

13/09/09 (pm)

Suffering ... and the Advancement of the Gospel?

Phil. 1:12-14

*Theme: A Christian's suffering
can serve to advance the Gospel.*

Sin has turned the world from a paradise to a thicket, and there is no getting through without being scratched. As gnats in the summer will fly about those walking abroad in fine attire as well as those in sordid apparel, so will crosses in the world meet with the high as well as the low.

(Boston The Crook in the Lot—The Sovereignty and wisdom of God Displayed in the Afflictions of Men)

Suffering comes to all.

Suffering comes to Christians: Gal. 5:17; 1 Pet. 5:8-11; 2 Tim. 3:12. Jn. 16:33.

Suffering is a thread running through Philippians.

Paul speaks of his suffering serving to advance the Gospel (1:12-14).

When a Christian suffers it can serve to advance the Gospel.

The Apostle Paul's Imprisonment (1:12-14)

Paul was suffering in prison (*cf.*
Acts 28:30-31).

Consider 1:12:

what happened to me. Cf. Ac.
21:17-28:31.

advance. Clearing things that hinder progress.

Gospel. Good News about the Father, Jesus, salvation, Christian walk.

Putting it all together, the Apostle's suffering advanced the Gospel.

How?

Two ways:

1. The reason for Paul's imprisonment became clear to the whole palace guard and to everyone else (1:12-13).

How did this come about?

From Paul!

What did he talk about?

The Gospel!

His demeanour while suffering
spoke of the transforming power of
the Gospel.

1st Principle:

A Christian's suffering can result in evangelistic opportunities.

Suffering may bring you to places you would not choose to go e.g. hospital.

Suffering may introduce you to people you would not otherwise meet, e.g. fellow patients.

Opportunity arises for a suffering Christian to preach the Gospel by his/her words and life.

*Are **you** suffering?*

*Is your suffering serving to advance
the Gospel?*

2. Paul's chains emboldened other Christians to preach the Word more courageously and fearlessly (1:14).

Other Christians spoke the Word
boldly.

How/why did Paul's chains have
this effect?

Paul's example inspired other
Christians.

The grace the Lord gave Paul in
his suffering inspired others
Christians to serve.

2nd Principle:

A Christian's suffering can result in the edification of other Christians.

*Christian, as you suffer yet exude
God's grace, your suffering may
serve to advance the Gospel in
other Christians' lives.*

Why?

**Others will see the transforming
power of the Gospel in your life.**

Conclusion—The Place of Duty

No one wants to suffer...
... but everyone will.

Let us not wrap ourselves in self-pity.

*Let us see our suffering as our place
of duty (cf. 1:16).*

Paul's suffering served to advance
the Gospel because of his
attitude in suffering.