

Prayer List

Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia
Josh
Daniel
Olene

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Michael Odom - MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Ernie Sprinkel - preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

What king forced ten of his concubines to live as widows for the rest of their lives?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Jezebel - 2 Kings 9:30

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Snatching Victory From Defeat - Philippians 1:12

By Jon W. Quinn

Jesus spoke quite plainly of the costs of true discipleship and discouraged people who were unwilling to pay the cost from even starting (Luke 24:27-30). Paul always wanted others to know all the facts. He always told it like it is; the good and the bad. He never failed to face reality. He was certainly like the Lord Himself in this (Philippians 1:12-19). Paul was a prisoner at the time he wrote this letter to the church of Christ at Philippi. It wasn't right that he suffered as a prisoner of faith. Notice how he dealt with being in prison; while he never ignored this fact, but neither did he use it to play upon the sympathies of others. In fact, he did exactly the opposite. Instead of seeking sympathy because of his confinement, he took advantage of the situation so that he might be an encouragement to others. This section of scripture deals with the fact that even in the midst of burden and disappointment distinct advantages had come to him. What a powerful and helpful lesson that is for us!

"Now I Want You to Know"

"Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel..." (Philippians 1:12). Many people miss out on great blessings/opportunities in life because they do not understand an event. Many times we assume something is true when it isn't. Sometimes we miss opportunities because think on a level beneath faith in God.

Since Paul was in prison, he could no longer move about freely preaching the gospel of Christ. We might assume that he is severely hampered in what he is able to accomplish. Suppose Paul had made that same assumption and that he had become bitter and blamed

God for it. Suppose he had ceased to make any effort toward sharing the good news about Jesus Christ and allowed cynicism to take over his life?

Not Paul! He reasoned that if God had permitted him to be imprisoned there was a divine purpose for it. So, he looked for opportunities and found them by the wagonloads!

Listen! The world will never adjust itself to completely suit our preferences. Some things will not go "right" and it will not always be fair. But, life can always be successful, and will be as long as we take it and fit it into God's plan. That is what Paul did. He was not ready to quit, and he didn't.

"For The Greater Progress of the Gospel"

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

Paul frankly stated his feelings about the disasters that had come to him. He refused to be a defeated man at the end of a strenuous life.

He did not know for certain whether his imprisonment would end in death, or in release, but he refused to allow either possibility to deter him from promoting the gospel of His and our Savior, Jesus Christ. He said, "But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake." (Philippians 1:22-24).

Now, it could be that thinking he might be executed would cause him to become cynical and do little. Or, thinking that he needed to improve his chances of being released, that he would not be very active and keep quiet. But he didn't do that. He preached the gospel. He taught prisoners and slaves and soldiers and guards and governors and even a king. He by no means convinced them all; not even most of them; but only a few. But it was enough.

What makes this all the more wonderful is who Paul was, and who he had been. He had also been a persecutor of the Way, but had been changed so radically by the Lord he had met on the road to Damascus. A look at Paul's conversion and subsequent life shows the truth behind his words... he lived as one who had seen Jesus. It is powerful evidence to the truth of Jesus and who He is. Make sure you share this with others! One of the reasons you believe is because of Paul's life, and how it fit his explanation of why he was so zealous in spite of imprisonment and other evil circumstances (Acts 22:4-16).

"My Circumstances Have turned Out"

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

Similar to our own era, the time in which Paul lived was one in which people had become disillusioned with shallow substitutes for answering real human spiritual needs. This lack of true spirituality gave way to people searching for substitutes, just like today. They longed for something substantial, something that would give them confidence concerning the meaning of life and hope for the future beyond the grave. There were, and are today, all kinds of cults and occultism seeking to address those needs, or at least make money off of them.

Today, as then, true Christianity provides the only answer. Paul delivered the message with a certainty that caused people to realize their craving for inner peace would be met only in Christ. Paul's demeanor, as well as the demeanor of other Christians in similar circumstances, was convincing to others that Paul had found something special. Could his words about Jesus and salvation and eternal life be true? His actions strongly indicated that they were! What do your actions say about your words of professed faith?

Paul believed that life had a main issue which dwarfed all others. In the world of uncertainty only Christ can bring a steadfast hope and an anchor for the soul. As Paul delivered this message to the people around him, a wonderful thing happened. The soldiers, impressed by Paul's strength of character, wanted to know more about his Savior and Lord. As his guards were believing, the word was spread. Paul became an object of interest. Through those people whom Paul contacted, the gospel was spread even further.

This is one of the reasons why we must never compromise our beliefs, but also we should not become so mean and militant that we harm the message through an obstinate and haughty attitude.

Adversity can and will strengthen us if we have faith. We can turn our burdens into bridges. We simply do not have all the answers as to the dilemmas we face each day as far as why or what good may come from them, but by faith we shall face them as did Paul, and be confident of the final good outcome of our faith, the salvation of our souls. From Expository Files 14.7; July 2007