

# Studies in Philippians

## LESSON II

Text: Chapter 1, Verses 12-30 (NIV)

<sup>12</sup> Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. <sup>13</sup> As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. <sup>14</sup> Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

<sup>15</sup> It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. <sup>16</sup> The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. <sup>17</sup> The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. <sup>18</sup> But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, <sup>19</sup> for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

<sup>20</sup> I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup> For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup> If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! <sup>23</sup> I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; <sup>24</sup> but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. <sup>25</sup> Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, <sup>26</sup> so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

<sup>27</sup> Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel <sup>28</sup> without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. <sup>29</sup> For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, <sup>30</sup> since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

# Questions for Discussion

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1. Take another look at verses 12 through 14—what a perspective! What happened when Paul became aware of the divine hand of God in his life? Is it possible to see our own life circumstances the way that Paul did his own?
2. Can God use anyone to spread the Gospel? (vv. 15-18) Even those who preach Christ “out of envy and rivalry”? Does this mean we can rejoice when Jesus is preached, even when we disagree with, say, that person’s view of the book of Revelation?
3. What did Paul see as the point of his suffering? (vv. 19-20) Why was the decision to follow Christ a win-win situation for him (and for us)? (vv. 21-26)
4. Take another look at the first sentence in verse 27. Now, personalize the passage by defining “whatever happens” as a specific challenge you are facing now. For example, “Whatever happens at work, I will conduct myself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.”
5. How does our decision to faithfully “take up our cross and follow Christ” (Matthew 16:24) become a powerful source of encouragement and inspiration to others? (vs. 28a)
6. How does suffering fit into God’s plan for our lives? (vv. 28b-30)