

## Philippians 1:12-26 CCH Sermon 12OCT25 “The Priority of the gospel”

V18b “The important thing is that in every way whether from false motives of true, Christ is preached, and because of this I rejoice”.

### PRAY

- **Here’s a Question: What matters? In your life**
  - If someone did an audit of your life behind the scenes/panorama investigation/ what would they discover really matters to you?
    - Your lifestyle. You are a Christian but in reality much of life is organised around having the house, the car, the gadgets.
    - Your survival. Life has been so hectic and chaotic lately you are just chasing your tail to get through.
    - Your future. You find yourself daydreaming towards an upcoming holiday or life event.
      - For me an upcoming cycling trip.
  - All good things.
  - But what our passage today shows us is that Paul has another priority.
  - The priority of the gospel.
  - Last week started our studies in **Philippians**
    - It’s a book that’s packed with Jesus.
    - “Christ” is mentioned 38 times
    - A very positive and joyful letter (compared to say Galatians).
    - At it’s heart is a hymn or poem about Jesus in chapter 2
      - About how though he is God, he had an incredibly humble mindset, putting others’ interests ahead of his own.
    - And we also meet others in the book who do the same/same mindset
      - Timothy & Epaphroditus.
    - In our passage today Paul shares some of his story,
      - And what we learn is that for him....

### WHAT MATTERS IS THAT THE GOOD NEWS GOES OUT! X2

3 sections. Despite 3 things. We’ll reflect on each with a question.

#### 1) ...DESPITE OPPOSITION

- V12-14.
- Perhaps some saying Paul too brash, too black & white. He’s charged headlong into talking about Jesus as he always does and he’s got himself arrested.
  - If only he just toned things down a bit, took longer term view.
  - Then the Christian project would go forward better.
- No! v13. Going prison hasn’t halted the spread of the good news, it’s accelerated it!
  - **Double blessing. Paul had gospel opps/ Others have had gospel opps.**
  - Yes, Imprisoned, prob Rome (where we find him end of Acts).
  - DA Carson says nearly 9000 soldiers in Praetorian guard.
  - But gospel has advanced among them all.

- Stories are circulating.
  - Who's that new prisoner? Jewish guy.
  - What's he done. Armed robbery? Murder?
    - No- follows carpenter
    - claiming he's Lord and Saviour.
  - Caesar is the imperial Lord.
    - He's saying it's a peasant from far flung corner empire.
      - Most think that's a load of rubbish.
      - But Some 4:22 in Caesar's house are
        - beginning to believe it.
  - Well he must really believe in Jesus to go on claiming he is Lord and Saviour when it lands him in prison.
- This is an interesting perspective on suffering isn't it.
  - Horrible to be in prison
  - But Paul sees it as an opportunity for the gospel to go out.
  - Many in our church are suffering, and need our support.
  - If you are suffering at the moment, don't lose this focus.
  - Could be that you have extra opportunity to witness to Christ.
- But had a **double effect**- Not just Paul others have spoken up. V14.
- 1<sup>st</sup> yr after uni Xn friend Jewish background shared gospel with Jewish friends<sup>1</sup>. ▲ Rabbi Shmuley Boteach. 1<sup>st</sup> year after uni.
  - Radio 4- can I speak to Nick.
  - Terrifying.
  - But he survived.
  - Didn't get fed to lions. People actually came and listened.
  - Actually emboldened us!
- It was the same with Jim Elliot and the Aucas in the 50's. He went to share the gospel with indigenous tribes in Ecuador, and got killed aged 28 leaving a wife and young daughter. It put Ecuador on the map for US Christians, and there was a long list of people signing up to serve there.
- Q: What's getting in the way of this priority for you? **Comfort?**
- People need the gospel. The message about Jesus and his salvation can rescue people from hell to heaven. It's happened to us. ▲ Vaccination! Save Huntingdon!
  - We should be willing to speak up, even if socially awkward.
  - Simon shared it with Greek Taxi driver last week.
  - "Thank you- not many people spoken to me about that".
  - How many Xns been in his taxi.
  - But out of wanting a bit more time on their emails they kept quiet.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/howard-s-son-tries-to-convert-oxford-jews-1145419.html>

WHAT MATTERS IS THAT THE GOOD NEWS GOES OUT 1) DESPITE OPPOSITION

## **2) DESPITE MIXED MOTIVES**

V15-18

- Again- the important thing to Paul is that the gospel goes out.
- Interesting. NOT SAYING FALSE GOSPEL. (Galatians). They are preaching the true Jesus. But have false motives.
- Now it's not GOOD to have bad motives.
  - But the important thing is that the true gospel is communicated

Even if slightly mixed motives.

- Why do we sometimes share the good news?
  - To be able to tell a story at the Prayer meeting.
  - To look good.
- We don't need to- we don't need the accolades of people.
- But if we had to wait for our motives to be 100% perfect we may never share good news.

WHAT ARE THOSE BAD MOTIVES

- Envy & Rivalry (v15)- put together.
  - I want a bigger church!
- Selfish Ambition (v17)
  - I want to be more famous
  - I want to look good and I want successful Paul to look bad.

GOOD MOTIVES?

- Goodwill. Love. Actually love people heading to eternity without Christ.
  - They actually love Jesus and want to see him glorified.
- V18.
- **What's getting in the way of this priority for you? #1 COMFORT**
  - **#2 WAITING**
    - Are you not sure what the good news is? **Waiting til more confident**
      - It's the message about Jesus.
      - I bet you know more about him than you think.
        - His perfect life.
        - His sacrificial death to pay for sins.
        - His resurrection. Read Phil 2.
    - Or are you **waiting until your friends ask you** to tell them.
      - Yes our lives should invite questions
      - But could be waiting a very long time.
    - Or **waiting until your life is sorted**, and your motives are sorted.
      - None of us pure motives. Paul says important thing v18.
      - Just tell them! Tell them, tell them tell everybody. **RPT 1&2**

### **3) DESPITE DELAYING BEING WITH CHRIST**

- V18b (Philippians are praying for him for work of HS)
  - In point 1 looks back his suffering.
  - Point 2 looks around at others motives.
  - Point 3 looks to future.
  - Thing is he doesn't know what's going to happen.
  - You see there's an ambivalence when you're in prison.
- What's going to happen.
- What could happen in prison? Prob with a trial coming up.
  - Released (happened to him a few times- eg Philippians- doors opened!)
  - Killed, or starve to death.
- What's Paul's concern?
  - That he's set free? Is that what he means by deliverance? V19.
  - No – wants deliverance not from prison, or even death, but from the shame of dishonouring Jesus by denying or downplaying the gospel!
    - He wants Christ to be exalted.
  - That's why he wants the gospel to go out (not for numbers, not because he wants the church to triple). He wants Jesus exalted.
    - He wants the world to know how great Jesus is.
  - And this is the real reason why sharing gospel is so important.
    - Not to have more people in church
    - Not so we look good.
    - So Jesus is known and lifted up.
      - That people see his kindness.
      - His mercy
      - His Glory
        - That though he was the greatest man ever lived
        - He used his power to serve and to save and rescue.
- That's what matters. The honour of Jesus.
  - He doesn't matter if live or die!
  - He wants Jesus to be exalted. V20.
  - V21. This is amazing.
- That's why we share good news!
- Look at v20-21.
  - Now this is extraordinary.
  - Life is fragile.
  - Could be life or death.
  - Doesn't matter.
  - Win win situation.
  - LIFE- ministry.
  - DEATH- be with Jesus

- What he'd prefer is to be with Jesus. 22-26
  - What?
  - He'd actually prefer to be dead.
  - Why is he struggling so much in prison?
- No it's because he wants to be WITH JESUS. V23.
  - (Just pause on those 2 words, that's what heaven is. WITH JESUS)
    - Ever been looking forward to catching up with a loved one for a long time
    - Can't wait for that moment.
    - Perhaps fallen in love
    - Seeing your family from overseas after a long time.
    - Savour every moment.
    - Because relationships are important
    - But to be with Jesus
      - The most loving
      - And yet powerful person.
- Pastor **Tim Keller** knew he had terminal pancreatic cancer<sup>2</sup>.
  - Despite preaching Jesus all his life. it was a rollercoaster ride
    - But he said he couldn't wait to see Jesus.
- And Paul would prefer to be with Christ.
  - But he's willing to do what is better for others.
  - He's willing to delay heaven
- This is just such alien thinking to us.
  - First because we don't get how wonderful being with Jesus is.
  - But then if we did, would we be so selfless that we'd be willing to delay that for the sake of other people?
- Note here in this final section it's about the gospel going out to Christians.
  - Paul isn't just interested in converts
  - His "fruitful labour" here is to the Philippians who are already Christians.
  - It shows just how important discipleship is.
- As he puts it v24. "for your progress and joy in the faith".
  - HE wants to see the Philippians grow
  - HE wants to see them grow in loving Jesus more.
- So he thinks it's probably more likely that he won't die straight away
  - But that the Lord has more work to do.
  - He'll be ready to be
- I just don't think we live like this, as if Knowing Jesus is everything.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://youtu.be/idPDAUC5cBQ>

- We need to pray that the Holy Spirit will so work in our hearts that we will value Jesus above everything.
- We can actually say
  - To LIVE IS CHRIST.
    - If I don't die today, it's to promote Jesus.
  - To LIVE IS GAIN
    - Not loss.
    - Not a great tragedy
      - But better!
- I know a pastor who prays each morning that he will live by this verse.
- So what's getting in the way of this priority for you?
  - I think for many it's just **busyness**
  - We are just so distracted by everything we've got to do
    - Getting off to work
    - Getting new glasses
    - Shopping online
    - Thinking about the kids
    - Figuring out the plans for Christmas.
  - What has taken our focus is **stuff!**
    - We've lost sight of **Jesus**.
  - I wonder if for many of us, we just haven't seen how great Jesus is!
  - We need to just pause and remember. (perhaps using ch2)
    - So great that he is God
    - So great that he became a baby
    - So great that he used his supernatural strength to serve not be served
    - So great that God raised him from the dead and has put him in the No1 seat. So that one day
      - Donald Trump
      - Vladimir Putin
      - King Charles
      - You and I
      - And every other human being who has ever existed will bow before him!
- **What matters? What matters is that the good news goes out.**
- Let's have some time praying this for one another! Out loud!
- For that depth of insight.
- **Questions? Prayer time?**