

## When God's Ways Don't Make Sense - Philippians 1:12-19 - October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018

- In the text before us the Apostle Paul rises from the pages of our Bible, teaching us God's purpose when nothing makes sense.
- To say his circumstances were difficult at the time that he wrote this to the church in Philippi would be a gross understatement.
- This because, he's unjustly imprisoned and chained to a Roman guard who rotate in six-hour shifts all day under Caesar Nero.

- It's important to understand that for Paul to now be in prison again made absolutely no sense to the Christians there in Philippi.
- The reason is when Paul was there with the Philippians, they witnessed God miraculously freeing Paul and Silas from prison.
- Yet now, Paul is in prison once again only this time, God is not freeing him as He did the last time and they are a little confused.

- If this weren't bad enough, there were those in Philippi who were taking advantage of the fact that Paul was imprisoned again.
- So much so we're told they were deliberately stirring up trouble for Paul because they fancied themselves competing with Paul.
- I say competing because they, out of envy, rivalry, and self-promotion, sought to further their reputation by slandering Paul's.

- One would think that Paul would be prone to become discouraged and even depressed in the midst of all that's against him.
- Instead, he says because of all this, he will rejoice, and he even repeats it again in verse 18 saying he will continue to rejoice.
- The question becomes one of how this is even possible, and perhaps more importantly, is rejoicing like Paul possible for me.

- I would submit that not only is this absolutely possible for you and me, this is the main reason we even have this in our Bibles.
- In other words, if the Apostle Paul could rejoice in his unfair circumstances that made no sense at all then so can we as well.
- Actually, this is exactly what happened with the Philippians who because of Paul's example were encouraged and emboldened.

- Here's where I'm going with all this, not only was this true for the Philippian Christians back then, so too is this true for us now.
- By that I mean, if they could be encouraged and rejoice in the midst of difficult circumstances that made no sense, so can we.
- One of the things I'm learning in my walk with the Lord is God brings about the greatest things out of the most difficult times.

- Such is the case here in our text starting in verse twelve where Paul tells them all that's happened has advanced the gospel.
- Then in verse thirteen he goes on to say that it's becoming clear throughout the whole place guard that this is for Jesus Christ.
- And, in verse fourteen, he then says that out of all this, most of the Christians have become more confident in sharing Christ.

- Then, in verses fifteen through eighteen Paul says that in spite of his name being dragged through the mud, Christ is preached.
- It's for this reason that he rejoices and will continue to rejoice because in verse nineteen he knows that they are praying for him.
- As such, he also knows what's happened to him will turn out for his deliverance by God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

- I am of the belief that had none of this ever happened to Paul, it's doubtless any of this good could have come through Paul.
- I mention this because it can help explain that the reason God is allowing the difficulty in your life is to work through your life.
- As one said, God is not more concerned with the circumstances in your life; He's more concerned about His call upon your life.

Romans 8:28-29 - 28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

- I want to close with a question that we would all do well to consider as it relates to that difficult set of circumstances in our lives.
- Has the Lord allowed this to happen because He has something glorious planned in and through what you're going through?
- I'll take it a step further and ask this question: "Is there someone in your life that God wants to reach in and through your life?"