

Report on the Positive Aspects of Imprisonment (vv. 12-14)

VERSE 12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned

out for the greater progress of the gospel (Γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ μᾶλλον εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν [*pres.act.infin. ginosko know + conj de + pro.acc.p. su + pres.dep.ind.1s. boulomai want + noun voc.m.p. adelphos + conj hoti that + d.a.nom.nt.p. to + prep kata + pro.acc.s. ego "my" + adv mallon "greater" + prep eis + noun acc.f.s. prokope progress, advancement + d.a.w/noun gen. nt.s. euangelion gospel + perf.act.ind.3s. erchomai come; "have turned"])*

VERSE 13 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well

known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else (ὥστε τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ γενέσθαι ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πάσιν [*conj hoste so that + d.a.w/noun acc.m.p. desmos + pro.gen.m.s. ego + adj.acc.m.p. phaneros manifest; "well known" + prep en + noun loc.m.s. Christ + aor.act.infin. ginomai "has become" + prep en + adj.loc.nt.s. holos whole + d.a.w/noun loc.nt.s. praitorion palace guard + "praetorian guard" + prep kata + d.a.w/adj.loc.m.p. loipos rest; beyond that + adj.loc.m.p. pas all; "everyone"]),*

VERSE 14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my

imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word without fear (καὶ τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐν κυρίῳ πεποιθότας τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου περισσοτέρως τολμᾶν ἀφόβως τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν [*conj kai + d.a.w/adj.acc.m.p. polus "most" e.g. that majority + d.a.w/noun gen.m.p. adelphos "brethren" + prep en + noun loc.m.s. kurios + perf.act.part.acc.m.p. peithos be confident; "trusting" + d.a.w/noun loc.m.p. desmos + pro.gen.m.s. ego "my" + adv. perissosteros "far more" + aor.act.infin. tolmao be bold "have courage" + adv aphobos without fear + d.a.w/noun acc.m.s. logos word + pres.act.infin. laleo speak]).*

ANALYSIS: VERSES 12-14

1. What follows in this set of verse is a rather detailed missionary report in the city of Rome.
2. With v. 12 Paul move into the main body of this letter.
3. There is a parallel to this in 2 Cor. 1:8-11 but there the tone is different as it deals with difficulties Paul faced while he was traveling and spreading the Christian message.
4. Here he seeks to encourage the Philippians no matter what had been reported to them concerning Paul's circumstances while in prison.
5. The Philippian account is somewhat comparable to Paul's report in Rom. 15:22-32.
6. We have noted the mutual affection between Paul and the Philippian church.
7. The Philippians communicated their concern for Paul's welfare (cf. 4:10).
8. So the first item (in the main body) is to put them at ease.
9. Paul returns to this topic at the end of this letter (4:11, 13, 18).
10. Surely this section must be viewed as a response to the Philippians' gift.
11. The Philippians are supporting Paul and they have a "right" to find out about his circumstances.
12. So Paul assures them that their efforts on his behalf are not wasted.
13. Paul's love for these believers would not have flagged had they not sent him monetary help.
14. In certain situations Paul did not accept contributions (e.g., 1 Cor. 9:1-8; 1 Thess. 2:9) and even here in this letter (4:10-11) we detect a note of embarrassment over the Philippians' gift.
15. "Now I want you to know" is formulaic introducing the report.
16. What he wants them to know, first and foremost, is that even though he is a prisoner "the word of God is not imprisoned" (cf. 2 Tim. 2:9).
17. Paul's two Roman imprisonments are comparable even though he was cut off and forsaken by believers (cf. 2 Tim. 4:17 "But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth.").
18. Paul here in v. 12 is not merely saying that the gospel message had continued to make progress *in spite of* adversity; rather, the adversity itself had turned out for the advancement of the gospel.
19. Paul goes out of his way to make sure that the Philippians should not be distressed over his situation; here he give a glowing report of his ministry designed to bring them joy (v. 18).
20. Implicit in all this is God's sovereign workings in human affairs.
21. Paul's appearance before various rulers fulfilled his commission as per Acts 8:15 "But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the sons of Israel.'"
22. So this ironic turn of events is that while some intended to curtail his ministry with "chains," the upshot was that his imprisonment led to the evangelization of the Roman populace both in and out of prison.
23. Pagans were evangelized, that probably would not have be exposed to such a profound witness as that of the apostle, and believers living in Rome were emboldened.
24. First, the imprisonment made it possible for the "whole" praetorian guard, and others, to be exposed to the gospel (v. 13).
25. Paul expresses this in a peculiar manner so that the opening clause may be rendered "so that my imprisonment in Christ has become well known..."

26. Paul here does not express his thought with the more predictable *dia Christou* (for the sake of Christ).
27. Here he features the doctrine of positional sanctification and we see in this choice a sharing in the sufferings of Christ (cf. 3:10) who experienced arrest and death at the hands of the local authority.
28. The mention of the Praetorian Guard (akin to the Secret Service) serves to demonstrate how high a profile Paul's case was at this time.
29. Paul's witness reached the upper echelons of Roman rule as noted in "and to everyone else."
30. In v. 14 the report serves to show how his witness effected believers living in Rome.
31. The unexpected happened, that is, instead of putting a damper on witnessing the faith in the very center of the empire, believers were emboldened to speak out to the general populace.
32. The majority of the Christians in Rome became bolder witnesses when they learned of Paul's example.
33. "Most of the brethren in the Lord" again features positional sanctification.
34. V. 14 can be rendered: "most of the brethren in the Lord, having confidence by/in my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word without fear" as this follows closely the Greek word order.

Two Extremes (vv. 15-17)

VERSE 15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but

some also from good will (Τινὲς μὲν καὶ διὰ φθόνον καὶ ἔριν, τινὲς δὲ καὶ δι' εὐδοκίαν τὸν Χριστὸν κηρύσσουσιν [*pro.nom.m.p. tis some + part men on the one hand; "to be sure" + prep kata + prep dia + noun acc.m.s phthonos envy + conj + noun acc.f.s. eris strife + pro.nom.m.s. tis some + conj de but + prep kata + prep dia + noun acc.f.s. eudokia good will + d.a.w/noun acc.m.s. Christ + pres.act.ind.3p. kerusso preach, proclaim*]);

VERSE 16 the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense

of the gospel (οἱ μὲν ἐξ ἀγάπης, εἰδότες ὅτι εἰς ἀπολογίαὶν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου κεῖμαι [*d.a.nom.m.p. + part men "the latter" + prep ek + noun abl.f.s. agape love + perf.act.part.nom.m.p. oida know + conj hoti that + noun acc.f.s. apologia defense + d.a.w/noun gen.nt.s. euangelion gospel + pres.dep.ind.1s. keimai be appointed*]);

VERSE 17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment (οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας

τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν, οὐχ ἄγνως, οἰόμενοι θλίψιν ἐγείρειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου [d.a.nom.m.p. “the former” + conj de + prep ek + noun abl.f.s. eritheia selfish ambition + d.a/w/noun acc.m.s. Christ + pres.act.ind.3p. katangelo proclaim + neg ouk “rather than” + adv agnos pure motive + pres.dep.part.nom.m.p. oimai suppose: “thinking” + noun acc.f.s. thlipsis distress + pres.act.infin. egeiro raise (the dead); arouse; “cause” + d.a.w/noun loc.m.p. desmos + pro.gen.m.s. ego “my”]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 15-17

1. Paul’s report does not omit an unpleasant aspect arising out of his high profile case.
2. “Some, to be sure” (*Tines men kai*) reference an element within the Christian community in Rome that are to be included in the “most of the brethren” of v. 14.
3. The flourishing evangelism at the grass roots level was tied to Paul’s witness before the powers-that-be.
4. Even those believers with corrupt motives were emboldened by Paul’s example.
5. Perhaps this painful situation regarding a minority who desired to hurt Paul was reported to the Philippians.
6. Note that both groups were “preaching Christ.”
7. Those within the Christian community who had impure motives (“envy and strife”) were in fact communicating the true way of salvation through Jesus Christ.
8. Their STA driven “envy” (*phthnos*) was undoubtedly directed at Paul.
9. Envy is a mental attitude sin (cf. 1 Pet. 2:1 “Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and strife.”; also Gal. 5:21).
10. The Jewish leaders were envious of Jesus and Pilate knew it (Mk. 15:10)!
11. “Strife” (*epis*) is an STA activity (cf. Rom. 13:13; 1Cor. 1:11; 3:3; 2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20; 1 Tim. 6:4; Titus 3:9).
12. “Strife” refers to their verbal attack on Paul; their attempt to denigrate him and exalt themselves (cf. v. 17).
13. “But some also from good will” (*eudokia*) refers to pure motivation.
14. Those with pure motives (“out of love”) were fully acclimated to Paul’s place in the plan of God (v. 16).
15. They (“the latter”) knew something that kept them in the will of God.
16. They fully accepted Paul’s gift and niche (“I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.”)
17. Cf. Gal. 1:15-16 where Paul describes his own calling to the ministry.
18. “Defense of gospel” here refers to a witness against false charges before Caesar.
19. Some were jealous of that fact.
20. So their gospel witness while correct in content was done in such a fashion as to arouse public animosity towards Paul.

21. Again, note that they “proclaim Christ” indicating a proper presentation of the way of salvation.
22. “Selfish ambition” (*epitheia*) occurs 7x: Rom. 2:8; 2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 1:17; 2:3; Jam. 3:14; 3:16.
23. Here the idea is that of rivalry or competition for attention.
24. It stands over against “pure motives” (*agnos*; adv. only here).
25. These individuals within the Christian community actually wanted to bring Paul additional misery (“thinking to cause my distress in my imprisonment”).
26. If these types were preaching the same gospel as the one Paul promoted and so there was no doctrinal issue at stake, how were they hoping to cause him distress?
27. As suggested in point 20 they presented a false portrait of Paul to illicit animosity from those who had the power to cause him even more “distress.”
28. Who knows what kind of accusations they were making while still preaching the gospel.
29. In any case, it was all for naught.