

“ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD”

**Based on
Philippians 1:12
Romans 8:28
Genesis 50:20**

**By
Buddy Dano, Pastor
Divine Viewpoint
www.divineviewpoint.com**



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Philippians 1:12, Romans 8:28, Genesis 50:20

“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things (which happened) unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel.”

The words in parenthesis, “which happened,” do not appear in the original Greek text.

Nothing just happens to the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ!!! These things come directly from the Lord. Or they reach us through His permissive will (i.e., Job).

The thing that was dominating Paul’s life at this time was imprisonment. He says they *“have fallen out,”* they have come to a result. The result of these things, “rather,” tells us that there were those who were thinking that Paul’s ministry was being curtailed. So, he says, no, **but to the furtherance of the Gospel.**

“Furtherance” is the word, PROKOPTO, which means **a pioneer cutting through the forest.** To cut before, like an army of woodcutters that precede the regular army, cutting a road into an impenetrable forest. Thus making it possible for the pioneer advance of the army into regions where otherwise they could not have gone. A pioneer advance.

So, Paul assures the Philippian believers that his circumstances have not only not failed to curtail his ministry, but these pressures, persecutions, have advanced the Gospel in new areas where otherwise he could not have gone. **It is the same in every believer’s life. Our God-ordained, our God-permitted circumstances are used of the Lord to provide for the pioneer advances of the Gospel in our own personal ministry before the Lord.** We can cut paths through roads that before could never have been traveled. Paul’s imprisonment resulted in our having, for example, the prison epistles in writing, which live and abide forever.

This is Paul’s first sentence mentioning his own affairs, Philippians 1:12. The Philippians had sent him a gift, so they were involved in the fellowship of the Gospel. They contributed

to his support. Verse 5, *“For your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now.”* In verse 7 Paul confirmed and made a defense of the Gospel, a result of their support. Verse 7, *“Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel ye all are partakers of my Grace.”*

Verse 12, **as a result of his imprisonment, there was a furtherance of the Gospel, a pioneer advance in places he otherwise would never have gone (like Caesar’s palace, the Praetorian guard).** So, this is a Romans 8:28.

Paul’s opponents were using his circumstances and calamities as a proof of the unworthiness of the Gospel. They were looking for bad news from Paul. He says, but rather not bad news, but good news. This severe imprisonment and hardship, which the Philippians expected and were concerned about, were in his favor. It made progress.

Verse 13, *“So that my bonds (two years in prison) in Christ are manifest in all the palace (the Praetorian), and in all other places.”* He was in prison in Rome. But, notice he says he was a **prisoner of Christ.**

Here is the faithfulness of God getting the Gospel to this part of the world, so, “What about the heathen?” The word “bonds” refers to Paul being a prisoner in the Roman Empire. It was *“made manifest,”* he says, made known, to become known, to be plainly recognized and thoroughly understood. The word “are” means to become known. **His bonds are because of Christ, “in Christ,” and so he had opportunity to witness in prison.**

So, there was positive volition in Caesar’s palace, which was composed of Praetorian guards, with their imperial barracks of regiments at Rome. He lived for two years with a Roman prisoner chained to his wrist. He had conversations with visitors and they overheard. **Paul was bound, but the Word of God was not bound.**

The language of the day was the universal language, the Koine Greek language, **so the Gospel went to the palace and the barracks of the Roman Empire, a place where it would not have come if Paul had not been taken prisoner there.**

That's a Romans 8:28, "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.*" Or, "*They meant it for evil, but God meant it for good, to deliver many souls alive.*" "**We know that all things work together for good...**" Paul knew it. Prison is not good, but it worked together for the good and will work together for good. The good news is not Paul in prison. **The Good News is the Gospel of Jesus Christ had a pioneer advance in the Roman Empire.**

Then verse 13 says, "*In all the palace, and in all other places.*" As a result of this principle of all things working together for good, there was an overflow of the Grace of God. In addition to the Gospel making a "pioneer advance" throughout the Roman Empire, Paul speaks of the increase of the presenting of the Gospel in Rome itself.

Verse 14, "*And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the Word without fear.*" "*Many of the believers in the Lord.*" The word "many" is literally, the most. Most of the believers were giving out the Gospel, which means, and has the implication that only a few held back. Many, the most, but not all. Persecutions in Rome had somewhat silenced the Gospel there.

The words "*waxing confidence*" come from a Greek Word to persuade. These believers had been persuaded by the brave and fearless example of Paul in prison, and the principle of the Gospel making a pioneer advance into the Roman palace, **that they came to a personal settled confidence in the Lord.** They waxed confidence in the Lord. So they became more bold in declaring Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world. And that Jesus Christ is the Lord and not Caesar.

Their confidence and their boldness required them to present Jesus Christ as the only Way, the only Truth, and the only Life. We have findings scribbled on the walls in Rome where there is a caricature of Christ on a Cross with an ass head portrayed, and on the left there appears a Christian youth in an attitude of adoration, and underneath are these words: "ALEAMENOS WORSHIPS GOD."

Verse 14, "*And many,*" most "*of the believers in the Lord, waxing confidence by my bonds,*" Romans 8:28, "*are much more bold to speak the Word without fear.*" "*To speak*" denotes the fact, not actually the substance of speaking, but that they broke their silence. So, it says literally, "*the great majority of the brethren, having come to a state of settled confidence in the Lord by means of the fact that they have been persuaded by my bonds, are more abundantly bold, fearlessly breaking their silence and speaking the Word,*" literally. This is a result of "*all things working together for good.*"

In Philippians 1:15-17 we continue this concept. Paul, after explaining to the Philippian believers the result of his imprisonment, and the result of Romans 8:28, God's purpose was to increase the number of Gospel witnesses. Paul begins to speak of two groups into which these witnesses were divided, and the different motives that impelled them to break their silence. Their motivations were governed by their personal attitudes about the apostle Paul.

In verses 15-17 another result of Paul's imprisonment and the furtherance of the Gospel is revealed. "*Some indeed preach Christ of envy and strife; and some also of good will:*" Verse, 16, "*The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds.*" Verse 17, "*But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the Gospel.*"

Verse 15, "*Some preach of contention ...*" The preposition "of" is literally "because of." Verses 15 and 16 show false motivation for witnessing. Verse 17 shows a true motivation for witnessing.

One group preached Christ because of being envious of Paul, the practice usually of the religious Jews. This group was known as the Judaizers in Galatia. These were Jews who taught that the Gentiles had to enter Christianity through the gate of Judaism, circumcision. They preached Christ, but their real objective was to gain adherents to the Law. They valued success, not as a triumph over paganism, but as a triumph over Paul. It would make them feel good if they could make Paul's sufferings in prison more acute by reason of jealousy that would arise in his heart. **They were trying, as the word says here, to add affliction to his bonds.**

The other group, verse 17, of love, these were made up of Gentile converts, friends of Paul's, who were encouraged to preach by the thought that it would give joy to the great apostle whose personal liberty was restricted, and to also be a part of God's plan, of Romans 8:28, the furtherance of the Gospel.

The word "contention" is the word for self-partisanship, intrigue, factious, a selfish spirit, contentious. The word "defense" is the technical word used in a courtroom, which is a verbal defense presented by a lawyer who defends his client. Literally, *"in fact, certain ones even because of envy and rivalry, but also others because of good will are proclaiming Christ, some indeed out of a spirit of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the Gospel, but others, out of a partisan self-seeking spirit are announcing Christ, not with pure unmixed motives, but in impure, thinking to make my chain, my bonds, gall me."*

Verse 18 observes the great effect this had upon the apostle Paul when he saw the manifestation of God's Grace in the principle of Romans 8:28. Verse 18, *"What then?"* This had the idea of in every way or manner. Literally, whatever manner or whatever way of preaching of Christ.

"Notwithstanding every way." "Every way" has the idea of in every way or manner. *"Whether in pretence."* "Pretence" is from a Greek word that has in it the idea of ulterior motives. *"Whether in pretext or in Truth, Christ*

is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." "Rejoice and again I say rejoice." This is the keynote of this epistle.

As a result of his imprisonment, there was a pioneer thrust of the Gospel in the Roman Empire, and people were getting information about the Lord Jesus Christ. Regardless of the method or motivation, love or contention, pretext or Truth, Christ was mentioned. **Paul rejoices and will rejoice because people are getting information about the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world.**

Literally, *"What is my feeling in view of these things? Supposing they do purpose to make my chains gall me, the only thing that follows is that in every manner and way, whether in pretense or in Truth, whether impure or pure, Christ is being announced, and in this I am rejoicing, and certainly will continue to rejoice."*

When a person reaches positive volition at the point of Gospel hearing, then God the Holy Spirit will boom the correct information into the mind of the unbeliever so that he can accept Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, apart from the motives of the communicator. It is not the man it is the Message. The Holy Spirit convicts of unbelief in Christ. He is the Sovereign Agent of evangelism.

Notice how in the promise of Romans 8:28, *"that all things work together for good,"* was fulfilled while Paul was in prison in Rome. Paul was imprisoned, but the Word wasn't. There was a pioneer advance of the Gospel into the Roman Empire. All things are not good. Paul was in prison and that is not good, but it worked together for good, the furtherance of the Gospel, and pioneer advance into new areas. It was manifest in Caesar's palace and in all other places. **God was faithful in getting the Gospel to those who were positive to Christ.**

As a result, the believers became bold in proclaiming Christ, and they broke their silence, many of them, most of them. Romans 8:28 is a promise that gives us encouragement and boldness in the Lord. Then, as a result, many others began to proclaim the Lord Jesus

Christ, and the motivation of each was different. That was not good: the contention, the pretense, the impure motives of some, **but it still worked together for good because people came to hear about Jesus Christ.** As a result Paul rejoiced and will rejoice and we also rejoice of the principle of Romans 8:28, and **to know that God is faithful to get information of Christ's death on the Cross to the whole world. Even though men may be bound, the Word is never bound, because it lives and abides forever.**

"The Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believeth, to the Jew and also to the Greek." "They meant it for evil," Paul's imprisonment, "but God meant it for good to deliver many souls alive," the furtherance of the Gospel in Rome.

History teaches that there is a Romans 8:28. Just look at the history of the Roman Empire, and see how Christianity replaced heathenism.

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