

Praise in Prison

August 8th & 9th, 2015

Ephesians 3:1-3

“For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus...”

Paul wrote four letters to the Churches while imprisoned in Rome:

- ❖ Ephesians – Paul sent this letter to Ephesus with Tychicus. *Ephesians 6:21*
- ❖ Philippians – Epaphroditus took this letter to Philippi. *Philippians 4:18*
- ❖ Colossians – This letter was sent with Epaphras to Colosse. *Colossians 4:12*
- ❖ Philemon – Onesimus, a slave from Colosse took this letter to Philemon. *Philemon 10-12*

Paul was actively serving Christ while confined!

- ❖ Paul’s focus was on the finished work of Jesus Christ and the glory of His church!
- ❖ Paul’s “Prison Letters” begin with praise and thanksgiving.
 - “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,...*” *Ephesians 1:3*
 - “*I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,*” *Philippians 1:3*
 - “*We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,*” *Colossians 1:3*
 - “*I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers,*” *Philemon 4*
- ❖ Paul’s response to unexpected trouble was praise!
 - f Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God while in prison in Philippi.
📖 *Acts 16:23-25*
 - f Paul cheerfully makes his defense before Felix the Governor.
📖 *Acts 24:10,14,24-27*
 - f Paul praised God for his salvation before Herod Agrippa.
📖 *Acts 26:28-29*

Paul’s life is an example of the power of God’s grace!

- ❖ God’s grace is sufficient for all circumstances.
📖 *2 Corinthians 12:7-10*
- ❖ Prisons are places where our freedom is restricted and can come in different forms in our lives.
 - f Hurt: When we have been victimized, wounded, rejected, reviled – we cannot change the past so the hurt can become a type of prison, restricting our freedom to be ourselves!
Colossians 3:13-14 “bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”
 - f Health: Unexpected disease or injury that incapacitates us can become a prison.
Romans 8:28 “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.”
 - f Home: Parental abuse, abandonment, alcoholism, divorce; and also the consequences of rebellious children whose actions inflict trouble on family members can become prisons.
Isaiah 61:1-3 ... Jesus came to bind up the brokenhearted!

Paul's letter to the Ephesians reveals God's Sovereignty over every situation.

- ❖ God's Grace and Calling in our lives is not bound by prison! *Ephesians 3:2*
- ❖ God's Revelation of Himself to us is not bound by prison! *Ephesians 3:3*
- ❖ God's Insights into His Word are not bound by prison! *Ephesians 3:4*
- ❖ God's Plan and Purpose are not bound by Prison! *Ephesians 3:5-6*
- ❖ God's Adoption of His people, making us heirs with Christ and members of His glorious family, is not bound by prison! *Ephesians 3:6*

Praise is a lifestyle!

*I will bless the Lord at all times;
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the humble hear and be glad.
Oh, magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt His name together!
I sought the Lord, and He answered me
and delivered me from all my fears.
Those who look to Him are radiant,
and their faces shall never be ashamed.
Psalm 34:1-5*

Endnotes:

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