

“The Mind of Christ”
Week 2: Philippians 1:12-18a

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 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.

- 1. Paul says in verse 12 that “*what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.*” What do you think of when you read that? Can you think of a time in your life where something that seemed “bad” – for whatever reason – actually served to “advance the gospel”?**
- 2. How could the fact that Paul was “in chains” actually help to become other believers to “*become confident in the Lord*”? Can you think of a situation where someone’s difficulties encouraged others to become more confident and bold in declaring their faith?**
- 3. How can we reconcile the idea of people “*preaching Christ out of envy and rivalry*”? Doesn’t that seem to contradict the very message of the Gospel? In verse 17, Paul says that those who *preach Christ out of envy and rivalry* do so *out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me...* Again, doesn’t this seem to contradict the message of the Gospel?**

4. Notice Paul's comment in the first part of verse 18: *"The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached."* Is that really "the important thing?" What does Paul mean?

5. Does Paul's statement that *"the important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached"* mean that the motives and methods of those who preach the Gospel are unimportant? Explain your answer.

6. Paul's comments in this passage indicate that the people who were "preaching the Gospel" were motivated by their feelings about him. Do you think that the desire to please other people is a good motivation for serving and obeying God? Why or why not?

7. Why would Paul include this discussion in his letter to the Philippians?

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