

Philippians 1:12-18

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Attitude is your mental outlook. Other words that could be used are approach, belief, bias, character, mindset, philosophy and the list goes on.

Attitude is demonstrated through how you behave when you go through a rough patch? How does your spouse, your children, your mum or dad see this and how do others at your work place, at school? This is when your true colours are displayed. This shows your true heart attitude.

It's not when things are going well that your attitude is fully visible but rather when things turn bad.

What I'd like us to look at this afternoon is the example of Paul demonstrating a godly attitude and how we can learn from this to apply it to our lives.

Philippians 1:12-20 (ESV)

¹²I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. ¹⁴And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

¹⁵Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. ¹⁶The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. ¹⁸What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

Yes, and I will rejoice, ¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, ²⁰as 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.

Paul says

[12] I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel

What has happened to Paul?

He was imprisoned for the sake of the gospel.

What do we know of Paul's imprisonment?

- He was in a Roman prison
- He was chained to a prison guard, possibly even two one on either side
- He was never by himself. The guards were constantly changing after each shift
- He was not able to live privately by any sense of the word
- It is likely the guards were rough soldiers who used language far from the spiritual intellect of Paul

It is fair to say what Paul was going through was a trial!

So how should our attitudes be when we are going through a trial?

James 1:2-4 (ESV)

²Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

How did Paul respond to this situation, his imprisonment? You have to read on to verses 18-20

Philippians 1:18-20 (ESV)

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Paul responds

- Rejoicing because the gospel is proclaimed
- Eager expectation and hope
- Full courage now as always that Christ will be honoured

Paul's focus is not on himself but rather is on Christ. Let's call this his attitude.

This is getting to the central focus of this portion of scripture. Paul has an attitude that is different from most humans.

We've just read that we, as believers, should be joyful when we have a trial.

How has the non-believing world typically responded to trials?

We've had two world wars that we have gone through, numerous other wars that are ongoing and the world often says: How can this be if God loves? What about the current Covid-19 situation? Can this really be happening if God loves us? This shows the people's attitude. Attitude comes from knowledge of God. God loves yes He certainly does. But the world has limited to no knowledge of what this really means.

We know that God so loved the world that he sent his only son to die on the cross for us, so that we might be saved.

Let's look at the last time we went through a trial. How we responded shows our attitude. If we responded in a "poor me attitude" then this may point to an attitude problem.

Paul here did not respond in this way. Why do I think this?

Because people know why Paul is being imprisoned..... For Christ

Being chained to a prison guard all of the time must not have been easy. This brings to mind Job's wife who said curse God and die.

Job 2:9-10 (ESV)

⁹Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." ¹⁰But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

See Job's attitude here. Perhaps not right because all that comes from God is good but the intent is bang on.

And so Paul doesn't say "I've had enough Lord end this". No that would not have impacted those around him. You see how Paul responded to this trial impacted the imperial guard and all the rest... Who? Believers in the Philippian church and the Roman churches.

It is important to note that this encompasses the two people groups of the bible. Believers and unbelievers.

Believers and unbelievers benefit from a God honouring attitude.

How did Daniel respond when he heard that he should pray to the king. He prayed and got thrown into a lions den for it. The point here is that a rule change did not change him. He knew that there should be no other gods before God. Let's read how this played out after he got thrown into the den.

Daniel 6:19-22 (ESV)

¹⁹Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" ²¹Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! ²²My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm."

The king knew Daniel served God continually, yet not at all to the detriment of the King's service as we read. And Daniel was blameless before God. Daniel had a good attitude.

For a further good example let's look at Daniel's fellow Jews a few chapters earlier when they had been told they will be thrown into a fiery furnace.

Daniel 3:16-18 (ESV)

¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Here is the attitude we should have. We should know our God is able to conquer and we know this in our hearts.

The thing is it may be that we don't quite understand what God has in store for us so how Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego respond is good advice. It is a good principle.

Rather than look at the negative look at the positive. Rather than be thinking about yourself (a symptom of pride) be thinking "I wonder how God will work this out for His good".

These examples indicate the huge impact that believers had by behaving in a similar way.

In the same way the kings saw how Daniel and his fellow Jews behaved so did the prison guards and the believers saw how Paul behaved.

Imagine what confidence this gave to the believers. If Paul can do this by God's help so can we they must have thought!

And so it was. Look in verse 14 Paul's example of how he responded with confidence that they were bold to speak the gospel without fear.

[14] And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear

More confident in the Lord... What does this mean? Simply it is becoming more confident, more trusting, in God. He will do what he says he will do. Paul shows his view of confidence in the Lord in Romans.

Romans 8:31-32 (ESV)

³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

If God is for us who can be against us? Remember we were undeserving yet God sent his Son to die for us. God's love in action. This is the gospel.

Knowing this through Paul's attitude the brothers were more bold to speak the word without fear.

Sadly it was not all rosy

[15] Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. [16] The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. [17] The former proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.

Some preach from rivalry and envy... simply pride.

Thinking to afflict Paul - Really? The reason he is writing this is because he is holding up well, persevering, in a tough situation. It's not going to afflict Paul. In some regards it goes to demonstrate even better Paul's attitude to the guards and believers.

So what?

Philippians 1:18-20 (ESV)

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Yes, and I will rejoice, ¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, ²⁰as 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.

What Paul wants is that Christ is proclaimed.

He rejoices in this.

He is rejoicing and he is chained to a prison guard!

Let this be your attitude when you are next tested knowing that others will see how you behave. You can be both an encouragement to both believers and unbelievers alike.

James 1:2-4 (ESV)

²Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

You can say like Paul

Philippians 1:12 (ESV)

¹²I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel,

All for the sake of the gospel for the glory of God!