



Season 8 Podcasts

The Preaching of the Gospel

By

Mark McGee

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 Advancement of the Gospel

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

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

“Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.” Philippians 1:15-18

Paul was a ‘preacher’ of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He began preaching Christ soon after he was saved (Acts 9), and the Holy Spirit called Paul to a special ministry of preaching and church building some years later (Acts 13). By the time Paul was imprisoned in Rome and wrote to the Philippians from there, he was very well known throughout the Roman world as a preacher of the Gospel. His letters were copied and shared among churches and many people helped him in the ministry (e.g. Romans 16).

Paul was also well known for addressing false preaching with great boldness. The letters he wrote to the churches in Galatia are an example, as are the letters he wrote to the Corinthians, Thessalonians, and Romans. Paul warned Christians to ‘beware’ of false preachers and ‘avoid’ them. That historical background makes his comments to the Philippians even more interesting because what he said about preachers with ill-intent was different than what he had written before.

Paul did not tell the Philippians to ‘avoid’ the men who preached Christ out of envy and strife. Paul said he had been ‘appointed for the defense of the gospel,’ but he also wrote that ‘whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.’ Had something changed from his earlier days in Galatia, Thessalonica, Corinth, and Rome? He Paul mellowed in his old age or was this a different ‘type’ of preaching?

I believe it was a different ‘type.’ The Greek word for ‘envy’ is *phthonos*. It means ‘jealousy, spite, ill-will.’ The word was used to describe people who were happy when someone experienced pain or misfortune. That fits well with Paul’s statement that those men were ‘supposing to add affliction to my chains.’ For some reason the men were pleased that Paul was in prison chains in Rome. That meant they could go around preaching Christ hoping to add some type of ‘affliction’ to Paul. Why would they do that?

I think it had to do with their personal pride as preachers. They were glad to see Paul in prison because that allowed them to boast of themselves. Is that so different than what we see in churches and denominations today? Jealousy, envy, spite, and ill-will are still with us in pulpits across the world. These types of preachers do preach the Gospel, but they do it for the wrong reasons. God will always ‘bless His Word’ when it goes forth, but that doesn’t mean He will bless the ministry of preachers who preach for the wrong reasons. That’s what Paul was addressing. He knew they preached ‘from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction’ to Paul’s chains (imprisonment). Though they went

about preaching with the wrong heart motive, Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached.

Paul also used another interesting phrase when describing men who were out ‘preaching the Gospel’ – ‘whether in pretense or in truth.’ The Greek word translated ‘pretense’ is *prophasis* and means ‘pretext, outward showing, for appearance sake, to cause to shine before.’ Remember that Paul said some of the men were preaching ‘from selfish ambition.’ Part of that selfish ambition was that other people would see them preaching and think more highly about them. Selfish ambition leads to ‘pretense.’

Paul compared those men who were preaching ‘in pretense’ and those who were preaching in ‘truth.’ That doesn’t mean the ‘pretensers’ were not preaching the truth of the Gospel because Paul would have called them out as ‘false preachers’ if they were. What Paul meant was that they were not preaching with ‘true’ or ‘pure’ intent. That’s still alive in our churches today – men who preach for wrong reasons. However, even though Paul knew their intent was not right he still wrote – ‘Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in

truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.'

Paul preferred the men who went out preaching for the right reasons – true and pure reasons. They knew that Paul was in prison in Rome and knew he could not continue traveling from town to town preaching the Gospel of Christ. Even though Paul lived in a rented house and was allowed to have visitors, he was still under constant guard (Acts 28). So, those men took on Paul's ministry for a time from hearts of love and goodwill and preached Christ. They knew that Paul was imprisoned for the 'defense' of the Gospel of Christ and that gave them a special boldness to step out and preach as well – even if it meant they too might be arrested.

A Personal Message to Preachers

If you are a preacher of the Gospel, I'd like to speak directly to you for a moment. I hope you will seriously consider Paul's words to the Philippians. Why do you preach the Gospel? Is it out of a heart of love and goodwill? Or do you preach for selfish ambition, jealousy, spite, and ill-will? Are you jealous because the numbers of people you preach to are fewer than some other preachers in town? Do you wish your church had more people in attendance so you could make more money and have prestige in the community? Do you wish you could have a radio or television ministry and become known across the country? Why do you preach? It's a fair question – in fact I think it's an important question. Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, but you could tell from his language that he had a higher regard for those men who preached from hearts of love and goodwill. I pray you will be like them.

[Play Podcast](#)

In Christ's Love and Grace,

Mark McGee

GraceLife / Faith and Self Defense / Grace Martial Arts /
Substack

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®.
Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission.
All rights reserved.

© 1971-2026