

Philippians 1:12-14

- 1) Paul's desire to keep the believing congregation informed—1:12a ¹² *Now I want [boulomai] you^{pl} to know, brothers,*
 - a) Communication to other believers concerning God's work in and through us is a good thing.
 - b) Rather than dwell on the hardships of his circumstances he wants the Philippian believers to know what God is doing through those circumstances.

- 2) Paul's evaluation of the unexpected results of his imprisonment—1:12b *that my circumstances (cf. Acts 28:16-31) have turned out rather for the advancement [prokope] of the gospel [euangelion], (cf. Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28)*
 - a) Times of testing do not always turn out the way we initially anticipated. Rather than hindering the spread of the gospel, Paul's imprisonment actually demonstrated progress for the gospel.
 - b) The world and, sadly, many Christians think that the hindering of the gospelizer will also hinder the gospel. Not true!
 - c) There are things worse than prison for the Christian. Ask John Bunyan.

- 3) Paul details two aspects of the gospel's progress—1:13-14 ¹³ *so that ...*
 - a) Among unbelievers—1:13 *my imprisonment has become apparent in Christ in the whole imperial guard [praetorium] and to everyone else, (cf. 4:22)*
 - i) The Praetorium consisted of @ 10,000 elite troops functioning as Caesar's personal guards and Rome's police force. Cf. Acts 28:16, 30-31
 - ii) i.e. if it wasn't for Paul's relationship to Christ, Paul wouldn't be in prison. They learned that he was not a criminal. (cf. Acts 28:18)
 - iii) The unbelieving world is watching how we respond to times of testing.
 - iv) Someone once said, "The winds of persecution often spread the flame of the gospel."
 - b) Among believers—1:14 ¹⁴ *and most of the brothers, having become convinced in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more courageous [tolmao] to speak the word fearlessly [aphobos].*
 - i) Apparently the brothers were intimidated because of Paul's imprisonment.
 - (1) Lack of boldness may signal a lack of trust in God. (Harmon)
 - ii) Believers are watching how we respond to times of testing.
 - (1) We can lead others to either discouragement or encouragement in the things of God by how we respond.
 - (2) Your spiritual bravery (or the lack of it) can be contagious.

God is able to produce good results from difficult circumstances.