

## ***“Sharing Joy and Hope in Jesus!” #2***

### **Introduction and Background Review**

The author - The Apostle Paul. The date is in the first century (60's). The place is Rome, while Paul was chained. (See also Acts 16: 11 – 40 for Paul's first visit to Philippi.)

### **Chapter 1: 9 - 11**

*And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,<sup>10</sup> so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,<sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.*

- As Paul prays for people he loves in Philippi, his thoughts focus on things spiritual. Notice the petitions for growth in knowledge, discernment and “fruits of righteousness.” The ultimate goal is to be “pure” and “blameless” for the day of Christ.

**Take a few moments to examine your own prayer life. What sort of requests make the top of your list? What is the balance between physical (health, safety, etc.) and spiritual (growth in faith, love for the Lord, fruits of faith, etc.)? Are there any areas of your prayer life you would like to change? Explain.**

### **Chapter 1: 12 - 14**

*Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.<sup>13</sup> As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.<sup>14</sup> And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.*

- The Lord promises that every circumstance in life will work for the good of his children. (See Romans 8:28). In these verses, Paul reflects on how his personal confinement in Rome resulted in good for the spread of the gospel. The gospel was spreading through the “whole palace guard” and many believers grew bolder in their personal proclamation of the gospel.

**Have you noticed any spiritual good the Lord is working now in your life and in the lives of others? Explain.**

**What causes fear as you are given opportunities to share the good news of Jesus with others? How can we all grow bolder in our personal proclamation of the gospel?**

### **Chapter 1: 15 – 18a**

*It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill.<sup>16</sup> The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.<sup>17</sup> The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains.<sup>18</sup> But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.*

- Paul exposes one of the ugly realities of the visible Christian church on earth. The apostle had rivals who were jealous of the success of his ministry. These rivals desired personal glory and honor. They worked hard to proclaim the gospel while Paul was confined, but their motive was stirring up trouble for Paul while they advanced themselves. Note Paul's selfless reaction.

**How do we react when Christian churches outside our WELS/ELS fellowship experience apparent success and remarkable outward growth?**

**If the spread of the gospel is the ultimate goal, why don't we join in worship and mission efforts with those outside of our WELS/ELS fellowship? (See John 8: 31,32; 2 John)**

### **Chapter 1: 18a - 26**

*Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, <sup>19</sup>for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>20</sup>I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. <sup>21</sup>For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup>If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! <sup>23</sup>I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; <sup>24</sup>but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. <sup>25</sup>Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, <sup>26</sup>so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.*

- Paul expects to be release from Roman custody. (He himself had appealed to have his case heard in the Roman courts of Caesar, rather than having a trial in Jerusalem on the false charges of inciting riots. (See Acts 21 – 25.) Paul bases his confidence on the prayers being said for him and also on God's provision.
- Paul also asserts that he is in a "win – win" situation. There is no way he can lose. In fact, he admits a sense of relief at not having to chose whether he would live or die.

**A fellow Christian with terminal cancer once remarked that he found peace in this thought: "Either I'll get better or I'll get perfect!" How did his comment mirror the comments of Paul?**

**For what purpose does the Lord extend our lives in this world after we have come to faith?**

### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, when I am attempted to focus on my personal health, safety, finances and security, help me trust you to provide my daily bread. Then set my heart on things above. Please strengthen my faith. Keep those I love close to you. At this difficult time, I pray especially for *[insert your own list of people]*. Give me renewed boldness to share the gospel with the people you have put in my life. Then, when the time is right, bring me to the full enjoyment of that life which is better by far, a life which is mine thanks to your saving work for me. All praise and glory to you, O Lord. Amen.