Lesson 2 – Philippians 1:12-30 Christian Dilemma: Die Now and Be With Christ, or Stay Alive and Serve?
English Standard Version (ESV) Bethel Bible Resources

(12) I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest --- that my imprisonment is for Christ! And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are more bold to speak the Word without fear.

(15) Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the Gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed --- and in that I rejoice!

(18b) Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always, Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ…and to die is gain!

(22) If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard-pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ --- for that is far better! But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for you progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

(27) Only let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

<u>Think on these things:</u>

1) Last lesson we learned that Paul was under guarded house-arrest in Rome. What was the impact of this on the Roman Imperial guards (vs. 12-13)? The Christian brothers (v.14)?

   Guards – **All the guards knew Paul was imprisoned because he preached of Jesus Christ.**

   Brothers – **They became more confident and bolder.**

2) His imprisonment also resulted in the general spread of the Christian Gospel --- but for two different reasons. Describe the two approaches taken by preachers of the Gospel (vs.15-17). Did this make Paul happy or sad? Why (v.18)? Do you think we still have both types of these preachers today?

   Preacher Type 1 – **Preaching out of ENVY and RIVALRY; they were insincere and had selfish ambitions.**

   Preacher Type 2 – **Preaching out of goodwill (pure motives) and love.**

   Paul's Response – **"I rejoice! Whether out of pretense or truth, Christ is proclaimed."**

   Present Today? **Yes. For some, preaching is a "job"; for others it's about prestige and wealth.**

3) At this time, did Paul believe he would be killed or set free (v.19)? What was he determined to do either way (v.20)?

   Paul believed the Philippian's prayers on his behalf, in league with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, would result in his deliverance. He was determined not to be ashamed, but was committed to honoring Christ courageously in his body.

4) Paul shares his view of death in v.21. Can you sense what his preference was, living or dying (vs. 21-23)? How does he describe the value "to remain in the flesh" for the Philippians (vs. 24-26)?

   Preference? **Dying was seen as a gain (because it meant he would be present with Jesus).**

   Value in Remaining? **Living in Christ, he could help them in their progress and joy in the faith, as well as come back to visit them.**

5) From v.27, what are the characteristics of a "life worthy of the Gospel"? This is often the same desire preacher's have for their old congregations when they move on to new ones.

   People of faith UNITED in one Spirit, working side-by-side in the faith.

6) V.28 tells them (us) not to be frighted by anything done by our opponents (i.e., opposers of the Bible and of Jesus Christ in our day and age). What is our living by faith in Jesus to them? What is our living by faith in Jesus to us (and who assures this to us)?

   When we live by our faith in Jesus --- our life witness becomes a condemnation to our opponents --- but a confirmation of salvation from God to ourselves!

7) What can people living by faith in Jesus realistically expect in the here-and-now (vs.29-30)? See also Jesus' words in John 15:18-22.

   We can expect to suffer with Him, too.
   John records Jesus saying that He was hated and persecuted by the unbelieving in Israel. And if He, our Master, was treated this way, we can also expect to suffer as His followers.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: