

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Date 17th July 2022 Hymns Psalm 24v1-5, St Magnus 300, 526, Read: Philippians 1:12-14 Text Philippians 1:12-14

Series: Philippians (23) Title: The Furtherance of the gospel (1)

When Paul arrived at Rome, he was brought as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

Paul desired to preach the gospel of saving grace, to those in Rome, and while God granted Paul his request and desire,

yet the way in which Paul would arrive and how Paul came to Rome was all under the guidance of God in His sovereignty and providence.

Paul in writing about the events, and his arrival in Rome said these words, “**...the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.**”

The phrase “**...the furtherance of the gospel,**” is an exciting word, packed with good things to feast on.

Above all, these words point to God's eternal redemptive purposes in Jesus Christ in purchasing His Church.

All that takes place in this world, events, what is termed as calamities, wars, in Government the changing of leaders, and our lives, God works for “**...the furtherance of the gospel,**”

Think of the situation in Ukraine.

Since war broke out in Ukraine, how many Ukrainians have heard the gospel, and the gospel has furthered, not in way we thought it would, or should, but according to God's own purposes.

His people gathered for prayer more often, and gave sacrificially.

When Paul formerly known as Saul of Tarsus persecuted the church,

only then do we read that believers in **Acts 8:1** “...*were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. Verses 4-5 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. ⁵ Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.*

God was pleased through a time of persecution to further the gospel in different places, reaching sinners for whom Christ gave His life a ransom,

The word **furtherance** means *advancement or progress*. The idea is to move along, to keep pressing onward, and forward despite the obstacles in front and the opposition against.

In other words, resist giving in, and giving up.

Though there are persecutions, dangers, distractions, and diversions, **yet the gospel message progresses, advances in spite of every resistance.**

It's interesting to note that this word **furtherance**, comes from another word meaning **to drive forward, increase, to beat forward to cut down.**

Paul in his letters use this word two different situations.

In Philippians Paul uses this word **for the furtherance of the gospel**, yet he also used the word in Galatians, **for the furtherance of false religion against the gospel.**

But the meaning is the same in each, that whatever obstacle is in front move forward.

Paul used this word in Galatians to explain his unsaved days when as self righteous sinner, he lived to further and advance false religion.

In Galatians 1, Paul testifies, to what he was by nature a guilty sinner, in hatred of Christ, but now through the grace of God, he has been transformed by the gospel and loves Christ.

To get the context we'll read **Galatians 1:13-14** *For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: ¹⁴ And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."*

The word **profited** in **verse 14**, is the word **furtherance, progress**. The picture is of a woods man, chopping down trees or obstacles in his path to make a way forward.

Paul in his unsaved days viewed the gospel, the message that Christ saves from sin, and the church of Christ, as an obstacle, a barrier, in the way, and so he is going to chop it down, cut it of, by persecution, casting believers into jail, in order to further, advance and to promote the system of religious works.

That is the meaning of the word furtherance.

In Philippians Paul is using the word in favour of the gospel.

I may be in prison, but be assured the gospel is advancing against obstacles, opposition. The message of free grace without human effort is reaching people.

Never forget when Paul spoke this letter, someone else wrote it down, and read it to the church, they heard read out, the **Philippians 1:21** *for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."*

They heard Philippians 2, expounding the humanity and deity of Christ two distinct nature in one person forever.

They heard that Christ was obedient unto death even the death of the cross. They heard God has Highly exalted Christ. They heard Christ's name is above every name. They heard that one day every knee will bow and tongue confess Jesus is Lord.

The pagan gods that the romans worshipped, where exposed as false. Christ was preached as the righteousness of God by faith.

In taking all that has taken place, Paul is saying to the saints at Philippi, "***I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;***

This includes the furtherance of the Gospel outside of the church at seen in **verse 13** and inside the Church as seen in **verse 14**.

Today we will consider the furtherance of the gospel, and may the Lord help us to understand these great Biblical truths.

I FIRST, THE CAUSE IN THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL

The cause for the furtherance of the gospel is the gospel itself as it centres upon the Glorious person, sinless life and substitutional death of Jesus Christ.

Paul is writing about the ***furtherance of the gospel***, all that has taken place in his life and situation its because of the gospel.

The word **gospel** means ***glad tidings, or good news***. Upon this basis, Christ is the gospel, Christ is the glad tidings and good news. Christ the is greatest news for fallen men and woman.

Paul in speaking of the gospel uses the phrase in **verse 13** *my bonds in Christ* the key phrase is *in Christ*.

Take Christ out of the gospel and there is no gospel.

(Present the gospel where Christ is left out, set aside, is to present a message void of truth.)

A Christ-less gospel, gives no hope for the hopeless, no pardon for the guilty, no rest for the burdened, no peace for the troubled, no recovery for the addicted, no assurance for eternity.

But praise the Lord, The gospel of God centres on Christ Himself. Preaching the gospel is to preach Christ, to live the gospel is to live Christ.

Christ is pre-eminent, peace, pardon, propitiation, and He is the power of the gospel.

I have a gospel to preach, a message of life to deliver

Preaching the Gospel of grace, gives hope for the hopeless, rest for the burdened, peace for the troubled, restoration for addictions, pardon for the guilty, salvation for sinners and cleansing for believers.

All that takes place is for the purpose that the person and message of the gospel will be furthered, Christ Himself. This is what Christ commanded in **Mark 16:15** ***“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”***

If the gospel was powerless then Paul is in prison for nothing, only a trouble maker for law breaking.

But Paul was set for the defence of the gospel, He could say in **Phil 2:16** ***I have not run in vain neither laboured in vain.***

Going to jail, suffering, its for the cause of the gospel, the advancement, the gospel marching onwards.

Paul said in **Romans 1:16** “...*the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...*”

the word **power** means ability. the Greek word is **Dunamis** is power that which overcomes resistance. **Dunamis** is power in action, the power to accomplish. In fact English word **dynamite**, is derived from dunamis and since dunamis is used by Paul to describe the “**power of God**”, on this basis the Gospel is “God’s dynamite”. The Gospel power brings spiritual life to dead sinners.

The gospel is not a dead and empty message, but divine, and dynamic in operation.

Furthermore, the word power is present tense meaning a continual action,

Therefore the gospel will never lose its power, because its biases is upon the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

It is the dynamite of heaven.

Only the gospel has power to deal with sin, the gospel never leaves sinners where it finds them, rather the gospel rescues and transforms a life from the corruption and condemnation of sin.

Paul desired to preach the gospel in Rome, because the people of Rome and in other places needed the gospel.

All that took place in Paul’s life was that sinners would call on the name of Christ and be transformed by His power.

Believer, God is working out His redemptive purposes. He uses all people, events to fulfil His cause of saving sinners, by the furtherance of the gospel.

The people of London and in all other places, need the gospel. They don’t need another version of the gospel, nor a gospel update.

Lives are never transformed by a compromising, counterfeit, corrupt gospel.

Oh people may be entertained, fascinated, caught up in the moment, their sin pushed aside for a time, but they will remain spiritually lifeless, and coldness, they need the gospel Paul preached and they need it now.

Paul counted it an honour to be used by Christ not only witnessing the saving of sinners, but as **verse 14** shows the strengthening of saints.

Let our prayer be, Lord make me willing to be willing make me to be a soul winner, a saint encourager. May my life impact someone else's.

It's all part in the cause of the furtherance of the gospel.

II SECOND, THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL

God in His eternal, infinite and unchanging wisdom, chose that the Gospel would be furthered by Paul's imprisonment.

God in His own sovereignty and to the good pleasure of His will chose the circumstances that His gospel will advance.

Paul said in **verse 13** ***so that my bonds in Christ are manifest***... now clearly Paul is a prisoner in Rome.

the word **bonds** literally refers ***to being imprisoned chained and bounded***.

However, Paul in referring to his **bonds**, always sees himself as a prisoner of Christ chained to Christ or **bonds in Christ**, As in **Ephesians 3:1** & **Philemon 9**,

Ephesians 6:20 ***I am an ambassador in bonds***

He wasn't a prisoner because he committed a crime, for he had not committed a crime. Paul made it clear in **Acts 28:17** and in

other letters, He was a prisoner because he preached Christ, Christ's ambassador. His chains were evidence of his faithfulness to Christ.

Paul's imprisonment became plainly recognised and clearly associated with Christ.

In putting the two points together Paul is a prisoner for the cause of the furtherance of the gospel. He said in **2 Timothy 2:10** ***"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."***

Believer, maybe you feel your time is chained to work schedules. You're bound to a job for 8-12 hours a day.

I know some of you leave the house for work around 5 am, and don't get back home until late.

Young people you are at school, collage between the time you leave the house and get back, it about 9-10 hours in the day, then you have home work, projects.

In a certain sense, you are chained and bound to certain routines, you cannot unchain yourself from going into work, or attending school. There are places we need to be, people we need to help.

Many to come to prayer meetings it's a sacrifice, but I tell it's a sacrifice with making.

However, always keep Paul's view before you, as a believer you are in ***bonds in Christ***, you can never be unchained from Christ, or separated from Christ. He is ever with you and watches over you.

Therefore, live out the gospel at home, in work and education, as Paul said in **Phil 2:15** ***shine as lights in the world***, **verse 16** ***"holding forth the word of life..."***

Share the gospel by your actions, reactions, responses.

If your environment, setting, is a hard and difficult place, then God has placed you there and given you an opportunity to demonstrate the reality of a transformed life.

The home you live in or work place, will have its challenges and changing circumstances,

The question is from these circumstances how can I further the gospel, or how can God make me to be a channel of blessing.

The answer is never to fight fire with fire, or get even or to get ahead, or to do one over on another,

Paul said in **Phil 1:27** **only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.** the word **conversation** in this words means **conduct, behaviour.**

In other words it is to demonstrate Christ likeness, the fruit of the Spirit in our life which is **love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance...**

If an opportunity arises, a question asked regarding spiritual matters, then answer of the hope within you, but If you are unable to speak out the gospel, then live out the gospel, live out the hope within you.

When Paul was taken into prison, he found another way to share the gospel and took the opportunity **as a result he seen souls believe trust in the God of salvation and believers strengthen to speak a word for the God of their Salvation.**

God desires the lives of His people to be available daily for the furtherance of the gospel.

Believer will you surrender all to him, take my life Lord, I have only one life to life I can never withhold from God. Make me to be a blessing for the furtherance of the gospel.

I don't know what all that will involve, what path that will take me down, what door will be closed for work or education to open another one so the gospel can be furthered.

Lord all to thee my blessed Saviour I surrender all. Christ gave His all for me, it is my reasonable service to present my life to Him.

Unsaved surrender to Christ today, abandon human effort, He will save you.