

## Philippians 3: Locked Up Not Stopped

Dr. John Carmichael

**[Phl 1:12-18 NASB95] 12** Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, **13** so that my imprisonment in [the cause of] Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, **14** and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. **15** Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; **16** the latter [do it] out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; **17** the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. **18** What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

- Paul is writing from a Roman prison, yet this letter is filled with joy. Instead of complaining, Paul testifies that the Gospel is advancing. Why? Because the Holy Spirit is not bound by walls, guards, or chains.
- A fire in a fireplace is contained, but drop that same flame in dry grass, and it spreads. Paul in prison is like a flame dropped in dry ground; he couldn't be stopped!

**What does a healthy mindset look like when the enemy tries to stop what God wants to do in our lives?**

**Here are four aspects of a health mindset when the enemy tries to stop what God wants to do in our lives.**

### **I. The Gospel and the Purpose of God in You Cannot Be Bound**

- a. [Phl 1:12 NASB95] 12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,
- b. What looked like a setback became a set-up for Gospel expansion.
- c. The Spirit doesn't retreat in crisis. He multiplies impact through it.
- d. [2Ti 2:9 NASB95] 9 for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned.
- e. [Act 16:25-26 NASB95] 25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.
- f. The enemy can not create a cell that will hold back what God wants to do through your life.

### **II. Your Adversity Becomes Another's Boldness**

- a. [Phl 1:14 NASB95] 14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.
- b. Paul's endurance emboldened others to preach. Your fire inspires others to step into their calling.
- c. The anointing is contagious, especially under pressure.
- d. [Heb 10:24 NASB95] 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,
- e. [Act 4:31 NASB95] 31 And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and [began] to speak the word of God with boldness.
- f. Your faith stand is strengthening the faith of others.

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### III. The Motive Doesn't Stop the Message

- a. [Phl 1:15-18 NASB95] 15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; 16 the latter [do it] out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; 17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. 18 What then? **Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice.** Yes, and I will rejoice,
- b. Some preached Christ out of jealousy or rivalry. But Paul wasn't discouraged because the Gospel still went forth.
- c. The Holy Spirit can use imperfect people and impure motives to advance His perfect will.
- d. God used a donkey. [Num 22:28 NASB95] 28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"
- e. Caiaphas prophesied truth unknowingly. [Jhn 11:50-52 NASB95] 50 nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish." 51 Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.
- f. God is going to get His purpose fulfilled one way or another. Don't be surprised if compromised people end making decisions that become a catapult to your destiny.

### IV. Rejoicing Is the Weapon in the Waiting

- a. "In this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice." [Phl 1:18 NASB95] 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,
  - b. Paul made a choice to rejoice not because of comfort, but because of Christ.
  - c. The Spirit gives us joy that defies our surroundings and declares God's sovereignty.
  - d. [Neh 8:10 NASB95] 10 Then he said to them, "Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."
  - e. [Rom 14:17 NASB95] 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
  - f. The more we understand immense power of God the more we learn to rejoice in every attack of the enemy.
- What the enemy meant to confine you, God will use to proclaim Christ because Spirit-filled people turn every prison into a platform.
  - Paul's prison wasn't a pause; it was a platform. The chains didn't choke the message; they carried it further. For Spirit-filled believers, the jailhouse becomes a joy-house when Christ is preached, souls are encouraged, and fire keeps spreading.
  - You may be in a tight place today, but the Spirit still has a pulpit in your prison!