

**Good Results From Bad Circumstances**  
**Philippians 1:12-26**  
**Part 5**

We have begun to examine Phil. 1:12-26, which briefly outlines for us various circumstances in Paul's life. The underlying principle of this section of Scripture is that human circumstances lie in God's hands and that God will use those circumstances to advance the gospel. This is true of our lives and it was also true of Paul's life. How did God use Paul's circumstances to advance the gospel?

The first circumstance in Paul's life that God used to advance the gospel were his chains. We saw this in **VV. 12-14**. The second circumstance in Paul's life that God used to advance the gospel were professing Christians who were preaching Christ from impure motives. We saw this in **VV. 15-17**. What was Paul's response to this? Let us read **V. 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.”** This response was very challenging and we should purpose ourselves to emulate it.

But this response by Paul raises questions. Last week we asked the question, “If Paul was able to rejoice regardless of the motives, do motives even matter when we preach Christ?” And we concluded, of course they matter! We are now addressing a second question. As we learned from **V. 18**, Paul was rejoicing that Christ was being proclaimed whether in pretense or in truth. Does this mean that we are to rejoice anytime Christ is proclaimed?

What is the answer to this question? We are to rejoice any time Christ and His work are proclaimed correctly. This means that before we rejoice, we need to know what the Scriptures teach about the person and work of Christ. What do the Scriptures reveal about the person of Christ? The Scriptures reveal to us that He is 100% man and 100% God. The reason why this is so important is because if Jesus were not a man he could not be our substitute and if He were not God His death would have accomplished nothing. If we reject either His humanity or His deity, we have rejected Christ as He has been revealed in the Scriptures and therefore have rejected the gospel.

Last week I shared with you several groups that I believe have rejected Christ as He is revealed in the Scriptures. The Jehovah Witnesses have rejected Christ as He is revealed in the Scriptures because they have rejected the deity of Christ. They teach that Jesus was a mere angel who became a man. The Mormons have also rejected Christ as He is revealed in the Scriptures because they have, like the Jehovah Witnesses, rejected the deity of Christ. They teach that Jesus was the first spirit-child of many spirit children born to Elohim and the Heavenly Mother, who later became a god in the very same way that we ourselves, as his juniors, can also become gods. In addition to these religious groups I also mentioned the “faith movement” as having many teachers who have rejected the deity of Christ. They have rejected the deity of Christ by removing His sovereignty from Him and in essence transferring it to those who speak so-called words of faith. In doing this they have redefined what it means to be divine. And in this redefinition of what it means to be divine, they have denied the deity of Christ as the Scriptures

define deity.

We are to rejoice any time Christ is proclaimed correctly and this means that Christ must be proclaimed both as 100% man and 100% God. But the Scriptures don't just speak about the person of Christ.

This weekend I want to go on to the second essential element of the gospel and that is His work. I want us to look at what Christ did. In order for us to rejoice when Christ is proclaimed His work must be proclaimed correctly.

### The Work of Christ

What was the work of Christ? Let us go back to the passage that we briefly looked at last week. Let us look at **1 Cor. 15:1-4**, “**Now I make known to you brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, (2) by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. (3) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, (4) and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.**” What was the work of Christ that fully satisfied the debt that we owed to God because of our sin? The work of Christ that fully satisfied the debt that we owed to God because of our sin was His death. This work was so perfect that He opened the only door to heaven. If anyone chooses by faith to enter through that door, they will be saved. Salvation is fully and totally by grace. It is God's riches at Christ's expense. It is not God's riches by our works.

Listen to the words of Paul in **Col. 2:13-14**, “**And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, (14) having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.**” Was it simply our transgressions or the transgressions of the whole world that were nailed to His cross? Listen to **1 John 2:1-2**, “**My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; (2) and He Himself is the propitiation (or satisfaction) for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.**” When Christ, after fulfilling all things, bowed His head on the cross and gave up His Spirit, He opened the door to heaven and He opened the door to whosoever.

Do you want to be saved? Do you want to be set free from your sins? All you have to do is transfer your trust from yourself and your good works to Jesus Christ alone for your salvation (Acts 16:31). What did the Apostle say to the Philippian jailer when he asked, “What must I do to be saved?” Paul responded, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” He did not say believe in Christ and in your works. He simply said, believe in Christ. Everything that needed to be done to satisfy the debt that was owed to God because of sin has been done by Christ (Heb. 10:12). What does **Heb. 10:12** tell us? “**But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins, for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.**” Why did he sit down? He sat down

because everything that needed to be done had been done. He had finished His work.

If you are here this weekend and you want to be set free from your sins and you choose to transfer your trust from yourself to Jesus alone for your salvation you will immediately be born again. Why? Because Jesus, being 100% man and 100% God, through His death on the cross for our sins, was able to blow the door of heaven open. How do we know this to be true? We know this to be true because after He was buried, He was raised from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures. Through Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, He convincingly broke the power of sin and this is why 1 Cor. 15:1-4 is called the gospel or good news (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

If anyone teaches we have to do anything in addition to what Christ has already done in order to enter heaven, they have rejected the work of Christ as it has been revealed in the Scriptures and they have rejected the gospel (Gal. 1:6-9). If there is any doubt concerning this, all we have to do is read Gal. 1:6-10, **"I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; (7) which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. (8) But even though we, or an angel from Heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. (9) As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed."** What was the problem?

There were certain professing Jewish believers who were insisting that in order for Gentiles to be recipients of God's saving grace, they not only had to believe but also had to be circumcised. These professing Jewish believers did not deny the humanity of Christ, they did not deny the deity of Christ, they did not reject that Christ died for sins, but they rejected that Christ's death *alone* opened a door to heaven through which whosoever will may come. They said Christ's death only opened a door for those who believed in Jesus *and were circumcised*. They therefore rejected the work of Christ and in rejecting the work of Christ they rejected Christ and in rejecting Christ they rejected the gospel of Christ.

Last week I shared with you several groups that I believe have rejected Christ's person as He is revealed in the Scriptures. This week I would like to share with you several groups that I believe have rejected Christ's work as His work is revealed in the Scriptures.

Again I will begin with the Jehovah Witnesses. What do they teach concerning the work of Christ? I recently received a Jehovah Witness tract. Let me read for you what it said. After speaking about their hope of a perfect heavenly kingdom that will rule over an earthly society of people in eternal bliss, the tract then concludes with this paragraph: "This is certainly a wonderful hope, and it is not too good to be true because God always fulfills his promises. Of course, there are requirements to be met if we are to live forever in this coming Paradise on earth. What are they?" Then it goes on to say, "These requirements can be found both in the Old and New Testaments." Why are people standing on the street corners holding up the Watchtower magazines? Why are they going door to door? Why are they attending five meetings a week at their kingdom hall? They are, in their minds, working their way toward this eternal earthly

paradise by meeting the requirements laid down both in the Old and New Testaments.

The Watchtower magazine says, “God requires that prospective subjects of his kingdom support his government by loyally advocating his kingdom rule to others.” This man who provided me this tract did this in an effort to be saved as they understand salvation.

The Jehovah Witnesses have rejected the work of Christ as it is revealed in the Scriptures. They teach that in order to enjoy a future earthly paradise, they have to meet the requirements of both the Old and New Testaments.

Let us now consider the Mormons. Do they believe that the work of Christ alone is sufficient in order to obtain salvation? And the answer is, absolutely not. When Mormons talk about salvation, it is in the context of godhood. Brigham Young said, “the Lord created you and me for the purpose of becoming gods like himself .... we are created..... to become gods like unto our Father in heaven.” The exaltation to godhood is known as attaining “eternal life.” The official “Gospel Principles” manual tells us that “exaltation is eternal life, the kind of life that God lives.”

But how does one get to this level of exaltation in the eternal realm? It is through perfection. While godhood is the Mormon’s ultimate goal, his or her more immediate goal is perfection. It is through this pursuit of perfection that one moves closer and closer to godhood or in other words, to salvation. Obviously becoming perfect cannot be achieved in this life. It will take ages, according to the Mormons, for people through their good works or the good works of others, to accomplish this end before they reach the highest level of the celestial heaven, which is godhood.

The Mormon’s have rejected the work of Christ as it is revealed in the Scriptures. They teach that in order to someday enjoy the highest level of the celestial kingdom, good works have to be done by yourself and others to get yourself there.

Now let us consider Catholics. The Catholics are very different from the Jehovah Witnesses and certain teachers within the “faith movement” because they teach that Christ was in fact 100% man and 100% God and they do not in any way diminish His person as He is revealed in the Scriptures. But they have in their teachings rejected the work of Christ as it is revealed in the Scriptures. How have they done this?

What do the Scriptures reveal to us about the work of Christ? The work of Christ that fully satisfied the debt that we owed to God because of our sin was His death. Christ’s work was so perfect that He opened the one and only door to heaven. If anyone chooses by faith to enter through that door, they will be saved. Salvation is fully and totally by grace. It is God’s riches at Christ’s expense. It is not God’s riches by our works.

Is this what the Catholic church teaches? The answer is no! At the Council of Trent, which was the official Roman Catholic response to the Reformation, they said, “If anyone says that the faith which justifies is nothing else but trust in the divine mercy, which pardons sins because of Christ; or that it is that trust alone by which we are justified (or saved); let him be anathema.”

The Catholic church goes on to say in that same council, “If anyone says that the sinner is justified (or saved) by faith alone, meaning thereby that no other co-operation is required for him to obtain the grace of justification, and that in no sense is it necessary for him to make preparation and be disposed by a movement of his own will: let him be anathema.” The Catholic church teaches that in order to secure the grace that is available to us through the death of Christ, it is only available to us through the sacraments beginning with sacrament of infant baptism. This is not what the Scriptures teach concerning the work of Christ.

The Catholics have rejected the work of Christ as it is revealed in the Scriptures. They teach that though Christ’s death atoned for sin, the benefit of that atonement is mediated through the sacraments. Apart from the sacraments we cannot be the recipients of God’s saving grace.

## CONCLUSION

How did Paul respond to those who were preaching Christ out of impure motives? **V. 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.”** Does this mean that we are to rejoice any time Christ is proclaimed? The answer is yes, if Christ is being proclaimed correctly. Hopefully we are doing this. We are not the only church in the Antelope Valley that is preaching Christ correctly.

But if so-called churches or individuals are preaching incorrectly, we cannot rejoice. Why? Because people cannot be saved by believing in their message. We should be grieved and moved to preach the true gospel with greater boldness.

The only way for people to be saved no matter what group or movement they belong to is the same. They must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Scriptures. If they do, they will be saved.