

## Don't Waste Your Afflictions

Phillipians 1 – Joy in suffering

Vs 4 – *Pray with joy...*

Vs 6 – *Be confident* – he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion!!!!

*Paul's Chains advance the Gospel Vs 12~14*

**Affliction** - something that causes pain or suffering.

**Synonyms:** Suffering, distress, pain, trouble, misery, hardship, adversity, sorrow...

**Philippians 1:12-14 – NKJV - Christ Is Preached**

<sup>12</sup> But I want you to know, brethren, that ***the things which happened to me*** have actually *turned out for the furtherance of the gospel*, <sup>13</sup> so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that ***my chains are in Christ***; <sup>14</sup> and most of the brethren in the Lord, ***having become confident by my chains***, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

- Paul had always wanted to go to Rome to preach the gospel (Acts 19:21, Romans 1:15).
- However, he expected to go as a ***PREACHER, not a PRISONER***.
- **STORY:** illegal arrest in the temple in Jerusalem; prisoner in Caesarea for two years; appealed to Caesar; shipwreck on way to Rome; three months of waiting on Island of Malta; under house arrest.

Paul realized that his current circumstances ***weren't as important as what he did with them!!! ( In Prison Paul writes the prison epistles one being Phillipians.)***

We're not in prison, but we still have plenty of opportunities ***to be discouraged...***

***How we act*** in such situations will reflect **what we believe** 😊

Paul ***was not discouraged***, because ***he knew afflictions*** were part of the life of a Christian

### **2 Timothy 2:9 - NKJV**

<sup>9</sup> for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, *even* to the point of chains; **but the word of God is not chained.**

- Paul was **in chains in prison** *because of the Gospel he preached*
- **Despite the opposition, continue to proclaim Christ!!!!**

### **Philippians 1:29 - NKJV**

<sup>29</sup> For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

- **Paul considered it a privilege to suffer for Christ.**

### **Suffering has these additional benefits:**

1. It takes our eyes off of earthly comforts
2. It weeds out superficial believers
3. It strengthens the faith of those who endure
4. It serves as an example to others who may follow us

**Use suffering to build your character.** Don't resent it or let it tear you down!!!

### **Philippians 3:10 – NKJV**

<sup>10</sup> that **I may know Him** and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

- **Paul gave up everything** - family, friends, and freedom
- In order to know Christ and **His resurrection power.**
- **We will have to make sacrifices to enjoy it fully!!!**

**Paul's experiences contradict the "prosperity gospel" preached in the church recently!**

### **Acts 20:22-24 - NKJV**

<sup>22</sup> And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there,

- **Compelled by the Spirit – drawn irresistably by the Holy Spirit**

<sup>23</sup> except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.

- The Holy Spirit showed Paul that he would be imprisoned and suffer...

<sup>24</sup> But none of these things move me; ***nor do I count my life dear to myself***, so that ***I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.***

- Paul considered life worth nothing unless he used it for God's work.
- Every affliction we suffer is an investment that God is making in us!
- If the Lord did not permit troubles in our lives, that would be the worst form of rejection!

**Some Christians forever stay in kindergarten, where the tests are easier to endure!**

### **Hebrews 12:5-7 - CEV**

<sup>5</sup> But you have forgotten that the Scriptures say to God's children, "When the Lord punishes you, don't make light of it, and when he corrects you, don't be discouraged.

<sup>6</sup> ***The Lord corrects the people he loves and disciplines those he calls his own.***"

<sup>7</sup> Be patient when you are being corrected! This is how God treats his children. Don't all parents correct their children?

- It's ***never pleasant to be corrected*** and disciplined by God...
- His discipline is a sign of *his deep love for us...*

***God will use afflictions to bring us out into "a place of abundant fruitfulness."***

### **Psalms 66:10-12 - NKJV**

<sup>10</sup> For You, O God, have tested us;  
You have refined us as silver is refined.

<sup>11</sup> You brought us into the net;  
You laid affliction on our backs.

<sup>12</sup> You have caused men to ride over our heads;  
We went through fire and through water;  
But You brought us out to rich *fulfillment*.

**Not all afflictions come directly from God's hand, but He can still use them for your good!**

- God needs His seasoned veterans (like Paul) to show His faithfulness to their generation.

### Psalm 71:18 - NKJV

<sup>18</sup> Now also when *I am* old and grayheaded,  
O God, do not forsake me,  
Until I declare Your strength to *this* generation,  
Your power to everyone *who* is to come.

## HOW WE ACT DURING OUR AFFLICTIONS HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH THE RESULTS!

### 1. WE WASTE AFFLICTIONS BY WHINING, MURMURING & COMPLAINING IN THE PRESENT.

- This is the reason every test Israel experienced in the wilderness was wasted on them.

### 2. WE WASTE AFFLICTIONS WHEN WE DON'T REMEMBER DELIVERANCES IN THE PAST.

- When David stood before Goliath, he rehearsed his past victories with the bear and the lion.

### 3. WE WASTE AFFLICTIONS WHEN WE DON'T SEE GOD'S PURPOSES IN THE FUTURE.

- God brings us through so we can teach others, sharing God's faithfulness with them.

### Close:

## GOD IS PREPARING YOU TO BE A VETERAN OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE!

### Philippians 1:6 – NKJV

<sup>6</sup> being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ:

- When we speak fearlessly for Christ...
- Or live faithfully for Him during difficult situations...
- We encourage others to do the same...
- Be an encouragement by the way that you live!!!!

### **2 Corinthians 5:17 - NKJV**

<sup>17</sup> **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

We as Christian's are brand new on the inside...

- We are NOT reformed, rehabilitated, or reeducated...
- **We ARE re-created** – A NEW CREATION....

### **Made Alive in Christ**

#### **Ephesians 2:10 - NKJV**

<sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- We are God's work of art – masterpiece
- If God considers us His work of art
- We dare not treat ourselves or others with disrespect
- Thank God for the Affliction!!!!

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