

*I press on  
toward the goal to  
win the prize for  
which God has  
called me  
heavenward  
in Christ  
Jesus.*

Philippians 3:14

Following the upward call through Philipians ...

## Paul's Positive Perspective

The apostle was straining forward with every ounce of his being. If modern saints were to stop and consider what type of attitude and toughness it took for Paul — after being tormented and tortured time and time again after preaching in the synagogues — to go into another synagogue and preach! He then adds, in his comments to the brethren in Corinth: "Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:28). His whole being was tied up in his commitment to Christ, his care for each individual saint, and

for the hope of each congregation. For brethren to be "trashing" Paul and to be preaching their message out of envy and strife rather than having pure motives would have been hard for him to handle emotionally. But the Spirit of Christ pervaded everything the apostle dealt with, and his dealing with such petty brethren stands as a great example of positive perspective for saints today.

- **Rejoicing** — Most of the brethren were preaching Christ out of good will, and it was relatively easy for Paul to have a great attitude about that. But those other people ... "What then?" queries the apostle. "Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I will rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice" (Philippians 1:18). What a great attitude! The apostle was able to see that even if Christ was preached in pretense, those who came in contact with that gospel as truth-seekers would obey that gospel and be able to see the truth through the pretense. "Yes," he shouts, "and I will rejoice!"

- **Looking down the road** — Paul's imprisonment was talked about even among the praetorian guard. The envious and ambitious were bothered by Paul's successful impact on others even while in prison and sought to cause him distress. But he knew, by the Holy Spirit, that he was going to live through this imprisonment and come out the other side still victorious. "For I know," he affirms, "that this shall turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death" (Philippians 1:19,20). Circumstances were not going to dictate the apostle's attitude. He knows he is going to be delivered, but he is clear that, whether in life or in death, Christ is going to be exalted in his body! And, as he phrases it, the exaltation will not be hidden or in timidity, but "with all boldness."

- **Power of prayers** — The apostle knew he would be delivered from this imprisonment. But he is willing to credit, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, his deliverance to two entities: 1) the prayers of the saints; and 2) the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. He knew that the "Providence" of God would work somehow to give him his "get out of jail free card." But he also knew how important the prayers of the brethren were, and wanted them to have an awareness of the power of those prayers. In God's amazing spiritual economy, He set it up so that the prayers of the faithful impact the events occurring on this earth. Thus the combination of the prayers of the saints and the action of the Holy Spirit would result in Paul's eventual freedom from this particular jail sentence.

Paul's positive attitude was a direct result of his confidence in where he stood with God. In spite of the challenges he faced as a prisoner, and the poor performance of some of the brethren, he was able to rejoice that Christ was proclaimed. Modern saints need to learn from this, and recognize that it is of supreme importance that it is Christ who is proclaimed to the world!

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