

“PAUL’S CHRIST CENTRED LEADERSHIP”

Philippians 1.12--

- As we consider Paul’s testimony I trust it will prove an **encouragement** to respect the **potential** of our own!!
- Paul was what he was by **God’s grace** – God’s grace has not **diminished** one iota since **Paul’s day!!**

PAUL’S CHRIST CENTRED LEADERSHIP

OPTIMISM 12

- Paul is in prison in Rome – He has been **tried** and is awaiting his **verdict** – ***Deliverance or Death***
- He is writing to an **anxious** Church – Philippi – What is going to **happen** to Paul? – The Gospel **cause**?
- How can the Lord be **glorified** in Paul’s **imprisonment**? – What is going to happen if we **lose** Paul?
- But in his chains Paul still **rejoices** in the Lord and sends a note of **optimism** – Absolutely **no self pity** here!
- Here is our first point to **remember** about our own Christian Testimony–There’s always **place** for **Optimism**
- ***“I want you to know”*** Not about *my suffering– my pain– my chains*. No I want you **to know** God is in control
- What satan put as an **obstacle** (my **imprisonment**) is the very thing that’s been **used** for the **use** of Gospel
- The **furtherance** of the Gospel means- God has **cut away** through the obstacles to **clear** the way for Gospel
- ***It is like the drill that cut its way through the granite to reach the miners in Chile to reach the trapped miners***
- God used Paul’s **testimony** in prison to cut through the **obstacles** of satan to reach **people** with the Gospel
- In **adversity** Paul remained **optimistic** There was a purpose in all this Paul could **serve** God in- out of prison
- We see this time and time again in the **history** of the Church – ***Gen 50.20, Jer 38.6, Lam 3.24, Acts 2.22-24***
- ***“I want you to know”*** ***There is great cause for optimism – The Gospel has had free course - been glorified***

EVIDENCE 13

- Chained **constantly** to a Praetorian Guard. An **elite** band of soldiers – forming the **Imperial** guard in Rome
- These men were on **double** pay and **special** privileges and become the most **powerful** body in the state
- Probably at first they **treated** Paul just like any other prisoner– *Rudely– Roughly– Dispassionately– Number*

- They heard him **speak** – They watched his **demeanour** – They observed his polite **attitude** – *Saying grace!!*
- After a while Paul's testimony of Christ began to take **effect**. Paul become an **interesting** prisoner to be with
- They **listened** to how he spoke to his *visitors – the lawyers – the church members* – Christ was his **topic**
- They listened as he **dictated** letters to be written to Churches – Would have heard the **dictation** of this letter
- They observed his **demeanour** – his gracious **manner** – his polite **communication** with his captors.
- They would have noticed how many times he **prayed** – His constant **reference** to the Word of God
- They themselves became **captivated** not by chains but **Gospel**. To be with Paul meant hearing about **Christ**
- Paul and his testimony of Christ became the **discussion** point of the **guards** - Also Ceasars household **4.22**
- They **understood** there could be only one reason why this **gracious meek** and **honest** man was in **prison**
- It was **not because** of any crime he had **committed** but simply because of his committed **belief** in **Christ**.
- *"It has become evident"* Because Paul **focused** upon Christ in his testimony Christ in the end was **praised**
- How **different** it would have been if Paul had been full of self pity in prison– feeling hard done – **Opportunity**
- The Word of God was not **bound** in prison – Paul's testimony in captivity **proclaimed** Christ – The **Gospel**
- *Illust I know of two aged believers now in glory– Both lived in the same village both had the same care visitor*
- *One of the ladies maintained a wonderful testimony in suffering – Sadly the other was always complaining*
- *In the end the nurse swopped her calls so she tended the Optimistic old lady last – Her testimony spoke!!*
- *From Paul we learn that in times of adversity people are watching us – Our testimony can make a difference*

INSPIRATION 14

- Before Paul's **imprisonment** there had been among **many** a **fear** of their **adversaries**.
- At his **defence** no one had been at Paul's side, all had **deserted** him. It was **just him** and His Lord in Rome
- But Paul's **testimony** in prison inspired **renewed** confidence. The Lord had **sustained** Paul wonderfully **4.13**
- That same **faith** in Jesus Christ was now being put to **good use** outside the prison in Rome by others!

- There is now, a **boldness**; among the brethren in the Lord to **preach** Christ whatever the **cost**. Influence
- The result was the Gospel became the **topic** of conversation without restraint The Church was focused again
- It all **came about** when the key man was put in prison and bound–But **considered** the trial as an opportunity
- [From Paul we learn that inspiration to serve and to be bold must come from the Leaders](#)

MAKING KNOWN THE NAME OF CHRIST THE KEY OBJECTIVE 15

- To **understand** the next verses accurately we need to put them in their proper **context**.
- **15** The impact of the Gospel under **inspiration** of Paul's testimony stirred up a number of preachers in Rome
- Before this **period** a number of them had become **lethargic** and lacked conviction in preaching of the Gospel
- Paul's **influence** stirred them up and **embarrassed** them in their lethargy. Became **envious- jealous** of Paul
- They were **goaded** into action in **preaching** the Gospel but did so with **resentment** towards Paul
- **16** Others picked up on the **increasing** impact of the Gospel and wanted to be **part** of the action
- They lacked **sincerity** and in fact were **opposed** to Paul and resented his **authority** even in prison
- They thought by **preaching** - actual gospel insincerely for gain Paul would be **stressed-frustrated** by chains
- **17** While others having a love that **discerned** recognised Paul's **defence** of the **Gospel**
- These preachers loved Christ **Preached** the gospel **inspired** by Paul's true testimony–His arguments Gospel
- They knew Paul was appointed (set in his firm belief in the Gospel) Word depicting a **fixed** purpose **Lk 2.34**
- **18** Paul rejoices that the **actual** Gospel is being preached. Sincerely or insincerely the message is **going out**
- Paul is not saying they are preaching **another** Jesus or a **different** gospel. Had **truth** in the **head** not **heart**!
- The issue here is that while all were **proclaiming** the true gospel **not all** were doing so out of right **motives**
- But Paul's determined to **rejoice** in the fact that Christ preached. Not **discouraged** by the unworthy motives
- While he **recognises** the problem he is not **overwhelmed** or stressed by it – I will **rejoice** Christ is preached

- Christ is being brought to the **attention** of thousands upon thousands in Rome – The Gospel **action is on**
- *I know of a man who used to stand outside a Church with a board hanging from his neck with a text on it*
- *This brother knew his aggressive style was not the image the Church wanted to portray yet he continued*
- *However in the end the Leaders just let him do it – It was the Word of God and in that they rejoiced.*
- From Paul's testimony of rejoicing we learn the importance he put on getting Christ known by preaching
- He would never condone heretical preaching – But he did rejoice that the Gospel message was going out

CHRIST CENTRED CONFIDENCE 19-20

- Paul realises the day of **decision** about his case is getting **closer**. It will be **deliverance** whatever
- Either **deliverance** to serve Christ here on earth or **deliverance** to glorify Christ in Heaven – **Unique Hope**
- Paul looks to the **future** with optimism and hope whatever Meanwhile the gospel is **gathering pace** in Rome
- He rejoices in each daily **report**– He reminds himself of his utter **dependence** upon prayer -- Spirit of Christ
- He recognises the **precious** value of **intercessory** prayer – **Your prayer!!!** - Praying for the **persecuted**
- *“Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.” Heb 13:3*
- Paul **writes** of the Spirit of Jesus Christ **referring** to the Holy Spirit through whom Christ **ministers** to us
- Christ said He would **send** The Comforter Holy Spirit who will **minister** to us of Christ—His channel of blessing
- The Spirit of Jesus Christ in Paul **meant** the Holy Spirit working in him **conforming** him to be **Christ-like**
- Paul would **need** real grace to persevere *“But could do all things through Christ who strengthened him”*
- But it seems to me that Paul is also making **reference** here to following the **example** of Christ in suffering
- *“Who when He was reviled, reviled not again but committed it Him that judges righteously”*
- The same Spirit which **sustained** Jesus Christ in His *witness, ministry and suffering* here on earth
- The same Spirit in us will **mould** us according to the **Person** of Christ and His Way.
- Paul's Christ-like **witness** in prison had such an **effect** for the **good** of the Gospel.
- Looking ahead he has dedicated **expectation** - certain **hope** not in himself but- **keeping** power of the Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit would **bountifully** supply aiding him in his time of need helping **him** to maintain good witness
- From Paul's testimony we learn the importance of understanding where our resource come from

CHRIST CENTRED BOLDNESS 20b

- I shall not be put to **shame** but will **experience** all boldness because my **dependence** is upon the Lord
- *Like the boldness of the first rescuer going down to rescue the miners – Trust in Capsule – Last one out!!*

- There is such a thing as a Holy Spirit given **boldness** which we are **encouraged** to exercise in our lives.
- *“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marvelled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” Acts 4:13*
- *“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” Acts 4:31*
- *“In whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.” Ephesians 3:12*
- *“For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” 1Timothy 3:13*
- *“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,” Hebrews 10:19*
- *From Paul’s testimony we learn the importance of exercising a boldness which has its confidence in Christ*

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OPTIMISM 12

- *“I want you to know” There is great cause for optimism – The Gospel has had free course - been glorified*

EVIDENCE 13

- *From Paul we learn that in times of adversity people are watching us – Our testimony can make a difference*

INSPIRATION 14

- *From Paul we learn that inspiration to serve and to be bold must come from the Leaders*

MAKING KNOWN THE NAME OF CHRIST THE KEY OBJECTIVE 15-18

- *From Paul’s testimony of rejoicing we learn the importance he put on getting Christ known by preaching*
- *He would never condone heretical preaching – But he did rejoice in the Gospel being preached whatever*

CHRIST CENTRED CONFIDENCE 19-20

- *Here we learn the importance of knowing where our resource come !*

CHRIST CENTRED BOLDNESS 20b

- *From Paul’s testimony we learn the importance of exercising a boldness which has its confidence in Christ*
- We continue this morning in **considering** further **characteristics** of Paul’s **Christ Centred Testimony**

CHRIST CENTRED GLORY 20c

- Paul **continues** by reminding us of the best **inner motive** any person can have in this **world**.
- That Christ will be **magnified** in my body (*meaning his entire personality*) both in **life** and in **death**.
- What Paul is meaning in its full **depth** is that Christ will take over his **whole being** Christ centred **personality**
- That Christ shall appear increasingly **glorious** through my **sufferings** even unto **death**.

- When **writing** to the Church at Thessalonica Paul **explains** to them the **nature** of their **prayer** for them.

“Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” 2Thessalonians 1:11-12

- Prayer **centres** on this subject of Christ being **magnified** but here he uses an even stronger **term** – **glorified**
- I would like to draw your **attention** again here to the power and fruit of **intercessory** prayer.
- In Philippians the Church are interceding in **pray** for Paul: Result *Christ Magnified 19-20*
- In 1 Thessalonians Paul Silvanus and Timothy are interceding in **pray** for the Church: Result *Christ Glorified*
- An **email** from Pastor Peter Samuel in St Lucia it he says Ridley Hall are **now** on our Churches Prayer List
- Now we need to **value** such an extension in **intercessory** prayer for us.
- Wed eve we **joined** with our brothers and sisters in Christ at the Tabernacle for their Thanksgiving Service.
- One of the **brothers** said to me Pastor Buss we are praying for you and the Church **regularly** at P.M.
- May the outcome of such **intercessory** prayer bring: Fruit of **hope— boldness** - Christ **magnified** in our body
- Here is the **ultimate** desire for any Christian – That Christ might be **magnified** in my body
- Paul has this most **precious** desire – That whatever happens to him **deliverance** or **death**
- Christ will appear more **glorious** in the **estimation** of believers. This is the **testimony** of a Servant of Christ!!
- *Illust: The testimony of the Minister trapped some years ago in the Chilean Mine. I paraphrase part of a report in the Times.*

My job down the mine was to spread the Word of God. This was my objective the work that God had entrusted to me. Out of all the jobs I think the most beautiful fell to me”

“How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"” Isaiah 52:7

He went on to say The Lord strengthens the fallen and the weak.

This was really the power of God in action in each one of our hearts.

When the Bibles were sent down the borehole we read them with certainty as the Word of God”

Christ was magnified through the ministry of this Preaching miner.

As he said to the Times Journalists

“The glory belongs to the Lord any man is only a mere instrument in the hands of God.”

- It is **amazing** that God often chooses to work to greatest **effect** in times of **suffering** for His **glory**.
- William Cowper who experienced mental **depression** in his life leaving him in **despondency**. Wrote by **faith!**

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform;

He plants His footsteps in the sea And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines Of never failing skill

He treasures up His bright designs And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; The clouds ye so much dread

Are big with mercy and shall break In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust Him for His grace;

Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face.

*His purposes will ripen fast, Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste, But sweet will be the flower.
Blind unbelief is sure to err And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter, And He will make it plain.*

- Here is the Apostle Paul **chained** – having lost his **freedom physically** but not **spiritually**!
- In such a **seemingly** impossible situation through **testimony** and **prayer** Christ is being **magnified**!
- *From Paul's testimony we see Christ magnified in our own body will always glorify His name wherever*

CHRIST CENTRED FUTURE 21

- *“For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain”*
- Here is the **assured** motto of the Christian – A **purpose** in life and **purpose** in death.
- To help us understand what Paul **means** when he says to live is Christ we need to look at other **verses**
- His **source** of strength is in Christ **4.13**
- His **inspiration** for lifestyle is in Christ **2.5-11**
- His holy **ambition** is to know Christ **3.8**
- His **hope** of Righteousness is in Christ **3.9**
- His **reason** for rejoicing is in Christ **4.4**
- His **purpose** of life is in Christ **2 Corinthians 5.15 / Galatians 2.20**
- If you were to **examine** all the **positive** statements of the world not one could **match** this for **quality - hope**
- *From Paul's testimony we learn the importance of having a Christ Centred Purpose for future in life or death.*

CHRIST CENTRED DECISION

- *“But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit for my labour, yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better.”*
- Of course Paul knew that it was **actually** God's will that **must be done** in his life – **God's servant**
- In prison Paul is **weighing** up the two possible outcomes **deliverance** or **death**. Which would he **choose**?
- Whatever he chose would either be a **Christ centred fruit** for others or **Christ centred blessing** for himself.
- If he thought just for **himself** it would be better now to go to **glory**– His longing for glory pressed hard on him
- But a great Pastoral **burden** for the Churches also **pressed** hard upon him – Much yet to be **accomplished**
- Paul knows the day of reckoning is **fast approaching**– In a crisis consider how **positive** are the two options!
- In a way Paul was **positioned** between two blessings. Either way it **would turn out** for the **glory of God**
- Now consider for a **moment** an unbelieving prisoner facing a similar crisis to Paul – **Waiting the verdict!!**
- He also is in prison **contemplating** the future. Sadly he is not between **two blessings** but **two curses**.
- Will he be able to **return** to his sinful life in the darkness for a **time** – Or will he enter into **eternal** darkness
- If he lives on as an **unbeliever** he remains in **spiritual darkness** – If he **dies** they enter **eternal darkness!!**
- You may be **facing a crisis** in your own life – What are you **between**? Two **blessings** or two **curses!!**
- *Jesus Christ came to this world as Saviour to deliver sinners from the cursed way to the blessed way!!!*
- *When we follow Him we enter a pathway of great spiritual blessing. A way that leads to glory and heaven!!!!*
- *Future is assured-secure. Whether we live or die we are in Christ. We Live to serve Him Die to Praise Him!!*

- *Heaven is our home our destination we are walking as Pilgrims on a journey to our Eternal home in heaven!!*
 - *Two men were suddenly taken ill with severe heart attacks in a town one was a believer the other unbeliever*
 - *Both men in Casualty facing a never ending eternity made totally different statements to the Consultant*
 - *The unbeliever in fear said to the Consultant don't let me die I don't want to leave home – Time bound life*
 - *The believer said to the same Consultant I do not fear the future I am going home. – Eternal Hope*
 - In death **humanity** is divided into two **groups**. We are either **leaving** home, or **going** home!!
 - When **facing** a crisis in our lives, which is a **matter** of life - death to us, are we at **peace** like this man?
 - *A Pastor I know has recently been diagnosed with cancer. On Lord Day after diagnosis went to his Church.*
 - *His wife told me he entered the pulpit and preached like he had never preached before. A solemn depth!!*
 - This dear brother is like Paul **hard pressed**. Sees the need **around him** – But also desires glory in **Heaven!**
 - One way would mean **blessing** through **suffering** – The other would mean **blessing** without **suffering**
 - Paul's **hard pressed** between two options **epitomises** what is **true** in **measure** for every Christian in **crisis!**
 - In the end Paul **decides** for the Church and not for **himself**.
-
- *“Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith.”*
 - Paul definite **opinion** by faith was that he would be **delivered** to serve To bear more **fruit** for - glory of God
 - But in this hope of deliverance a clear **objective** in his future ministry. The **progress-joy** of faith of believers.
 - **Progress:**
 - This is the same word **translated** as **furtherance** in v12.
 - In other words the Christian Life is best **characterised** by constantly **making** progress – **Pressing on**.
 - Paul saw his ministry very much as **inspiring** Christians in **zeal** and **endeavour** and **service** for the Lord
 - Paul **understood** that Christian Joy is most often **experienced**-Christians living **wholeheartedly** for the Lord
 - The point for us to remember here is Paul's objective to **inspire progression**. Not in a **mechanical** manner
 - **Joy of Faith:**
 - Together with **progression** Paul's **objective** in Pastoral ministry is to **inspire** the **fruit** of the **joy** of faith -
 - What is **joy of faith**? An assurance that **rests** solely upon the **Person** and **Work of Jesus Christ the Lord**

*“To know my Jesus crucified By far excels all things beside;
All earthly good I count but loss And triumph in my Saviours cross
Knowledge of all terrestrial things Ne'er to my soul true pleasure brings
No peace, but in the Son of God No joy but through His pardoning blood
O could I know and love Him more And all His wondrous grace explore
Ne'er would I court mans esteem But part with all and follow Him*
 - Paul **prays** for the church at Rome that they would **experience joy** and **peace** in believing.
 - You **know** how Paul says later in *“Rejoice in the Lord and again I say rejoice.”*
 - The **point** for us this morning here is the **link** Paul makes between **progression** and **joy**
 - **Regression** often leads to **spiritual depression** whereas **progression** always leads to **spiritual joy**.
 - Yet the way we **progress** in our spiritual life to **experience** the joy of faith is **often** by way of **trial**

- *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” James 1:2-4*

“Lord may I bear my every loss. Be, patient under every cross

Never may I my Saviour blame. Though, I’m despised for His dear name

Thus make me willing glorious Lamb. To, suffer all things for Thy name

At last to where Jesus is And rise to everlasting bliss

- *“That your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again”*
- When I visit you again after such a **trial** your **pleasure** in seeing me again will **redound** to the **glory** of Christ

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CHRIST CENTRED FUTURE 21

- *From Paul's testimony we learn the importance of having a Christ Centred Purpose for future in life or death.*

CHRIST CENTRED DECISION

- *Paul believes the Lord would have him continue to serve the Church for a while longer before Glory.*

CHRIST CENTRED MOTIVE

- *Paul has a clear objective for the Church to inspire through his teaching and testimony Progression and Joy*