



Season 8 Podcasts

The Advancement of the Gospel

By

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So far in my 8th Season Podcast series I've shared thoughts with you about:

- 8 Rules for Bible Study
- 40 Rules for Ministry
- The Heart of the Gospel
- Defending and Confirming the Gospel
- Your Fellowship in the Gospel
- The Completion of the Gospel
- The Affection of the Gospel
- The Discernment of the Gospel
- The Excellence of the Gospel
- The Sincerity of the Gospel
- The Fruit of the Gospel

The next aspect I'd like to share with you is the 'advancement' of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul continued his letter to the Christians in Philippi by writing:

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

Philippians 1:12-14

The Christians in Philippi knew that the Apostle Paul was imprisoned in Rome. They were concerned about his welfare and prayed for him. Some may have also been concerned about the advancement of Gospel since the ‘apostle to the Gentiles’ was a prisoner of Rome. That’s what Paul was referring to in these verses. I believe his purpose was both to comfort and instruct them.

The Greek word for ‘furtherance’ is *prokopé* and means ‘advancement, make progress, profit, to proceed.’ Some Greek scholars explain the ancient understanding of the word this way: ‘advancement by chopping down whatever impedes progress.’ I believe that’s how the Philippians would have understood Paul’s use of the word based on both the definition as well as the ‘context’ of what Paul wrote next.

He wrote that two major things had happened because of his ‘chains.’

1. It (the Gospel of Christ) had become evident to the whole palace guard
2. Most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, were much more bold to speak the word without fear

Paul was imprisoned as an attempt to halt the ‘furtherance’ of the Gospel, but it actually helped to ‘advance’ the Gospel message. Members of the Roman palace guard became aware of the Gospel because many of them had to ‘guard’ Paul. Paul was an apostle, an evangelist, and a church builder. Nothing was going to stop him – not even being ‘chained’ to a guard. If Paul had just an audience of one, that one person was going to hear the Gospel.

The way Paul handled himself in such difficult situations – like imprisonment in Rome – encouraged ‘most of the brethren in the Lord’ and they became more confident which led to being ‘more bold’ to share the Gospel of Christ ‘without fear.’

Both of those outcomes were extremely positive, especially coming from something that outwardly appeared as so negative (being imprisoned and in chains). Paul wanted the Philippian Christians to also be encouraged, which is why he shared this information with them.

Whatever you're facing in your life right now, remember that 'advancing' the Gospel includes 'chopping down' whatever impedes your progress. That's what really important in this life – proclaiming the life-giving message of Jesus Christ to a world in great need of His grace.

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In Christ's Love and Grace,

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