



How to Rejoice while Suffering

January 20, 2019
Philippians 1:12-21

"I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel"
(Philippians 1:12).

The Apostle Paul proclaimed the truth about Jesus Christ, and his endeavors often led to his persecution and imprisonment by religious and political leaders. In addition to imprisonments, Paul suffered countless floggings and was often near death. Five times he suffered the thirty-nine lashes. Three times he was beaten by rods, and once he was stoned (2 Corinthians 11:23-25). Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians during one of his imprisonments, but instead of complaining, Paul rejoiced that the Lord and he had used his imprisonments as opportunities to proclaim the good news. Even all his guards knew that Paul was in prison for his courageous preaching about Jesus Christ. Jesus too had suffered unjustly: being arrested at night, convicted of a crime during a mock trial, and dying by crucifixion. But God the Father honored Jesus' faithful obedience, raised Jesus from the dead, and seated Jesus at His right hand. Paul learned from Jesus' example. Both rejoiced while enduring pain and suffering for they knew that through their labors many would believe in Jesus and receive God's just and merciful forgiveness for their sins and the gift of eternal life. Setting an example for Christians, Paul looked at his sufferings as opportunities to serve Jesus Christ in new ways and teach different people the good news about Jesus' death and resurrection. Paul rejoiced while in prison because he knew that the Lord Jesus would work through him to save many of his listeners from sin and death. Furthermore, Paul used his confinements as opportunities to write letters to encourage believers to keep speaking fearlessly about Jesus.

Thinking Further

1. Thinking of the good consequences of Paul's imprisonment, can you think of any other examples in the Bible when something bad happened to someone and God worked it out for good?
 2. Since Paul was a faithful apostle of Jesus Christ, how would you explain to someone why Paul was in prison?
 3. What are some of the ways Paul serves as a good example for other Christians to follow?
 4. What might you say to someone who expressed envy or jealousy of another Christian?
 5. What are some good reasons for telling others about Jesus Christ?
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