



INTRODUCTION

Isn't it a bit strange how we thought we were free when we did anything we wanted? After accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior we discovered our true condition. We were bound by sin and disobedience with no hope and without God in our lives. Some of us may have been under the impression that we were champions in every sense of the word, yet we were under the heel of the devil, defeated and in despair. Some even thought we were an "enlightened generation", but in reality we were in total darkness. Our old friends look at us now and believe we are imprisoned by our "religion". In reality, we have been set free by our "relationship" with Jesus Christ. Things are not always as they appear.

In our text, Paul's enemies think that he is imprisoned, silenced, and defeated, but in reality Paul is free to speak loudly through his letters and is more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus. Things are not always as they appear.

Philippians 1:12-18 (NKJV)

¹² But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,

¹³ so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;

¹⁴ and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from good will:

¹⁶ The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains;

¹⁷ but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.

¹⁸ What then? Only *that* in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

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When will the world come to the realization that the will of God cannot be thwarted by the meager actions of man? When will the church come to believe that the prayers of the righteous avails (makes tremendous power available) much? Even the power of the devil or his demons will not stop God's plans no matter what the resultant situation or circumstances look like.

Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ **But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.** In the situation detailed in our text, the pious Jews hoped to stop the spread of the gospel by having Paul locked up. However, just the opposite occurred with a vengeance. Not only did the gospel go forward like a wild forest fire, others who may



have otherwise been intimidated, have now become emboldened in Christ Jesus because of the outrageous treatment of Paul.

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We have some sincere Bible teaching, Holy Ghost filled preachers on television. At the same time we see many charlatans who preach the gospel but at the same time require money be sent in immediately for several different reasons, depending upon the charlatan. Some say they can't stay on the air without the viewer's support, but in reality the mansion, car or airplane they're buying isn't paid off yet. Some use the give and get principle of 10, 30, or 100 fold return on any investment into their "ministry". Still others say your next break through is dependent on you sending in that \$77.77 "seed offering" for you to get out of debt. However, if you listen carefully, they still get folks to confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in their heart that God the Father raised Him from the dead, viewers are getting saved!

Even in the beginning of Jesus' ministry, you had some folk performing miracles in the name of Jesus, but were not sanctioned by Christ Himself. What did Jesus say about these folks?

Luke 9:49-50 (AMP)

- ⁴⁹ **John said, Master, we saw a man driving out demons in Your name and we commanded him to stop it, for he does not follow along with us.**
⁵⁰ **But Jesus told him, Do not forbid [such people]; for whoever is not against you is for you.**

So, though some of the TV preachers are obviously bending the lives of some to false practices, Jesus is still being preached. Jesus is telling us to leave them alone. We should just watch them. (Phil. 3:2)