

LEMONADE
Victory Over My Circumstances
Philippians 1:12-14

The Things that have Happened to Me...

Philippians 1:12 (KJV) But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

- Paul writes a letter to the church at Philippi, a church he founded
- He's not writing from the mission field, not from a preaching engagement, he is writing from prison
- Paul is in a Roman jail, not for a crime, but for preaching the gospel
- The charges filed against him were made up
- Paul is in jail for being true to his calling
- Paul is under house arrest, chained to a Roman guard 24 hours a day
- Paul's fate was in the hands of Nero, the Roman Emperor and he didn't know from one day to the next if he would live or die
- Even with all that's going on in Paul's life, there is no bitterness, complaining or murmuring
- He calmly says, these are the things that have happened to me
- Paul was saying "life happens"
- Life happens that way for us, too
- We're in the throes of a pandemic that refuses to go away, it has affected us *indirectly* with the number of infected is hitting new record highs daily, hospitals are running out of space to serve the sick, medical experts are trying whatever they can to treat the sick, there's more bad news than we can handle
- This pandemic is affecting us *directly*, too
- We have family and friends that have been sickened by COVID-19, some of us are grieving the passing of family and friends from the disease, some of us are working from home, some have been furloughed, and even some of us have been laid off, we're limited to where we can go and what we can do, in a word, our lives have been turned upside down, and we don't know when thing will improve
- Paul handled all he was going through without complaining, what about you?
- How are you handling *the things that have happened to you?*
- This is not the time to grumble and complain, question God or wonder why this is happening to you, or ask when will this end, or fall apart, or lose faith in God
- We need to realize there's *another way* to look at trials and maintain our joy
- Paul said the things that have happened to me are for furtherance of the Gospel
- Paul's trials and suffering in prison was real, but he chose to see what was happening to him as an *opportunity* to spread the Gospel

LEMONADE
Victory Over My Circumstances
Philippians 1:12-14

- God's work should continue *regardless* of what's happening in our lives

Victory Over My Circumstances

[13] So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;

- Let's see how Paul used his bad situation to advance the Gospel:
 - In the Roman prison, Paul was chained to a Roman guard by 18-inch chain 24 hours a day for over 2 years
 - These guard weren't just any guards, they the guards that guarded the palace; they were Emperor's guards
- Every 6 hours, the guards would change shifts; one guard would leave, and a new guard would come in
- I wonder what Paul and the guards talked about?
- I believe Paul turned the conversation to talk about Jesus Christ and how Jesus changed his life from one who hated God to one who now speaks on behalf of Christ and how that *same* Jesus can change their lives, too
- But they didn't merely hear about Jesus, but Paul spoke with such power, they were convicted, and many began give their lives to Jesus
- Not only did they give their live to Jesus, but they began to tell *other guards* about Jesus who weren't even assigned to Paul
- How did this happen?
- Verse 13 says, **So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;**
- All the guards in the Emperor's palace and everyone in the palace found out Paul was in chains because he lived for Jesus
- Paul describes himself in Ephesians 6:20 as the *ambassador in bonds*
- Paul was not a "victim of" his circumstances, he was the *victor over* his circumstances
- What Paul realized that "his circumstances" were not as important as what he "did" with them
- What are you going *to do* with the things that happened to you?
- I believe our trials, troubles and tough times are *under-utilized*
 - Most people around us know "about" our troubles, sickness, our pain, disappointments, the divorce, the grief, our job loss, financial reversals, the wayward child, etc.,
- The things that have happened to *you* are for the furtherance of the Gospel
- Jesus like the soldiers guarding Paul heard about Jesus, the people around us want to hear about how God works in tough times
- God allows us to go through what we go through for **our growth** and **His glory**

LEMONADE
Victory Over My Circumstances
Philippians 1:12-14

Help Others Get the Victory

[14] And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

- What was happening for the soldiers guarding Paul began to happen for believers in the streets of Rome
- But when they heard about the success Paul was having with the prison guards and others in the royal palace, it did two things for them
 1. It encouraged them and emboldened them
 2. They were more courageous and fearless to *speak* the Word of God
- When we *joyfully and publicly* live for Jesus despite our trials, we don't realize there are other believers *watching and listening*
- People are watching, listening, people are reading what you post on social media
- They are longing for something that will help them, strengthen them, and encourage them
- They need to know you can maintain your joy even in tough times
- Real joy is not *circumstantial*, real joy is *relational*
- As Paul said, the things that happened to me are real, but he was not going through it *alone* ***Matthew 28:20 and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.***
- Real joy is not merely living *with* my circumstances, real joy allows us to live *above* our circumstances
- You can have victory *over* your circumstances