***Triumph out of Trouble, No. 2 - PH16-02

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:12-14***

We are looking at triumph out of trouble in Philippians 1:12-14. This is the second increment on that subject.

One of the hardest things that believers always seem to have trouble understanding is that Satan is out to get you. He is a very real personality and he has a very real program. That program is designed to destroy the believer's capacity to respond to the will of God. That capacity is structured, first of all, upon your understanding the Word of God. Therefore, at this stage in your life right here in this moment when you sit down to study the Word of God, you have arrived at a point of maximum satanic oppression and resistance. This is the point at which Satan will seek to divert you in one way or another.

The book of Philippians is a rather outstanding book for the simple fact that it is a book of joy. It is the "Happiness Is" book of the Bible. It is specifically designed to explain how to be happy. In the process of that explanation, it is interesting that the apostle Paul touches upon doctrine after doctrine after doctrine after doctrine. You can hardly read a verse in the book of Philippians without stopping and saying, "Now, let's explore the implications of this doctrine which was touched upon in this verse." This book is filled with touching upon doctrine. I think that the point of that is this: If a book is written to teach you how to be happy, and that book is constantly touching upon all the vast facets of the doctrinal structures of the Word of God, it should be a clue to us that there is no happiness apart from being doctrinally informed.

I know there are people every now and then who come to the reaction that, "Oh I'll die if I hear the words 'Bible doctrine' once more." I want to tell you something. You'll die if you don't hear it, and you'll die even worse if you don't hear the content of doctrine. The first stage of getting disoriented to the Word of God and getting off on your emotional tangents is signaled by a phrase like that: "Don't repeat the words 'Bible doctrine.' Don't stress that back to me again." Anytime I hear somebody say that, it causes considerable concern in my heart for that individual, because I know that that person is on his way out, unless that attitude is immediately squelched, stopped, and reversed. That's what Satan is going to try to do to you today. He's going to try to convince you that you don't need all this technical information and that you don't need all this insight, and all that you need are a few kicks to your emotions, and you're on your way. There are plenty of places where you can find that kind of service provided for you--that preaching in loopholes--but I'm afraid you won't find it here. That isn't what God has planned for you. There is a way for you to triumph in your troubles.

In verse 12, we looked at the apostle Paul who was in a boxed-in situation as a prisoner in Rome. Now, at the point of this writing, he has been a prisoner for four years, and a prisoner as the result of an act of legalism on his part. As the result of that fracture in his own personal spiritual life, and that act of legalism that he committed in the city of Jerusalem, he has been in prison for four long years, and out of active missionary service. It is very natural that under this restriction of the freedom of his choice, which is our inherent right by God's natural design, that the Christians in the New Testament world should be concerned as to what's happening to the Lord's work when the key man is out of operation.

Paul's situation was indeed a very grievous one because he was a key man, and it only points up to us again what many of you, I'm afraid, do not really take seriously. That is that when we are engaged in the Lord's work in a way that is really getting to Satan, we are under very grave danger. We are very very prone to combat casualty in the Lord's work just as we are in a physical combat. There are a lot of Christians who still don't understand that. Perhaps the devil doesn't give you any trouble. You probably don't have a spiritual maturity structure in your soul that is worth anything; and, consequently you are no threat to him as a witness. You are no threat to him with your money. You're not going to be out there with the information that you need to be able to evangelize in a teaching way. You're going to go out there and it's all going to be "Hip, hip, hooray" hoopla-day evangelism. You're not going to have the content that the Holy Spirit is going to be able to use.

In other words, you may not be aware of the big guns that Satan has trained upon those who are doing the Lord's work, simply because you're out of it. Consequently, the guns aren't trained against you. This is what the apostle Paul was trying to get across to the Philippians. Paul says, "In a way, I have been shot down, and perhaps it was because somebody was not on the job in behalf of me in prayer and support that should have been. But be that as it may, I want you to know," he points out in verse 12, "that my imprisonment has redounded to the advancement of the Word of God in new ways; in new fields; and, in new directions that it has ever done before. God again, in my restriction, has turned an evil for good."

**Philippians 1:13**

So in verses 13 and 14, he describes this outreach. He begins in verse 13 with the words "So that." This is the little Greek word "hoste." "Hoste" is a pointing word that's introducing the result of a situation that Paul has been describing that he has been in. This situation is described by the words "bonds" ("desmos"). This means his imprisonments. Therefore, Paul says, "So that (as the results of) my bonds (imprisonments) in Christ." The word "in Christ" means that they are because of Christ, or because he is a Christian. "My bonds in Christ are manifest." The word "are" is aorist active infinitive. Aorist means that every point that the work of the Lord is touched by his imprisonment. It is active in that it produces something--that imprisonment is actually producing something. Infinitive means that it describes a purpose. What he means is that it is to be plainly recognized or thoroughly understood. That is indicated by the word "manifest" ("phaneros"). Something plainly is to be understood. What is that? Simply this:

Because of what has happened to him in his imprisonments; because he is related to Jesus Christ; because he is on the job testifying for the Lord Jesus Christ; and, because he preached the gospel, something happened for a new outreach of the gospel: namely, that the fact that he is a prisoner as a witness of Jesus Christ has become evident in something. Your text may say "the palace," but it is not palace." The Greek word is "praitorion." "Praitorion" does not mean "palace." It refers to the Praetorian Guard of the Roman Imperial Army. It refers to the buildings in which the guards were barracked, and it has reference to the group of soldiers who are responsible for guarding prisoners. In other words, Paul was chained for 24 hours-a-day to a soldier who was in the Praetorian Guard. The Praetorian Guard was an elite corps of soldiers. The Roman army was a magnificent war machine in its day. As all magnificent war machines which are properly used, it brought peace to the world in its time. The Pox Romana settled upon all the known world, and it knew a period of freedom, justice, and prosperity. The Praetorian Guard supply the officers for that military force of the Roman Empire. Consequently, Paul was in touch with some very elite men. These were men whose future in the army was going to bring them into positions of influence.

The Ministry of Paul was in the sphere of the Praetorian Guard simply because he was chained to them. This guard consisted of ten cohorts, and a cohort had 1,000 men each. Consequently, with these men gradually speaking to one another, over the two years that Paul was in prison in Rome, the word spread concerning this man whom they were guarding in 24-hour shifts. These guards heard Paul's conversations with other believers who were visiting personalities in the Christian church. They heard him dictating his letters, such as the one we are studying--Philippians--these inspired Scriptures. They saw him in prayer, and they certainly received his personal witness concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. The word gradually got out through the Praetorian Guard that they were guarding a very remarkable man. He was a man with a fantastic message, and that message was the reason that he was a prisoner of the Roman government.

Well, we know that in time, under the trial that Paul had under Nero, that he was freed of the charge. He had about a year of freedom before he was brought back into a second imprisonment. Furthermore, Paul's fame spread not only through the Praetorian Guard, but we read "in all the palace and in all other places." This included the Praetorian Guard as well as all other places which means all the rest. This refers to nonmilitary people. These men would go home and they would talk to their families, and their wives would talk to other wives. The Word was in Nero's courts. The Word went into the streets of Rome.

In other words, Paul's message, in time, became the talk of the town. However, I want you to notice that the thing that was manifest was the message. It wasn't that Paul was impressed with VIPs. The apostle Paul was only impressed with the Lord. He is not impressed with people, and he is not impressed with the capabilities of people. However, he was impressed with the message that he had to deliver. Even though he was talking to men who were destined for positions of great influence often in the empire, he was not impressed with who they were. He was impressed with the Christ that he was presenting to them.

There is a delusion that many Christians fall into in the course of wanting to be witnesses for the Lord. It is a delusion that they fall into the idea that they must somehow form a certain camaraderie with the people to whom they are going to witness. If this person is interested in butterfly collections, they buy themselves a net and they run out and they catch butterflies, and they pin them on boards. That's known as butterfly evangelism. Other Christians believe that if they see their neighbor's lawn needs cutting, and he's an unbeliever, they get out there with their lawn mower and start cutting their lawn. Then because they cut the lawn, the unbeliever comes and says, "What are you doing?" The Christian says, "I'm cutting your lawn." The unbeliever says, "How much are you going to charge me." The Christian says, "Nothing, I'm doing this for free because I love you." That's known as friendship evangelism, and the man falls to his knees and praises God.

That's OK if you want to use that technique, and it's okay if that's your style, but don't get trapped up into the idea that this is New Testament evangelism. It's not anything of the kind. It is gimmickry. It is made up of devices and the inventions of men. You are going to have to learn to be a cagey sharp Christian in order not to be caught up in the great amount of misinformation which is given out concerning what genuine biblical Christianity is all about.

I'll tell you something else. When it gets into print, then it's authoritative. Have you ever explained something to your husband or to your wife, and they wouldn't listen to you? Then they picked up a magazine article from the Ladies Home Journal, and they read it and they said, "Look at this." They came back and told you just exactly what you were telling them. They believe it because it's in print.

Have you noticed the television ads concerning the Living Bible? All the stars and all the biggies are advertising it. One of the Dallas seminary professors recently commented again with some strong language that the Living Bible is simply a man's commentary, which is exactly what you have heard at Berean Memorial church. If Ralph Nader ever catches on to the advertising of the Living Bible, he's going to bring into operation the law of truth in advertising. Do you realize that? Nader hasn't understood this. That advertising gives you the impression that you're buying a Bible. Furthermore, the adjective "living" makes you think that you're buying one that's hot and alive, whereas the one that you're reading, which is a true translation of Greek and Hebrew, is a dead Bible. That's not truth in advertising. It is very deceptive to imply that here is finally a new Bible that people can read and understand.

It is no wonder that the Gideons were up in arms when the publishers of The Living Bible said they would give the Gideons something like fifty thousand copies if they would take the translations of the Bible that they were using out of hotel rooms and put the Living Bible in its place. In other words, they wanted them to put a commentary in place of the living and powerful Word of God. That's fantastic. Why do so many people believe that the Living Bible is alive while a true translation is dead? Well, because you see it in advertising in television and magazines. You pick up Sunday school literature, and there are the Living Bible quotations and it doesn't specify, "Now here's a commentary variation of this."

Now smarten up, believers. You are few in numbers because there are not many smart believers in the Lord's kingdom in this final intensified season of the age of grace and of the angelic warfare. There are not many sharp believers, and most of the believers are getting so much misinformation that they're sharing with one another and agreeing with one another that they actually think they're right. The apostle Paul was not impressed with people, and he was not impressed with some techniques and gimmicks of evangelism that were going to show people, "I'm impressed with you. You're a very important person. I'm impressed with you. If you become a Christian, God will be impressed with you." Well God will not be impressed with you. God doesn't need you. God only has something to offer you, and you should be grateful that He was kind enough to be willing to give it to you. When Christians are in love with the Lord Jesus Christ, they become impressed with Him. When you're impressed with somebody, you can talk about that person. When that fellow falls in love with that girl that he's impressed with, he can talk about her.

When you talk about the Lord Jesus Christ, if you are a doctrinally oriented Christian with spiritual maturity in your soul, and you are filled with the spirit because you have used the technique of the confession of sin and the other techniques by which we live the Christian life, you will be a fantastically impressive witness. You won't have to cut anybody's lawn; to stuff animals; to pin butterflies; or, to do anything else that this person happens to be interested in. You will just be able to be yourself and let that person be himself, and you won't have to go in for social evangelism either: to share cups of coffee; Cokes; donuts; and, empty holes in the middle together. You won't have to do anything. When you have Jesus Christ at the center and as the occupation of your life, you will be a witness. You're going to be the refreshing kind of witness that the apostle Paul was here to the Praetorian Guard. Paul's case understandably became the talk of the town in many circles in Rome.

In verse 14, this led to the witnessing of other believers: "And many of the brethren in the Lord." The word "many" here means the most or the majority. "The majority of the brethren in the Lord, becoming confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." Paul's response to his boxed-in condition affected the believers of Rome. This affected the majority of the believers in town. "In the Lord" means "by means of the Lord." So, this means, "The majority of the brethren, by means of the Lord." It was the Lord who led them to become confident. The word "confident" is "peitho." In the grammar, this is perfect passive participle. Perfect means that there was a permanent change. Perfect means that an action is begun in the past, and its effects continue. These people were emboldened in the Lord and it continued. It was passive because they didn't drum themselves up. They didn't sit down and say, "Now look Christians, we have to get out there and start attacking all the unbelievers to witness and to evangelize." Instead, their witnessing welled up from within them as the result of the testimony of Paul and the example of Paul upon them. It was passive. They just received the effect of this encouragement. The participle indicates a pattern of change in their lives.

What were they encouraged by? "By my bonds." That indicates his imprisonments again. Paul was under the threat of death, and yet he demonstrated a faith rest quality as he went on in the Lord's service. Paul's courage in this situation (his faithful witnessing) is what became an inspiration to the other Christians. He did this while he was within Nero's grasp. The persecutions that Nero had imposed upon the Christians had intimidated a large number of them so that they were afraid to witness. Consequently, verse 14 says, "And the majority of the brethren, because of the Lord, becoming confident by my bonds, are much more bold." "Much more" is "tolmao." It is present, so constant boldness developed. It is active, so they engaged in witnessing. It is infinitive, so this was the purpose. Their purpose was to speak out for the Lord. And they did speak out. They spoke the gospel message. The word here refers to the gospel message. "They are much more able to speak the Word, and this without fear." The word fear is "aphobos." "Aphobos" means "really boldly." So they spoke the Word of God boldly.

Therefore, in these three verses, it is clear to us that we have certain fantastic benefits that came from the imprisonment of the apostle Paul. One of them was that the Roman Christians for the first time received some good expository Bible teaching. This enabled them to learn how to love the Lord, and it enabled them how to be prepared with witnessing that had some content. Much of the witnessing that is often done today is in the spirit of a salesman who is going to sell Jesus Christ. A salesman can't sell anything unless he's in love with his product. A Christian who loves the Lord has everything that he needs to sell the Lord without using the salesman techniques. You and I often feel that we have to witness in order to impress somebody.

Most people who witness for the Lord do it very unobtrusively and have very little to say about it. The people who are off on an emotional kick of witnessing are the ones who rush in and tell you all about it, and they're all up in the air. It doesn't take very many weeks before they're all through with that kick, and they're on something else. Therefore, organizations devise gimmicks in order to get people to witness under some motivation which is false. This includes the glamorizing of Christianity with VIPs in meetings instead of glamorizing it with the inherent power of the Spirit of God.

Well, the temple witnessing was stepped up in Rome, and there was no pressure motivation except the internal pressures that came from God the Holy Spirit who emboldened the believers as a result of what they saw Paul do. Therefore, Paul's period of discipline turned to blessing in the Lord's work. Paul's ministry, as a result of this imprisonment, extended throughout the western part of the empire for the first time.

**Suffering**

This brings us to this whole problem of the experience of human suffering. The suffering that Paul experienced was further compounded by other Christians as we will see in the verses which follow. However, the fact of human suffering is something that all of us live with. Suffering is experienced by believer and unbeliever alike. This comes in various forms. We suffer from loss of health. We suffer when we break the law and the penalties are imposed upon us. We suffer from the mistreatment that we receive from other Christians who are operating from the old sin nature in them. Some of us suffer privation when we lack the necessities of life. We suffer from acts of nature including hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods. We suffer social conflicts with people, and we suffer rejection (ostracism). We suffer from mental stresses that are very easily imposed upon us in our society. We suffer because we are overcome by the details of life. We can't handle our prosperity. We suffer from national disasters when the nation suffers. We go down with it.

**The Reason for Suffering**

Why do we have all of this suffering? Well, there is one primary reason why people suffer. It is important that you orient yourself to that reason. This is because when troubles come into your life, and when you have problems of one kind or another, unless you know why suffering primarily comes in the world, you may be blaming the wrong person. Primarily human suffering is the result of the fact that Satan is now running the world. Our human society is under Satan's control. Be sure that you understand what that means. That means that all facets of human society are under Satan's control. He calls the plays. All of our governmental operations are under Satan's controls. He calls the plays. All of our economic circumstances are under Satan's control. He calls the plays. All of our educational systems of the world are under Satan's control. All of our social relationships; our moral standards; our public communications; and, our publications are under Satan's controls. Whatever phase of life you think of, Satan's darkness is controlling it.

The only break you have is the light that comes through Christians who are oriented to the Word of God, and through Christians who are sponsoring and conducting institutions that are functioning on the principles of the Word of God. That's the only area of light here and there in this sea of darkness. For this reason that Satan controls the world, there is suffering. However, Satan is not omnipotent. He has limitations of power, and due to those limitations of power, he is not able him to control everybody's old sin nature. Now he does a fantastic job of controlling our old sin natures and directing them to his use and to his goals. However, he is not omnipotent, and he cannot control the old sin natures of everybody in the world. The old sin natures are always getting out of line on him. Consequently, Satan feeds information to people. We call that human viewpoint. He has all kinds of ways to improve the world.

Therefore, people take these ways to improve the world, and eventually they backfire on him. Satan says that people are poor and people need to be taken care of. Therefore, he comes up with systems for taking care of poverty, and it always backfires. It does not solve the problem of human poverty and need. Satan comes along and says, "You know, we should have peace on earth. That would be a good thing." Remember what the devil is trying to do. He's trying to create a millennium without Jesus Christ. That's what he's trying to do right now. He's hustling around trying to create this perfect social environment.

So Satan says, "We should have peace." Therefore, he gets nations together, and it seems very reasonable to reasonable men that if there's anything nations should do, it's disarm, right? "If you give up all of your guns, and I give up all of my guns, we can't fight, right? Then there'll be peace on earth. Beautiful. Let's go to Geneva and talk this over." Therefore, nations sit across from each other; they smile; they grin; they drink their booze; they make plans; they give up so many ships, so many airplanes, and so many bombs; and, they face things out. However, do you know what happens historically? Nations become weak militarily, and then one side says, "You know, this disarmament stuff is great. Our opponent has now considerably weakened himself because of the agreements that we have made. However, I think we have a little bit of an edge because we kept a few things in the closet that we didn't tell him about. I think we can hit him now, and we can win."

Then we have a new war on our hands. Why? It's because you sat down and had a disarmament conference and said, "We will all disarm so you won't be afraid of us and we won't be afraid of you." You think that's so reasonable. Yet it always backfires. Historically, disarmament leads to a new war. Therefore, as long as Satan is ruling this world, and he's shelling out this human viewpoint, there's going to be suffering. People are going to suffer conflicts; they're going to suffer wars; they're going to suffer privation; and, they're going to suffer in every way. Yet, I want you to understand that the devil is doing the best he can. He's not trying to do the worst he can. He's doing the best that he can. He wants to set up the millennium but it's blowing up in his face. He wants peace for the world, but he cannot secure it. All in all, mankind has Satan climbing the wall most of the time because the old sin natures will not stay in line.

Some suffering is for time, and some suffering is for eternity. You and I in time as believers and unbelievers suffer. There are many reasons and many kinds of suffering which we won't go into here. You may be an unbeliever. This means that you have not received the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior; that you have not personally accepted the fact that Christ died spiritually on the cross to pay for your sins; and that you have not accepted the fact that He then died physically, bearing your sins in His own body on that cross. If you have not recognized that and accepted that fact, then you are outside of the family of God, and you will suffer forever in eternity as John 3:18 teaches us. If you are a believer, Revelation 21:4 tells us that there will be no suffering for you in eternity whatsoever of any kind.

Satan wants to teach us his viewpoint, and his viewpoint is false (and that's the problem). Satan gives us solutions and ideas that are incompatible with reality. The problem that we have is that we suffer because we're disoriented to reality. We are not tied into the way things really are. You can look upon our culture today. Where does the drug bit come from? The drug bit comes because a person is disassociated from reality. The idea is that here is something that will solve a problem which I have, and it will not. It compounds it, and it makes it worse. The person does not understand the realistic results of following that course of action. The hippie culture is a pure unadulterated disassociation from reality, It's a disorientation from the way things really are. Our foreign policy that we have in this nation is a foreign policy of operating from a base of weakness. That's not realistic. Socialism and communism are concepts that are very attractive, especially to college students. However, they are concepts which are so totally disassociated from reality and from the way God has made man to function. Consequently, socialism and communism bring nothing but misery to people, and you have to use guns and police force to keep people in socialism and communism. Otherwise, they would flee it.

Eventually, God shocks people into reality. He brings a war upon a nation, and everybody gets back to reality. He brings an economic depression, and everybody gets reality again. He brings personal discipline into our lives, and we get back to reality. I want you to understand that Satan's views are in conflict with reality, and that is why we suffer. If you want to avoid suffering, don't apply Satan's unrealistic views to your life. Do not operate on Satan's human viewpoint.

**How to Avoid Suffering**

Alright, what are you going to have to have to operate on? Well, you're going to have to operate on God's viewpoint, so you're back again to the Word of God and to being instructed in that Word of God. When you have that, I'm not saying that you will not suffer, but I am saying that the reasons for which you will suffer will then be reasons of great personal blessing to you. That's the difference. The poor unbeliever can't do anything but suffer misery. The Christian can enter suffering and find that he's in a millennium within his soul.

The suffering for the believer is usually designed for blessing (1 Peter 1:7-8, 1 Peter 4:14). Suffering as divine discipline, however, is not intended as a blessing. Hebrews 12:6 tells us that those of you whom God loves, He will skin you alive. If you get out of line from the reality of the Word of God, He will eventually skin you alive. The Word of God says that discipline is not pleasant, but that it has a blessing as its goal. So divine discipline as suffering can be terminated for you as a Christian by confession of sins (1 John 1:9, 1 Corinthians 11:31). Sin brings discipline. We can terminate that discipline by turning back to the Lord in confession. Upon confession, our suffering will turn to blessing under the principle of Romans 8:28 even though the discipline mighty continue. Christians suffer for many reasons, but the suffering is always a blessing if the reason for the suffering has been admitted to the Lord. The apostle Paul knew suffering, and he was the man who knew how to meet suffering as perhaps nobody has ever known in the history of mankind.

**2 Corinthians 12:1-10**

We are now going to begin a magnificent area of Scripture. In 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, the apostle Paul explains how to meet suffering in your life as a believer. We know that suffering exists. We know that it is in the world because Satan runs the world until the Lord returns and takes it over from him. We know that because Satan runs the world, he puts out false information and false directions which are incompatible with the realities of the Word of God. Consequently, we know that Christians and non-Christians suffer. Christians will come to the end of their suffering both here (through confession of sin) and completely in eternity. The unbeliever never does. Here is how you can meet suffering, and meet it in full stride. You are going to suffer. You cannot be in this world without suffering in some capacity.

In verse 1, Paul says, "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory." This is a rather poor translation. What it should say, and what it does say in the Greek, is this: "Boasting is necessary though it is not profitable." "It is necessary" is the little Greek word "dei," and this is the word that denotes a logical necessity. The apostle Paul is going to explain to you why he has been bragging. There is a time for bragging which is an honor to the Lord. That's going to disturb some of you who always like to find people that you think are proud. They are people that you think are trying to be little gods, and you think they're bragging.

So here's a very important point that we need to learn first of all. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-33, Paul says, "It is necessary for me to do what I have done." If you will run your eyes over those verses, you will see that the apostle Paul is answering his enemies and his opponents. Verse 23 says, "Are they ministers of Christ? I'm speaking as a fool." But he says, "I'm doing this of necessity." That's what "dei" means. It's a logical necessity. "I am more of a minister of Christ than any of them. In labors more abundant." (I have served the Lord more than they.) "In stripes, above measure." I have suffered physically more than any of them. "I have been in prison more frequently, and I've been in danger of death more often than any of them." He is saying that the logical necessity of the pattern of his boasting here is brought on by the circumstances of the people who are directing attacks against him.

**Stoning**

He goes on in verse 24 and he tells about how he has suffered in beatings. In verse 25, he tells how he suffered in shipwreck, and in stoning. I want you to notice that verse 25 says, "Once I was stoned." When he says, "I was stoned," this means that he experienced (and this took place at the city of Lystra) the Jewish way of execution. I want to just describe that for a moment so that you keep this in mind because this is going to be very important as we study this passage. Stoning meant that a group of men gathered around a human being; sometimes they would throw him into a pit; they would pick up huge rocks; they would come up to him; they would simply slam them at the person; and, they would smash rock after rock at him. The person would put his hand up to defend himself; he would suffer a blow and get an arm broken; and, that would be the end of that defense. He would put the other hand up; he would suffer another blow; the other arm would be broken; and, that would be the end of that defense. Eventually he'd get struck on the skull and be knocked unconscious and the stones would be piled on until the bones were crushed and he was dead.

That was stoning. When they walked off, there was nothing but a pile of stones with arms and legs sticking out. Paul says, "I experienced that once." You might say, "My goodness. It must have hurt him." You bet it hurt him. Do you know what it did to him? It killed him. Paul died in that stoning. Out of that event comes one of the most magnificent passages of Scripture. That's what we're getting into.

So the apostle Paul says, "I was stoned. I was shipwrecked." Verse 26 says, "I have been often in perils." He goes on describing, in the verses which follow, his travels around the countryside in the course of his ministry, the weariness and the pain that he experienced. He describes the hunger and the cold, and sometimes he didn't have enough clothes to wear. Then in verse 28, he says, "And beside all these things physically upon me, I suffered from the administration problems of taking care of all the churches." Paul says, "If somebody is weak, I'm weak with him. If somebody is ashamed among the believers for something, I bear his shame with him. I have entered into all of these things. Paul says that he would glory, if anything, in all of the problems and the troubles that he has. He describes how he barely escaped with his life out of Damascus.

**Boasting**

This is what he has been doing when he makes a declaration that boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable. That is, boasting on his part has been forced upon him. The word "boasting" is the word "kauchaomai." We're going to receive this word several times. This word is repeated again and again in the Greek text in these ten verses in 2 Corinthians 12:1-10. "Kauchaomai" means "boasting." It is present active infinitive. Boasting can be done in a good way, or it can be done in a sinful way. Boasting is bad if it is the result of the mental attitude sin of pride. Most of the boasting that we are acquainted with is that kind. It originates in pride, and that is sinful.

However, there is a good kind of boasting. That is a boasting which is expressing a personal confidence which results from the information that we have received from doctrine. In other words, this is a boasting in the fact that you know reality. It is right and proper that you should boast concerning reality that you have learned from the Word of God. This is true as that reality applies to you personally; as it applies to your family; as it applies to your friends; and, as it applies to your nation. It is a proper kind of boasting when it is an expression of confidence in the Word of God; in what it has taught; in the fact that you believe that what you have learned is reality; and, that you can function upon that in a way a blessing. It expresses, in other words, the realization that you have divine viewpoint. Don't ever be ashamed of the fact that you possess God's point of view. Be very much ashamed if you don't possess it. It is the most important thing in your life to gather divine viewpoint.

The apostle Paul has been boasting since 2 Corinthians 11:20 and these verses that follow. He has been describing for them his own experience with the Lord. Paul says, "This kind of boasting which I am doing is not sinful pride boasting. I am speaking in confidence about things in my life upon which doctrine has given me a divine perspective." People were prone to mislabel Paul by calling him proud. They mislabeled the fact of his confidence; his reality; and, his divine viewpoint. The critics say that the one who speaks the Word of God in a confident understanding way is proud, while the preacher who speaks in loopholes is humble. Such a preacher is not humble; he's just cagey. He's telling you something so that you can have a way out, or he's ignorant and he doesn't know what the Word of God says so that he can speak with authority.

It is present tense. It is Paul's continuous pattern to boast with this confident type of boasting. It is active. He chooses to do it. Infinitive declares purpose. It is his purpose. It is also a necessary thing for him to do. However, he says it is not expedient. The word "expedient" is "sumphero." "Sumphero" is a word that means "profitable." He says, "I recognize that this is not a profitable practice." He's deliberately giving to the Lord's credit what the Lord is doing with him. He's keeping the record straight. However, he says, "I'm doing this because it is a necessity forced upon me." He goes on then instead to speak of his visions ("optasia") and his revelations ("apokalupsis") of the Lord, meaning "from the source of" the Lord.

In the next session, we will pick the story up here with verse 2 and see just exactly what Paul had in the way of visions and revelations in which he says, "I will brag about this any time of the day or night. I am going to delight in bragging about a reality I have." Something happened to him that never happened to any other human being, and that gave him some information for his human spirit in the way of being taught by God that nobody has ever experienced before. For this reason, the apostle Paul became a target of fantastic suffering. Then he tells us the key to being sustained under that kind of oppressive suffering. Join us in the next session for the final sequel of triumph in tragedy.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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