his imprisonment produce a unique opportunity, verse 14 shows us that it produced boldness in other believers.

And it's still doing that today. I'm encouraged by this passage. I'm emboldened today by Paul's example. There's two ways that he shows this boldness in verse 14. First is that they were bold in faith.

They were bold in faith. Look at verse 14. Many of the brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my imprisonment are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Now the arrangement of these words is unique.

If you're using one of those scripture journals, it'll say it a little bit of a different way. And here's the way that it says it. Here's what it means. That many of the brethren waxing confident in the Lord because of my imprisonment are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

The first thing they were bold in was bold in faith. They saw the way that God was using Paul in that prison and it caused them to be more confident, not in themselves or in Paul, but confident in the Lord.

[22 : 36] And this point that Paul's trying to drive that God's pursuit is relentless and he cannot be stopped is what they began to understand. That even if we get cast into prison, it's fine because God will use us in the prison like he's using Paul in the prison.

God can't be stopped. They got confidence in the Lord. And then beyond that confidence in the Lord, we see that they were bold in their witness as well. A persecution that at one time brought fear to the church was now responsible for a passionate boldness to preach the truth.

Which as we study the history of the church, understand that that's most often what happens with persecution, isn't it? We see heavy persecution even today. We begin to see this gospel message spread like wildfire.

It's wild. It's not how we would think that it would work. You would think somebody gets murdered or martyred or cast into prison for their faith.

That's going to scare people from assuming that same faith. Over and over and over throughout all history, the opposite is what has happened. Paul gets cast into prison for four years and the gospel spreads like crazy because everybody else is bold to preach the gospel.

[23 : 46] Weird. We see this in the Middle Ages. Some of you will know John Bunyan. He's most famous for writing The Pilgrim's Progress. You've probably read it before.

He was also a fantastic preacher. And he was arrested because of preaching the gospel and he was thrown into prison. And they said that as he would sit in his prison cell, he had to preach the gospel. So he'd preach it as loud as he possibly could so that the people on the other side of the wall through a window could come by and they could listen to him preach the Bible.

And the authorities got so tired of him yelling out the gospel message that they moved him to the innermost part of the prison where nobody could hear him. And they locked him up. Thinking that they had shut John Bunyan up finally for the rest of his life, that he'll never have this gospel impact anymore.

sitting in that room where nobody can hear him, he writes The Pilgrim's Progress, which today is still used to spread the gospel all throughout the world. 400 years later, imprisonment cannot stop God's purposes.

And whatever it is you're chained to today, that's not going to stop God either. I don't know what it is you're chained to. Maybe you're chained to a job that you really hate.

[25 : 02] Every morning when you get up and you drive to work, it's the last thing that you want to do. Can I encourage you that tomorrow when you go to work, don't think about how much you hate your job.

Think, God's chained me to this job for a reason. What is God's gospel purpose in me being at this place of work today? Some of you are chained to an illness.

It's not that you hate your job, it's that you hate your health. And you just can't get over whatever it is that keeps coming. Hey, if you're discouraged in that, can I encourage you that God has a gospel purpose in that illness?

So ask yourself today, what is God's gospel purpose in my illness? And how can I demonstrate his glory through it? It could be that it's your life that he's trying to impact.

It could also be that it's the life of others. Find your chain today and then ask yourself, why has God given this to me? Not as a question of, Lord, I don't deserve this hardship, but as a question of, Lord, what are you doing in this?

[26 : 09] Help me be faithful to the gospel in this. So the gospel advances despite difficult circumstances. Finally, and more quickly, the gospel advances in spite of deceitful criticisms.

In spite of deceitful criticisms. Paul gets through these first two verses in 13 and 14. He is reassuring the Philippians that God is in control and that he's using all of this for the advancement of the gospel.

And then he anticipates a second question. Verses 13 and 14 anticipate the question by the Philippians, what is happening to the gospel that you're in prison?

Paul answers that question. Everything that is good is happening with the gospel, even though I'm in prison. And then he anticipates the second question. Well, Paul, what about all of these people not in prison that are saying you're a big phony?

That are saying that you're actually in prison because you broke the law in some way or they're criticizing you in some way. What's going to happen with the gospel for these people that are building their churches and they're building it on pretense?

[27 : 16] How can the gospel work through this? What's God going to do in this? That's the second question. You see Paul answering that in his opening statement in verse 15. Referencing back to those that are bold to speak the word without fear, he says, some of them indeed, as you might've been wondering, preach Christ even of envy and strife.

Some also of goodwill. The second thing that's happened to him is that he was being personally attacked. He's not even got a way to defend himself.

He's being personally attacked for his imprisonment and maybe even for the gospel. This unity is one of the greatest obstacles to the church's gospel focus.

Satan's been attacking this unity since the beginning and it's for this reason that unity in the gospel is one of the dominant themes of the book of Philippians.

Let me show you just a few verses. Look at verse number nine in chapter one. You're still there, right? This was a part of Paul's prayer. And I pray that your love may abound yet more and more.

[28 : 23] Right from the beginning, as he's talking about their gospel partnership, he emphasizes this unity together. Look with me at verse 27 of chapter one. He encouraged them, only let your conversation or your lifestyle be as it become at the gospel of Christ.

That whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs that you do what? That you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

Look at chapter two, the first four verses there. If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the spirit, any bowels of mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that you be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind.

Look at chapter four in verse number two. He speaks to a specific situation in the Philippian church. I beseech Euodias and I beseech Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

Over and over, Paul is emphasizing to the Philippian church, unity in the gospel is most important. Unity in the gospel. Hey, Euodias, Syntyche, whatever this riff is you guys got going on, the gospel is more important than that.

[29 : 32] So get your act together and let's unify together in the gospel. And so when we see this point and the Philippians are maybe writing, asking about these people that are attacking him and Paul say, look, the gospel is going to advance whether people are on my side or not.

What we care about is the gospel. We often expect to be criticized by those outside of Christ, but it's a particularly damaging blow when the criticisms come from those who are actually within the body of Christ.

Paul wrote a number of times about attacks on his ministry, but in this case, he's not referring to false teachers that are proclaiming a false gospel. In this circumstance, he's been attacked by other believers.

The problem here is not an issue of theology. It's an issue of a sinful motive of the heart. And we see that there will always be those that preach Christ with a sinful motive.

Look at the descriptions Paul gives. He doesn't tell us the exact circumstance. We can probably figure it out pretty easily, but he doesn't tell us plainly, but he does tell us the spirit of some of these other preachers of the gospel.

[30 : 47] Look at verse 14. He describes them with two words, envy and strife. They preach Christ of envy and strife. Those two words are rivalry and jealousy is what they're a reference to. Look at verse 16.

They preach Christ of contention. That means selfish ambition. They're not concerned about the gospel. They're concerned about building their own following. 16 again, that they preach it not sincerely.

That is without honesty and with an impure motive. 16 again, that they seek to add affliction to his bonds. They hope that it would hurt him even further. They were trying to kick a guy while he was down.

Verse 18, he says that whether they are preaching in pretense or in truth, pretense there refers to deceit or lies. That's the description given to these men. But the common thing of these particular men and these gospel preachers was that they actually had the gospel.

But the fact is they were preaching the gospel with deceitful motives. They didn't actually care about people's lives being changed. They cared about growing their church larger than the guy down the street.

[31 : 51] They didn't care so much about Paul's imprisonment as far as his care and concern. They cared about his imprisonment because as long as he was in prison, they could grow their own following.

That was the spirit of these men. The Philippians were concerned that it was gonna damage the gospel. And Paul says, as long as the gospel's being preached, I don't care what they say about me. Praise the Lord for the gospel.

They may have preached the right message, but they preached it from the wrong heart and with the wrong motives. Remember John the Baptist said, and a question similar to this after Jesus was coming onto the scene, he said, I must decrease and he must increase.

That was the opposite of these men's view. And there's a warning for us in this because it's amazing how often ego and selfish ambition can creep into the heart of a pastor or any believer for that matter.

When we care more about our image than we care about the gospel, we will inevitably find ourselves doing the right things for all the wrong reasons.

[33 : 02] When we're ruled by jealousy, we'll resort to tearing down any pastor or church that God has blessed with the image that we desire to have.

When impure motives have permeated our hearts, we'll look for any way possible to subtly rejoice in or even contribute to the hardship of someone that has what we want.

It's amazing the disunity that's experienced among believers. All because of selfish ambition, envy and strife, rivalry and jealousy.

And then we see that we shouldn't be distracted by the criticisms of others. One element of caring about your image more than the gospel is that you become ruled by jealousy.

You do all the right things for the wrong reasons. Another element of that is that you can't let go of the criticisms that have been hurled your way.

[34 : 14] I don't know how many times I've seen pastors, Christians, come under fire from people within the faith and they lose their focus on the gospel because of it.

They're not the ones that were hurling insults, but they get so obsessed with the criticisms that come their way that every message is about why that church and why that guy is not doing it the right way.

Christians that have been hurt in one church or another and the last thing that they would do despite the gospel witness of that church is say anything positive about it. All they can do is tell you why that pastor is a problem and the problems that they had in that church and why that place is doing it wrong.

And in all of that, they lose their own focus of the gospel to where they can't even rejoice in the gospel focus of another church because they can't get past the criticisms or the hardship that they faced in that place.

It's one thing to lose focus of the gospel because you're jealous. It's another thing to lose focus of the gospel because you've been hurt and you can't get past it. Paul says, I don't care.

[35 : 23] I'm just glad they're preaching the gospel. And we're not at war with any other church in Cornelius. We're not trying to pull away from the other churches here. That's not what we're here for.

We're here to preach the gospel. Be thankful for any witness of the gospel. Look at verse 18. So what, Paul says, in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ has preached and I'm going to rejoice when Christ has preached.

I will rejoice. The gospel was Paul's main concern and my prayer is that it would be our main concern. Thank you for listening to this sermon made available by Lakeside Bible Church.

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