

### **Philippians 1: 15-27**

*"Some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. These proclaim Christ out of love, knowing that I have been put here for the defense of the gospel; the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment. What does it matter? Just this, that Christ is proclaimed in every way, whether out of false motives or true; and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance. It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again. Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ."*

Perspective is an interesting thing. The thing about perspective is that you and I will never view things in the same way because our perspectives are determined by what we see and experience. Just as I have never walked in your shoes, and you have never walked in mine, which means that when an event arises in life, you are not properly equipped to make choices or decisions for me as you have not been where I have been. The same would serve true looking at it the other way. We can share our thoughts with one another but in the end, that is all it amounts to, our thoughts.

As we discussed a couple weeks ago we all have "what's" that happen in our life where we are left wondering the "why." The car accident caused by the other driver, with no insurance, and you do not have the money to pay for the damages and you just stand by and cry out loud ... why? A storm passes through and damages your home and/or property, and the next day you find out your homeowners does not cover the damage ... why? Most of us have experienced those moments. We just wish we could understand the whys of it all. Why did this have to happen or better yet why is this happening to me?

My question back to you concerning your "why me" is "Why not you, who are you? Why should you be immune from this, what-ever this is?"

Often, actually most of the time when bad things happen we all ask "Why me?" How about "Why not you?"

Throughout the years, I've learned that understanding the whys are not important, as long as I trust God with "the whys" of it all. Realizing that whatever is taking place right now God can use and as such has a purpose. God always has a why behind the what and though I may not understand the why, I can trust God completely with my what and ask with confidence "now what?" What do you want me to learn from this? When obstacles appear in my path do I see them as divine opportunities; opportunities in which God will show Himself not just to me but to those around me as well. When setbacks come, instead of viewing them as setbacks what if we saw them as setups? What if we saw setbacks as setups for God to be glorified in our lives and what we are attempting? God wants to use us to make a difference. The (spiritual) prison in which we live can become our pulpit. The misery we suffer can be turned into our ministry. God has a plan. No matter how horrible or evil the circumstances which surround us, whatever those around

us are attempting to interfere with, whatever Satan intended for harm, God can and will use for His glory and it will all be made right in His time.

**Romans 8:28** is clear on this, “*all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.*” It’s all about how we see things. It’s all about perspective.

So when life throws a curve ball and our plans, your plans go awry, when our plans fail as we see failure, instead of freaking out about it, instead of lashing out at those around us and at God, what if we learned to cry out “Tis Gar Plen!” When the wheels seem to be falling off and things seem to be all going wrong what if we cried out “Tis Gar Plen!” What if we just said “What does it matter!” (Tis Gar Plen!)” What does it matter? In the end, whatever hand we are dealt in life, we can be certain God has a purpose. God has a plan. God is in control. In the end, everything is going to be ok!

Now, there will be times, many times and you’re going to be in a place and you’re saying to yourself, “This isn’t good, I don’t see God working anywhere around here! **Philippians 1:6** “*I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.*”

Ever thought "I definitely don't feel God's presence, I just don't understand; there's nothing good that can come out of this!" Can anyone identify with me?

Now, I want to encourage you to stop and have a change of perspective and realize that our God is big enough and even specializes in working through things that we don't understand. We serve a God who can turn what we call stumbling blocks or setbacks and he can turn them into stepping stones or setups for divine opportunities for Him to show Himself. We serve a God that can take what we call setbacks, and He can actually turn them into setups for Him to be glorified and for us to make a difference. We could look at it from Paul's perspective of being in prison and say it feels like you're in prison, "Oh my gosh, I'm chained up to this thing that I don't like!"

Well, your prison can become your pulpit. In other words, there could be a purpose in your prison. What the enemy meant for evil, God can actually use for good in the middle of the thing that you would never choose God specializes in using those things for His glory.

Your prison could become the pulpit where you share what God is doing.

There is a purpose in your prison. You may not see it, but through faith God can give you a different perspective.

I don't know if any of you ever remember back several years ago, there were these pictures that you would often see in the mall. They were like a collage of all of these different colors and they would say that if you would look into it the picture, really look deep into the picture that 3D images would appear. How many of you know what I'm talking about? Okay let me say right off, I hated those things with a passion! People were like, "Oh, it's so neat! I mean, you just look at them and a 3D image of something will appear and can you see it."

I was like "No you can't, you're lying! You're all in it together just to get me to stand here look at these pictures and look stupid, it's a cult! You're all out to make me look dumb because I can't see those stupid 3D images!" No matter what I did it never happened there were no 3D images hidden within those pictures. For years I was frustrated by not being able to ever see those 3D images. Until one day at a McDonalds down at the beach that it actually happened! See you have to look through the colors and you have to

let your eyes get kind of blurry and you have to see through it and when you see through it and stare at it for a long time, and yes looking stupid, these things will come out.

And so, standing in a McDonalds waiting for everyone to come out of the restrooms and I don't know how long I was there, it might have been five or six minutes, but God as my witness, all of a sudden I saw it! And it was the most glorious experience, a God inspired moment! There were 3D buffalos that came alive and they were standing out in a vast field! And I saw it and it was so great! I shouted, "Everybody come quick!" And when I turned to get everyone's attention to my revelation I lost it and I never saw it again! But for that brief moment I had a change of perspective and what was always there I finally got to see.

There are times when we are in a place where we don't see it and we don't understand and we don't like it and even though we can't necessarily see it, God is there. Remember God speaking to Jeremiah in **Jeremiah 29:11** *"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."* If we'll just stop and look, not at but into the circumstances and kind of let our eyes get blurry,

we may actually see that God may have a purpose in the middle of our prison if we just look, and look with spiritual eyes, God will give us eyes to see.

And as we heard last week from God speaking to Isaiah in **Isaiah 55:8** "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the*

*Lord.*" We rarely see God's plans because we are often so selfish we stay

focused on us and what we want. When what we want and what we are seeking, when our plans go awry instead of stopping and maybe giving up,

instead of crying out and cursing God why not give God the benefit of the

doubt and believe in Him and His plans. Instead of crying out at God As

Elisha prayed in **2 Kings 6:17** "*O Lord, please open his eyes that he may*

*see.*" *So the Lord opened the eyes of the servant, and he saw;*" I can use this

what and trust God with the why and just ask Him, "What do you want to do

God through this, now what? What do you want to show me? What do you

want to do in me? What do you want to do through me? What way do you

want to use this that I would never choose to bring you glory. I don't

understand God, but I trust you with the why. Now what? Now what? Now

what do you want me to do?"

**Romans 8:28**, “*all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.*” “*for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose,*” notice there is a catch “*those who love God, and are called according to His purpose.*” If we truly love God and this is only possible with a relationship with Him not just head knowledge. Having a true relationship with Him doesn’t mean everything’s going to turn out great for us, or you, but “*those who love God, and are called according to His purpose,*” have the assurance that He can and will use what we, or you are going through for His glory.

So with the belief that God can and will use what we are dealing with or going through then instead of losing it, instead of cussing and screaming God just cry out “Tis Gar Plen!” “What does it matter” or “So what!” What does it matter according to God’s overall plan if this or that happens? Fill in the blank what you have gone through or are going through. What does it matter in the overall scheme of things?

We place so much emphasis on all the wrong things in this life and then we blame God when things go sideways. As Paul put it in **verse 20** “*Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death.*” Is Christ exalted always in your body? Is Christ exalted by your life? Is He?

I want to encourage you to stop and have a change of perspective and realize that our God is big enough and even specializes in working through things that we don't understand. We serve a God who can turn what we call obstacles into divine opportunities for Him to show Himself. We serve a God that can take what we call setbacks, and He can actually turn them into setups for Him to be glorified and for us to make a difference.

In that Roman prison, when Paul was writing this joy-filled letter, he was awaiting a trial to determine whether or not he would live or they would execute him. He was essentially locked up on death row; what could be death row. For me to live is Christ, to die means to be in His presence; “Tis Gar Plen.” When you have that perspective, all of the things that tend to weigh you down don't really matter that much.

We all have a what and we don't understand the why. The good news is God always has a why behind the what. We don't have to understand the why to trust God in the what. So we've got something that we don't understand why. Now what? God, what do you want to do in me? What do you want to do through me? What do you want to show me through this? What do you want to do through this attack to bring you glory? Something else, “So what? “Tis Gar Plen,” this doesn't really matter, because for me I'm all about Christ. To live is Christ, to die, hey the worst thing they could do to me is kill me and guess what? That's even better because if you knew where I was going, you wouldn't be so upset about the things of this world. Change your perspective and that changes everything. “Tis Gar Plen” should be our cry to what's happening instead of “Why Me?”