

Sermon Title: The Truth Is Marching On

Sermon Text: Philippians 1:12-18

Introduction

John Bunyan's preaching was so popular and powerful, and so unacceptable to leader in the seventeenth-century Church of England, that he was jailed in order to silence him.

Refusing to be silent, he began to preach in the jail courtyard. He not only had a large audience of prisoners but also hundreds of the citizens of Bedford and the surrounding area would come to the prison daily and stand outside to hear him expound Scripture.

He was silenced verbally by being placed deep inside the jail and forbidden to preach at all. Yet in that silence, he spoke loudest of all and to more people than he could have imagined.

During that time that he wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the great Christian classic that has ministered the gospel to millions throughout the

world. For several centuries, it was the most widely read and translated book in the world after the Bible. Bunyan's opponents were able to stop his preaching for a few years, but they were not able to stop his ministry.

Instead, they provided opportunity for it to be extended from deep within a jail in the small town of Bedford to the ends of the earth and the exact same thing took place with the apostle Paul.

Background

Because ever since he was chosen to preach the gospel, his enemies attempted to shut him down, and shut him up, but they quickly learned you cannot stop the work of God and you cannot stop the word of God. In other words, it will be preached and proclaimed despite the agenda and the attack of the enemy.

Acts 5:16-38: there were many who were healed who were possessed with a unclean spirit. In fact the scripture says everyone who was possessed with

an unclean spirit was healed by the hand of the disciples. When the high priest heard what the disciples had done, he rose up along with the rest of the religious leaders and laid hands on them and put them in prison but the angel of the lord by night opened the prison doors and brought them forth and said Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people the words of this life and when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning and taught.

During this time the high priest came and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of israel and instructed them to bring the disciples unto him but when they came and found them not in the prison they returned and told the high priest they had escaped and then one came and told them the men who they had thrown into prison were teaching in the temple.

Therefore they went and brought them before the council and the high priest asked them, did we not tell you that you could not teach in this name and peter answered and said unto him we will obey god rather than

man, and when they heard the response of the disciples they were cut to the heart and took counsel too slay them but one stood up in the council whose name was gamaliel and said you need to be careful what you do to these men.

For before these days, rose up theudas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom an number of men about four hundred joined themselves who was slain and all as many as obeyed him were scattered and were brought to nothing.

Next, there rose up an man by the name of judas from galilee who drew away much people after him but he also perished and every one who obeyed him.

Therefore, I say unto you, refrain from these men and leave them alone for if this counsel or work be of men it will come to nothing but if it be of god you cannot over throw it lest haply ye be found even to fight against god.

The High Priest Discovered:

You Don't Mess With The Messenger

You Don't Mess With The Message

Acts 12:1-25: king herod has killed james with the sword and since he saw it pleased the jews, he decided he would kill the apostle peter also. Therefore he arrested him and threw him into prison, but while peter was in prison he prayed without ceasing and when the time came to bring him out and kill him, the angel of the lord came upon him and smote him and said rise up and follow me and the angel led him outside the city and when peter realizes the angel of the lord had delivered him from the hand of the enemy, he goes to the house of mary where many were prayer and when peter knocked on the door, a damsel by the name of rhonda answered, and when peter answered, she ran back into the house with excitement and told the others that peter was standing at the door, but they did not believe her.

It must be his angel they said but peter continue to knock on the door and when they opened the door they could not believe their eyes, peter who had

been arrested was standing before them. Peter tells them that the lord had delivered him from the hand of the enemy, and when herod receives word that peter had escaped, he takes those who were responsible and puts them to death.

Days later herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and spoke unto the people and when he was done the people shouted, the voice of god and not of man, and when they were done the angel of the lord smote him and killed him because he did not give god the glory, and the word grew among the people.

King Herod Discovered:

You Don't Mess With The Messenger

You Don't Mess With The Message

Acts 19:1-20: paul entered into the synagogue and spoke boldly about the kingdom, however there were some who rebuke him and resisted him because they did not agree with what he had been preaching, but that did

not stop him. The scripture says the lord did many miracles by the hand of the apostle paul. In fact, they would take a piece of the apostle clothing and touch them who had an evil spirit and the scripture says the evil spirit departed from their body.

But then there were exorcists during that day who tried to duplicate what the apostle had done but when they laid hands upon the evil spirit, the evil spirit spoke unto them and said, we know the lord and we know the apostle paul, but we do not know you.

Suddenly the evil spirit leaped upon them and overcame them and prevailed against them, so that they ran out of the house wounded and naked and when the people heard what the evil spirit had done, fear fell upon them all and the name of the lord jesus was magnified and many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds, and others brought their books and burned them before the people.

Why? Because you cannot substitute the scriptures with sorcery, you cannot substitute the word with witchcraft. Therefore they burned their books and the scripture says the word of the lord prevailed.

The Exorcist Discovered:

You Don't Mess With The Messenger

You Don't Mess With The Message

Notice one very important thing before we move on, the scripture says they burned their books and they counted the price and the price of them was 50,000 pieces of silver.

In other words, their books were nothing more than the price of silver but the word of the lord, the scripture says is more precious than gold, which means theres no other book on the planet that compares to the book of god.

It Is Precious

It Is Priceless

It Is Powerful

Paul knews this and that was the reason he was content with his imprisonment, because he knew, whether he was present or absent, the gospel would be preach and that was all he ever wanted and even thou trials had come he rejoyce because he knew the lord could use them too honor his will and his word.

By the time he wrote Philippians, he had experienced serious hardships of every sort. When he wrote this epistle, he was a prisoner in Rome. He had long desired to preach in that great city, having only an few year earlier written unto the church there.

Although he was not writing this epistle from a dungeon but a private residence, paul was chained night and day to an roman soldier and he had no privacy when he ate, slept, wrote, prayed, preached, or visit with friends and yet for an period of two years, this very lack of privacy made it impossible for the roman solider guarding him to avoid hearing the gospel.

Therefore, paul rejoiced because of the ministry to which the lord had called him and the fruit that was produced even though he was on lock down.

Paul was a man who had gotten used to the confinement of a jail cell.

He was serving a prison sentence in Rome when he penned several letters, including the book of philippians and yet when you read paul's words you do not get the sense that he was dejected, but delighted, not discouraged but encouraged, not pitiful but positive.

In fact his words remind us that God can turn our tears into telescopes, our miseries into milestones and our burdens into blessings. This morning, I want you to know that no matter what the church may face the truth will continue to march on and there's nothing the enemy can do about it.

For the scripture says, upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it, which means despite the trials, troubles, and tribulation the gospel will be preached unto the ends of the earth and paul mentions that here in our text. Paul says in...

(V.12) I want you to understand that everything that's happened unto me has happened that the gospel may be advance. Paul knew nothing would stop the gospel from being preached and proclaimed and I want to share that with you this morning. Notice first all...

1. Paul's Chains: 12-14

(V.12) but I would ye should understand, brethren, that the thing which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto "the furtherance of the gospel."

During this time, the apostle paul was in an deep, dark, and depressing prison and yet he rejoiced because despite what had happened unto him the gospel had been heard and herald among the people.

Paul knew what happened unto him was not an accident but an appointment. Even though the lord had allowed these events to take place in his life he knew the lord would never leave him or forsake him.

By the way, paul was not in prison for something he had done wrong but for something he had done right, reminding us that sometimes bad things happen to good people, especailly those who have given their lives to the ministry of the lord, which was the case here and notice paul did not question the lord.

He did not ask why this, why me, or why now? He simply rejoiced because of the futherance of the gospel. The word futherance is the word progress and describes not merely moving ahead but doing so against obstacles.

The related verb was used of an explorer or of an army advance team hacking an path through dense trees and underbrush, moving ahead slowly and with considerable effort but demonic resistance is inherent too that sort of progress, and no one knew that better than the apostle.

He knew how inevitable the resistance of satan and the world is toward the progress of the gospel and this was the reason he was in prison, the religious leaders, the jews arrested him because he did not preach the same

message they were preaching. Now remember these religious leaders were his colleagues and contemporaries. There was a time when the apostle preached the same message they preached.

In fact he was present when they stoned Stephen for preaching another gospel, the same gospel that has now imprisoned Paul; his contemporaries had become his adversaries; he explained to the church of Corinth that although "a wide door for effective service has opened to me, there were many who opposed him."

To the Thessalonians he wrote: "After we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition".

He encouraged Timothy: remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, and descendant of David, according to my gospel for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned.

Therefore I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory”.

The attitude of the apostle paul was amazing. Because anyone else would have complained about their situation but not the apostle paul, he rejoiced because he knew that all things work together for the good.

He knew what the enemy meant for evil, the lord meant for good, and that in the end all things would work out for the good of the gospel; god help us to have the same attitude toward our adversary and adversity, knowing that no one, not even the devil himself can stop the advancement of the gospel. The truth will continue to march on despite the pressure and persecution we will face and no one knew that better than the apostle paul who said:

11 Corinthians: 4:8-11: we are troubled on every side but not distressed we are perplexed but not in despair we are persecuted but not forsaken cast

down but not destroyed, always bearing about in the body the dying of the lord jesus that the life also of jesus may be made manifest in our body.

Paul said:

Despite the madness, the message will be manifested

Paul did not deny that he was in an undesirable place, but he understood that there was an unseen purpose; and, the purpose was far, far bigger than him.

In fact, if I could say it this way: Paul understood that it wasn't about his problems, predicaments, or persecution; it was about the proclamation and progress of the gospel.

Next, paul focused on two very important achievements in his ministry, the progress of the gospel outside the church, and the progress of the gospel within the church. First, he rejoiced that his imprisonment for the cause of christ had become known throughout the palace. Notice verse...

(V.13) His bonds in christ had been manifested in all the palace and other places.

The word bonds speak of a chain or a rope. the term came to be used of any forced restriction or confinement, in particular that of a prisoner. During the time he wrote philippians, paul mentioned “wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel”, and in ephesians he spoke of being “an ambassador in chains”.

Paul’s “chains” were somewhat longer than a modern handcuff, about eighteen inches long. One end was attached to the prisoner’s wrist, the other to the guard’s.

The chain was not removed from the prisoner as long as he was in custody, making both escape and privacy impossible. Although the apostle was allowed to live in private quarters, he was chained in that manner to a series of soldiers for a period of two years.

Over those years, it's possible that several dozen different soldiers were assigned to guard Paul, each one becoming his captive audience. If they were not already aware of it, those soldiers soon came to realize that this amazing man was not imprisoned for committing a crime but for preaching the gospel.

By the way, some scholars believe verse thirteen references the praetorian guard who were composed of some ten thousand handpicked soldiers. It'd been established by Caesar Augustus, who was emperor at the time of Jesus' birth.

These men were dispersed strategically throughout the city of Rome to keep the general peace and especially to protect the emperor. Members of the praetorian guard served for twelve (later sixteen) years, after which they were granted the highest honors and privileges including very generous severance pay.

Eventually they became so powerful that they were considered "king-

makers,” who not only protected but also chose the emperors. The results of Paul’s stay in Rome were predictable. In addition to hearing his preaching and teaching, the soldiers also experienced firsthand his graciousness, his remarkable patience and perseverance in great affliction, his wisdom, his deep convictions, his genuineness, his humility, and his genuine love and concern for them.

They were aware of the false accusations made against him in Caesarea and the personal risk he had taken by appealing to Caesar. Both his message and his character had a profound impact on those elite, hardened, and influential soldiers.

How many of the praetorian guard became Christians is unknown, but those who did became evangelists and some even believe that some within the household of Caesar was saved, simply because Paul turned the prison cell into a pulpit and preached the gospel to anyone and everyone who was present.

Paul Turned His Obstacle Into An Opportunity

Listen, no one every side preaching and promoting the gospel would be easy. Even the lord said in this world you will have persecution but be of good cheer I have overcome the world.

The participation of the ministry and the preaching of the message is not easy, but that does not give us the excuse to retreat; we must take every obstacle as an opportunity to preach the gospel, knowing they who are outside the church are just as important as they who are inside the church.

By that the way that is the problem. We consider those inside the church more important than those outside the church and if you don't believe me then answer me this question, when was the last time you spoke to an sinner about the savior?

When was the last time you shared the gospel with someone who did not know the lord? Its easy to share the gospel inside the church because were

in our comfort zone, but what happens when we are outside the church and things are no longer as comfortable? What do we do then? I'm not here to belittle you nor berate you but how are they going to hear without an preacher?

It is important that we understand this because if we are not preaching the gospel another gospel is being preached. If we do not give up from our couches and chairs, many will spend eternity in hell and their blood will be on our hands because we did not share with them the good news, we did not share with them the gospel. I do not want the blood of the sinner to be upon my hands, but that will be the case unless I share the gospel.

11. Paul's Critics: 14-18

(V.14) And many of the brethren in the lord waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

I love this verse because it reminds us that we are always setting a example,

and were either going to be a stepping stone or a stumbling block. Paul was an stepping stone, because notice his attitude toward adversity made others more bold. They began to preach the gospel without fear.

They Preached The Gospel Fervently

They Preached The Gospel Faithfully

They Preach The Gospel Fearlessly

The perserverance of paul not only was winning converts outside the church but strengthening and encouraging believers inside the church. His courage and faithfulness, during his confinement caused other to be more trusting and more courageous, speaking the truth without fear. I believe one trait that's missing in the believer is the trait called boldness.

The church has lost the fire and fervor that once made the world tremble.

In an world, wherever one is exercising free speech we must never forget the scripture says let the redeemed of the lord say so, meaning contrary too what politics and social media may tell you, we have the right to stand

up and speak the truth but when are we going to have the backbone to speak the truth and never back down?

Listen to me, if we do not rise up and speak now there is going to come a day when we will not be allowed to speak and in some places that day has already come.

I am not asking the church to start a fight, but I am asking the church not to go down without one. It was paul who said I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith, henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness that the righteous judge shall give me but not too me only but unto all them that love his appearing. Paul said...

Ephesians 6:10-17: Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of

the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Where are the warriors this morning? Where are they who will show up, stand up, and speak up, despite the evil that surrounds them? Where are they, who like the three hebrew will stand up when others have bowed down even though it meant they would be cast into the fire?

Where are they, who like david stepped up and fought the giant because he had disrespected the name of the lord? Where are the warriors who will be brave and bold, speaking the truth in an postmodern world.

Because here me when I tell you this morning, everyone who is preaching is not preaching the truth. Just because they stand behind the pulpit and preach does not mean they are preaching the gospel.

Listen to me, the truth of the gospel has been destroyed and distorted. I do not care what you are going to think about what I am about to say, but you have no business listening to someone who preaches nothing more than an health and wealth gospel, you have no business listening too someone who believes theres more than one way to heaven

But pastor have you seen there church, they have twenty-five thousand people who attend, yea and the scripture says broad is the way that leads to destruction.

Listen to me just because something is big and beautiful does not mean the lord is blessing it. You need to be extra careful who you are listening to in this day and time or you to will be lead astray. God give us men and women who are brave and bold who will speak the truth, when others want.

(V.15) some indeed preach christ even of envy and strife and some also of good will.

There are two sets of people, there are those who preach the out of good will, and then there are those who preach out of ill will. The scripture says there were some during this time who were preaching with an heart of envy and strife.

In other words, there were some who were jealous of the apostle paul and used their platform too promote their ministry. Listen, I believe there are many who are in the pulpit who should not be.

Why? Because they have made the ministry about them when it should be about him, they may have the right message but they have the wrong motive, the problem was not what they preached it was why they preached.

The hearts of these preachers were not filled with jesus it was filled with jealous. Therefore, they did what they could to damage and demoralize the

reputation of the apostle paul. They used their pulpit to bash the man of god. They did not like it that the lord was blessing him and not them and that is the meaning of the word envy.

It is wishing others did not have what they have, and is closely related to the word jealousy, which is wishing to have what someone else possesses and from the context, it seems likely that Paul's detractors were both envious and jealous of the apostle.

They envied Paul's giftedness, his blessings, his intellect, his effectiveness in ministry, and especially, his being highly respected and beloved in the church. They considered him to be an threat to their own prominence in the church.

There have always been those whose service in the church was motivated by a desire to exceed others and that make them resent those who are respected and whose ministries are fruitful.

Such people inevitably breed envy and strife and thereby do great harm to Christ's church but hear me when I tell you the church has been beaten up enough by the world, the last thing it needs is for its own to beat it up and tear it down.

It will be a glorious day when we finally realize that we are on the same team. Now is the time we come together as one church and realize there is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one lord, one faith, one baptism, one god and father of all, who is above all, and through you all, and in you all. Since we have been in this series we have learned that we have an:

Common Devotion

Common Deliverance

Common Duty

What is our duty? Sharing the gospel with the world but that leads me to ask the question are we sharing the good news? Are you sharing the gospel?

At the end of the day that's the only thing that matters.

Conclusion

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962), the world-famous violinist, earned a fortune with his concerts and compositions, but he generously gave most of it away. So, when he discovered an exquisite violin on one of his trips, he wasn't able to buy it.

Later, having raised enough money to meet the asking price, he returned to the seller, hoping to purchase that beautiful instrument. But to his great dismay it had been sold to a collector.

Kreisler made his way to the new owner's home and offered to buy the violin. The collector said it had become his prized possession and he would not sell it.

Keenly disappointed, Kreisler was about to leave when he had an idea. "Could I play the instrument once more before it is consigned to silence?" he asked.

Permission was granted, and the great virtuoso filled the room with such heart-moving music that the collector's emotions were deeply stirred. "I have no right to keep that to myself," he exclaimed. "It's yours, Mr. Kreisler. Take it into the world, and let people hear it." The gospel:

We Have It But They Want Hear It Unless We Share It