

Philippians 1:12-30

Verses 12-14 Paul sees things from a spiritual perspective. Instead of complaining about his imprisonment, or talking about Satan's plan to quiet him, or railing on the government – he sees what God is doing. First, the whole palace is hearing about his stand for Jesus. Paul can see God using his testimony to draw this elite group to Himself. Ps 76:10 2Tim 2:9 And secondly, it is an example to the brothers to share the word of God courageously and fearlessly. What a privilege to suffer for Jesus! The worst they can do is send you to your homecoming.

15-17 Sounds like competing churches today. Envy, rivalry, selfish ambition – trying to get followers away from Paul's message to their own group, raise their own numbers, promote themselves to Paul's detriment. 2Co 2:17 But even here, Paul sees what God is doing – getting the Gospel out on the street. Sounds like God can even use speakers with false motives to his glory. Do you get the feeling Paul believes what he wrote in Ro 8:28?

18-19 Paul's main concern is that Christ is preached and that his life glorifies God. He believes their prayers and the help he receives from the Spirit will cause the final results to be his deliverance/salvation. This does not mean he will go free but that he will be a testimony of Jesus to the end.

20–21 He expects God to give him the grace that whether lions tear his body, or he faces more years of life, God will give him the courage to stand firm. Is 50:7 And then this wonderful testimony – may it be true of us: To live is Christ ... the life of Christ expressed through him daily in every circumstance. ...to die is gain. If he goes to his reward, into the presence of Christ, freed of his thorn in the flesh, what great gain.

22-24 What a quandary! Lay up more treasures in heaven, seeing the body blessed and growing because of the life of Christ expressed through me, or go to the unhindered presence of Christ. How do you make a choice like that? Meet a great need for Jesus or his heart's desire, to be with Jesus? Depart – fold up your tent, pull up anchor. Do you long for that day like the Apostle Paul did? I sense a real detachment from the things of the world and an overwhelming love for Jesus. Gal 6:14

25-26 Paul had a strong conviction that the expression of the gifts he had in the Lord would cause their joy in Christ to increase. Paul was confident in Christ, not his own ability. Sounds like he is pretty sure he will be released until you get to the next verse.

27-28 Live our lives in a manner that is worthy of the Gospel. Contend as one man for the faith. Unity and a life that expresses the fruits of the Spirit. Their fearlessness in the face of persecution should cause those who witness it, to know there is something they don't have at work in them. To their persecutors it is a sign of your confidence in God and will stand in contrast to their lack of certainty about everything.

29-30 A gift from God, not just belief, but also suffering for Him. We tend to see it differently, but it too is a gift. We see others in it and we know that we too will have to go through it. It is a refining fire and makes the world distant. Paul is being refined right to the end. If it was necessary in his life I'm sure it is in ours also.

