

Is the Gospel Shining From Your Life?



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) February 18, 2021

“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice” (Philippians 4:4). These are Paul’s closing word to the Philippians. He wasn’t saying, “I am in prison and these chains are a blessing. I’m so happy for this pain.” I’m convinced Paul prayed daily for his release and at times cried out for strength to endure. Even Jesus, in his hour of trial and pain, cried to the Father, “Why have you forsaken me?” That is our first impulse in our afflictions, to cry out, “Why?” And the Lord is patient with that cry.

But God has also made provision so that our “what ifs” and “whys” can be answered by his Word. Paul writes, “Knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel... Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice” (Philippians 1:17-18). He’s telling us, in other words, “I am determined God’s Word will be validated by my reaction to this affliction. I have set my mind that I won’t disgrace the gospel or make it seem powerless.”

Here is the message that I hear through Paul: We don’t have to do something great for the Lord. We only have to trust him. Our role is to place our lives in God’s hands and believe he will care for us. If we simply do that, his gospel is being preached, no matter what our circumstances. And Christ will be revealed in us most especially in our difficult circumstances.

Sam, an elder in our church, once told me, “Pastor David, the way you respond to hard times is a testimony to me.” What Sam didn’t realize is that his life is a sermon to me. He lives with chronic pain that allows him to sleep no more than a few hours each night. Despite his constant, raging pain, his devotion to the Lord is a testimony to all of us. His life preaches Christ as powerfully as any of Paul’s sermons.

So, is Christ being preached in your present trial? Does your family see the gospel at work in you? Or do they see only panic, despair and questioning of God’s faithfulness? How are you responding to your affliction?

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