

Philippians 10-04-23a

This is Friday, the 23rd of April, 2010. We're resuming our study in the Epistle to the Philippians. We're in chapter 1 and we'll pick up at verse 19.

Let's take a moment at the outset to focus our concentration by going to the Lord in prayer. It's an opportunity to recognize the importance of the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. He gives us understanding and insight in ways that we can't achieve in our human strength and our intellectual efforts.

It takes a supernatural work on God's part for us to make sense of His Word and His plan and His purpose. I can present as best I can the material that's in the Word of God, but ultimately God the Holy Spirit is our teacher. He teaches me, certainly, and hopefully teaches all of us and gives us insight into this truth in a special way.

It's important that we're susceptible to His ministry by having analyzed ourselves and ensured that if there's any unconfessed sin or any lingering bad attitudes and baggage and so on, that we can lay those aside and recognize the great opportunity we have because of what Jesus has done for us to be built up spiritually and strengthened through the study of God's Word. Shall we pray? Father, what a privilege it is for us to spend time together as believers who share a common enthusiasm for the Lord Jesus Christ and the new life that we have in Him, the great potentials and opportunities that are ours to transcend the mundane and the earthly and the temporal and enter into eternal things to build a future that is bright with promise and with the gifts and the benefits that You have promised to those who walk by faith and not by sight. We thank You for the passage that is before us this evening.

We ask Your blessing on us as we study it together. May each of us find in these verses truth that will be meaningful and will sustain us and strengthen us and guide us in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well as we have seen over the last few weeks, this is the letter that Paul wrote while incarcerated. He is under some sort of arrest.

They have never been able to figure out if he was in Rome or in Corinth or in Ephesus, but he is somewhere and he is under Roman guard. This is the praetorium that he refers to. The first instinct is to think that this is the royal praetorian guard that is in Rome, but there were detachments of praetorians in other towns.

So we are not real sure where he is. What we do know is that he is under arrest. He is in some sort of detainment and he has received a visit from some emissary or another who comes from Philippi.

This is a small church that Paul was responsible for founding. We looked at that in Acts in our

introductory lessons. He is writing to them.

He knows them. He has a warm remembrance of them. They stayed in Lydia's house.

You remember all of that out of the chapters in Acts that we looked at. He says in verse 3, after greeting them, Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We have done studies in the past about grace and peace.

I just reviewed those quickly. We did a pretty in depth study of the concept of grace when we did Colossians a while back. If you are interested in that greeting in verse 2, if you check the second or third lesson in Colossians, we spent a whole Bible study on charis and everything that it means.

He says, I thank God every time I call you to mind. Every remembrance of you causes me to send up a prayer of thanksgiving. Wouldn't it be great if this is the kind of person that we are? Fill in your name here.

Boy, you know, every time I think of Fred, I just send up a thanksgiving to God. Every time I think of fill in your name, I just want to thank God. Wouldn't it be great if you were that big of a blessing in the lives of people that every time they think of you, it just makes them break out in thanksgiving? That's how it was for Paul in these Philippians.

That's how close and like-minded they are. In every prayer, he makes requests for them with joy. We talked about the fact that joy is a recurring theme in this letter.

We ought to be happy. There ought to be something different about Christians. If there's not, there's nothing wrong with Christianity.

There's nothing wrong with God. Certainly nothing wrong with the Lord Jesus. If we're not happy, if we don't have an enthusiasm, we're all going to have our ups and downs.

But over time, the climate ought to be happy, ought to be joyful. There ought to be some, I mean, what's the point of being a Christian if it doesn't enter you into the joy of the Lord? This is another one of my beefs with Calvinism is they're just so full of stern and drang and depressed all the time. That's not the biblical view.

With joy for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now. This is what makes Paul thankful. They have been consistent and they've been motivated about what? About the things of God.

It wasn't a flash in the pan. It wasn't today's big fad. It wasn't some vegematic that's here today and gone tomorrow.

NERF stuff was big for a while. Angels were big for a while. You couldn't go to a bookstore

without having a rack full of angel books fall on you.

Then it was the prayer of Jabez. Then it was the purpose-driven this and purpose-driven that. Different waves of popularity.

Things come and go. Paul says from the very first day, you people have been in fellowship with the good news. Gospel we tend to think of as believe in Jesus and be saved.

But gospel is all of the good news from God. Getting the faith in Christ deal, that's just the beginning. That's just day one.

There's a whole life afterward. He says you've had fellowship with me in that from the first day until now. Being confident that this work that began at that first day is going to continue and go forward until the Lord Jesus comes.

We're in the middle of a process. We have entered into a life. It has a beginning.

It has a duration. And it's going to have a culmination in the day when the Lord Jesus returns. People get all spooky about the rapture and how can all of these supernatural things take place.

The main focus of our concentration is day by day. The day of the Lord is going to come on the day when God the Father appoints it. The day of our salvation has already passed.

We're in that intermediate stage. We don't know how many of these days we have. I could walk out here and be low in the car and get hit by some kind of a moving vehicle.

Get hit by a meteor. Get hit by a deep vein thrombosis or an embolism or something and keel over. And for me, that's the day of the Lord.

That's the last day of my life on this earth. But in this interim time, whatever time remains to us as believers, God has begun a good work in us and he is going to complete it. He's going to build it.

He's going to add to it every day of our lives. And it doesn't necessarily mean that we're getting greater and grander and more spiritual. It may mean that God is thinking up greater and grander ways to discipline us and motivate us.

That's what we've been seeing in Isaiah. But he's going to work and complete this work until the day of Jesus Christ. So Paul says, it's right for me, it's proper, it's fitting that I should think of you all because I have you in my heart, both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of this good news about life in Christ.

You all are partakers with me of grace. And you're back to that word, kars, that word grace. Again, everything that comes to us by grace through faith.

God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. And one thing

that you notice here is Paul doesn't say, he doesn't write back to Philippi and say, boy, every time I think of you all, I think of that wonderful fishing trip we took out there on the seashore. I think of that wonderful meal we had at Lydia's house.

And I'll never forget those lamb chops or that fried tilapia or whatever it was. What is it that conditions and characterizes Paul's relationship with the people of Philippi? And don't think it's just because he's an apostle and he has to talk wholly all the time. What is it that forms the fabric of his love and his fellowship and his relationship with them? Look at this paragraph.

When he thinks of them, he immediately goes to God in prayer. He makes requests of God on their behalf because of their fellowship. He thinks about the work that God is doing in their midst.

And when he says that he has begun a good work among you, this is their fellowship, their group. And he's going to continue to work there because I have you in my heart, because whether in imprisonment or defense and confirmation of the gospel, you're partakers with me. It's a spiritual friendship.

It's a spiritual fellowship. And this is the best kind because it doesn't depend on circumstances. Most of us are old enough to remember times in the past when somebody was a really close friend.

We just spent inordinate amounts of time with them. I may have told you this story some years ago, but when I was in high school, a guy moved to our county and moved to our school district and moved to our section, our section in Rogers County. He was just around the corner.

He was about a little over half a mile from us, which is like next door where we live. And his name was Ron. And I got to know him and we just hit it off.

We rode the same bus, took all the same classes. And Ron and I just became fast friends, did everything, spent time after school and on weekends and were just thick as thieves all the time. But his dad had a job that moved him around a lot.

And after about a year, they moved to Broken Arrow. They moved half an hour away from us. And so I didn't see Ron for a couple of weeks.

He had moved and school had ended. And so I went over to his house in Broken Arrow that summer to see him. And I just got my driver's license so I could drive over there.

And the friendship had changed substantially because all of the things that we had had in common had shifted. We weren't in the same classes. We didn't know the same people.

We didn't live in the same section. We didn't have or do any of the same things. And all of the circumstantially conditioned elements that had formed that friendship were gone.

And maybe you've had this experience. You go back and see somebody and all you can do is reminisce. Oh, wasn't that fun when we did X? Wasn't that fun when we did Y? But there's no footing on which to have a current friendship.

Am I the only person this has ever happened to? It's just a very circumstance-dependent thing. Well, the great thing about friendships and relationships in Christ is that this is a footing that never changes. This is a fabric that is constant and is in fact eternal.

And when you have a friendship on this basis, years can go by. And the next time you see that person, you are immediately in harmony and you have plenty to talk about because that that you have in common is of a totally different nature. That's the kind of relationship Paul has with the Philippians.

And it's important to understand this because and the reason it's emphasized for us in the beginning of this letter is Paul is going to go on to talk about some things with the Philippians that he would not talk about with the people in Corinth or the people in Rome or the people in Laodicea, other places where he does not know them so well. These are his bosom friends and he can sort of bear his heart to them. And it's one of the reasons that he talks about joy so much because he can relax and share his enthusiasm with them in a fairly intimate way.

And the section we're going to get into tonight, the reason it's in this book and not in some other book, some other letter of Paul is because of who he's writing to. It is this close relationship. So he says, I pray that your love will abound more and more in knowledge and all discernment.

This is what we talked about last week. How do you get this spiritual momentum going? What distinguishes a believer from an unbeliever? How and why are we different? God is love. God so loved the world.

The love of Christ is shed abroad in our hearts. The three great Christian virtues are faith, hope, and love. Faith is the means.

Hope is the motivation. Love is the environment. It is the characteristic.

It is the outworking of those things. If you have faith, if you believe God and you believe his word, if you have hope and an expectation that God is in his heaven and he rewards those who diligently seek him, like it says in Hebrews, then that's motivating. People will do a lot of work when they're motivated.

I remember a story my Aunt Madge told when she was a little girl in Texas, West Texas, out there by Snyder. She entered into a contest and you had to go around and get subscriptions, get people to sign up for a subscription. It was kind of like Grit.

Do they still do Grit? Is that still around? When I was a yonker, you could sell subscriptions to

Grit. This was some other deal. The prize was no slouch of a prize.

Whoever sold the most subscriptions got a new piano. Well, Aunt Madge desperately wanted a piano. She went around and sold these subscriptions like you can't believe.

It's sparsely populated. It's West Texas. This was before the Dust Bowl, but not by much.

It's flat and it's spread out. People are all over the place. She made the trek and she sold these, but then she got sick, deathly ill, bed fast for weeks ill, danger of dying ill.

Call the doctors and hope and pray that she makes it ill for weeks. In the meantime, everybody else was out selling subscriptions, but she had sold so many that she still won. She got the piano and it sat in the house.

It was the joy and envy of the entire community. Not too long after that, it was getting near Christmas. Her brother, my grandpa, who was a boy, and his brother decided that there were Christmas presents hidden somewhere in the house.

They went looking in the closets with a candle because there were no flashlights in those days. They set the clothing and ultimately the house on fire. Stuff just went up like kindling in those days.

Aunt Madge has a very vivid description of the house going up in this great conflagration and people pushing her mother's stove out the kitchen one way and pushing the piano out the door the other way to save it. They did save it, but it put a deep scratch across the front. It was a beautiful, beautiful piano, but these men in their haste to get it out of the fire, the door handle hit it and put a deep scratch which was in it ever after.

Every time she looked at the piano, she remembered the fire. One of the guys who was next door to put out the sparks that were descending on the roofs of neighboring houses was a guy named George Massey, a boy named George Massey. She married him when she grew up.

Anyway, I digress. What was I talking about? Faith, hope, and love. She was motivated to sell those subscriptions because of an expectation.

You get excited. You look ahead and you think, if I persist, if I persevere, here is the goal I can attain. You go to school and you say, if I struggle and learn this material and take these quizzes, write these papers, take these tests, I'll pass the course.

I'll get a degree. I'll graduate. I'll finish.

That expectation carries us through the intermediate ground. You want to wind up in a good place, you'll go through things to get there. That's why I was thinking of my aunt because she really wanted that piano.

There are things that we really hope to arrive at and achieve. It's a motivation. That's part of our life here.

So Paul says, I pray that your love will abound more and more by means of knowledge, by means of discernment. We looked at those words last time. This is why we do Bible study.

It's not just a ritual. It's not just a nod to God. It's not a thing to check off on the box and say, well, God certainly got to bless me now because I sat through that boring hour and a half of monologue.

If you think wearing a hair shirt and suffering through is going to earn blessing, that's not it. It's not the Bible class. It's not the going.

It is the knowledge. It is the discernment, which comes not only by coming to class and spending time speaking the truth together in love, but thinking about it later. I think there couldn't be any higher compliment that you could pay to the word of God than to think about it on a day other than the day that it was taught.

People come out of a church, you know, standard churches with the doors and steeples and the pastor at the front afterward. I used to stand at the front. People come out and shake your hand.

It's always kind of a bellwether, kind of a telltale how the sermon went because everybody's always nice. They're always very gracious. Oh, thank you, pastor.

I really enjoyed that. But over the weeks, you learn to gauge the level of enthusiasm. They're going to say the same thing, but sometimes they really say it like they mean it.

Other times they say it and you think, boy, I must have really tanked that one. That must not have gone well because everybody's saying the right thing, but there's some hidden sense of insincerity there that makes you feel like, you know, that one didn't exactly get past the first baseline, much less get out of the park. The way you know whether or not you're getting into this knowledge and discernment area is if you meditate.

We've talked about this many times. Psalm 1, the man is blessed who meditates on God's word day and night, and not constantly to where you can't think any other thoughts, but call it to mind. The greatest compliment I can think of to a sermon is not to say, oh, you know, pastor, great sermon, although, you know, please say that to your heart's content.

But the real compliment is if it comes back to your mind on Tuesday and you think, oh, you know what? This situation reminds me of what we studied on Sunday. This mental gyration I'm going through, this is just exactly what we covered last week. I don't expect us to remember back more than a week, but wouldn't it be great if we could actually call to mind the word of God? That's what we're supposed to be doing.

It's not the listening. It's not the taking of notes. It's not the ritual of assembling.

It is the learning of it. People who get practical training know what I'm talking about. Some of you all have nurse training.

It's one thing to sit in the class and say, okay, you put the rubber thing around the arm. You wait for the vein to pop up. You get the hypodermic needle and you jam that thing in.

I know this is wrong. It's actual practical knowledge. If I was talking about setting time on an artillery fuse, then you all would be confused and I would be right.

But when it's a practical thing, it's one thing. You look at it in the classroom and here's a picture and so on. But then you're sitting there and here's Mr. Smith and you're doing your first needle insertion.

You do whatever the steps are and you get that sharp needle and you're just about to jam it in there. You just take a deep gulp and you say, there's a big difference between watching somebody else do this and doing it myself. I can watch other people bleed with impunity, but I don't like looking at my own blood for some reason.

I typically kind of look away when they take blood. I don't know why. I've watched hundreds of other people get their blood taken.

It doesn't bother me at all. But when I see my blood coming out, it just kind of gives me a sensation that's not pleasant. So I just put my mind elsewhere.

But practical knowledge, you know when you're applying it and you say, I sure hope I remember whatever the steps were they gave me in class, because this is the real deal. Well, we ought to have that attitude about Bible class. This is my point.

We should have that attitude about Bible class. It's not platitudes. It's not lofty, grandiose stuff that just kind of lifts us up on a wave of something for the moment and then, okay, now back to real life.

It's not like a spiritual commercial that we're supposed to be implementing these things. That's why Paul says, I pray that your love will abound in epinosis. That epi is kind of an intensifier.

It means upon in the literal sense. But epinosis and isthesis, we talked about that aesthetic. And if your love is abounding by means of your knowledge, by means of your sensibility of knowing when and how to apply it.

Did I tell you last week that I heard somebody, and I thought they slaughtered the concept of hypocrisy by giving a bad example of it. The same guy, this week, did the very same thing on another topic that's near and dear to my heart. I've got to quit listening to the radio on the day I'm

going to teach because it skews my mind.

But he was talking about that we should always apply things the same way. And I thought, well, what about Paul? What about the Apostle Paul? There is a context in which you make application. You can't always apply things the same way.

You remember the Apostle Paul when he came into a community of Jewish believers with Timothy. And Timothy had had a Greek father and a Jewish mother. And he said, you know, this is not the time to stir up this whole circumcision issue with these people.

So he had Timothy circumcised, which was no doubt traumatic for Timothy. But Paul made the decision, this is what you need to do. For us to integrate it at this time and in this context, we're going to not make an issue out of circumcision because we need to reach this particular group of Jewish believers with a different set of truths.

We don't want to distract them by getting them all hung up on, but you know, he's not circumcised. So he just eliminated that. It's not a distraction.

Timothy is circumcised. So now let's talk about the Word of God. Later on, different context, different group, different time, different truths at issue, big issue of legalism.

Paul takes Titus with him, who is also Greek, and purposely does not circumcise him. And he says, look, you people need to understand that circumcision is not the issue. Two men, same apostle, same issue, different decision in different contexts.

That's what eistasis is. How do you apply what you know? There's a time to speak. There's a time to remain silent.

You think about Ecclesiastes, time to gather stones, time to scatter stones, time to sow. There's a time to reap. There's a time for this and there's a time for that.

And they're opposites. That's eistasis. So you need the knowledge of what the Word of God says, but we also need this perception of when and how it applies.

Paul says, I pray that your love will abound, supported by these two things. You've got knowledge. You know what the Word of God says.

You know what God's will is. You know what God's plan and purpose is. You know why we're here.

We're not just amway. We're not here trying to evangelize the next guy because somebody evangelized us. There's a reason why we're here.

God has set a task before us. It is the transformation of our minds. It is the renewing of our being to live in the same world we were in before, but to live differently, to live in the light of heavenly

things by God's grace, in God's power, with God's word, by means of that knowledge.

That's why we're here. We can do normal things. We can look normal, walk through the mall.

Nobody sees us glowing in the dark. I don't have to look like Mr. T with 16 crosses hanging all over me. I don't have to wear a big I love Jesus cap.

I don't have to put a fish on my car. I live, hopefully, differently. My thoughts and intents are transformed.

They're different. I look above. This is the context.

When we get into what we're looking at tonight, skip on down now to our current situation. He already talked about, don't worry for me, things have turned out for the good. He talked about those who are preaching Christ.

He said, look, there's two ways of looking at this. Some people are preaching out of good motives. Others are preaching out of envy, in verse 16.

They're not doing it right. They're not doing it for the right reasons. But, he says, I choose to look at it, that whether it's for wrong reasons or for right reasons, Christ is preached.

And I rejoice in this. And I will continue to rejoice. Two more joy.

I would be tempted, if I was the apostle of the Gentiles, if the Lord Jesus had struck me blind on the road to Damascus and said, Sam, I appoint you the apostle of the Gentiles, and I was getting beat and stoned and left for dead and shipwrecked and imprisoned and I was doing all these things to get this gospel out to the Gentiles, and then somebody else started picking up and preaching it wrong, it would torque my jaws. It would be the equivalent. I almost got this feeling after I'd been a gunnery instructor for several years.

And I'm just a purist on ballistic gunnery. There's a right way to do it. And a best way to do it.

And there is no substitute. If you want rounds to impact as accurately as possible, there's a right way to do that. Given all of the machinery and all of the mechanisms, there's a right way to set off a quadrant elevation and a deflection on a howitzer to get the rounds to go where they are desired.

Well, I got sent over to Lebanon and here these guys have been trained by the French in a French way of doing artillery that just sets your teeth on edge. The French may know how to cook. The French may be great lovers.

But as artillerymen, they stink like last week's fish. Horrible, horrible artillery training. Horrible procedures.

Just wrongness. Wrongness that you could cut with a knife. Well, see, you can tell, this would just irritate me.

But what is a great example is you look at the Apostle Paul. Can you imagine the people messing up the doctrines of Christ for the Gentiles, that Paul would feel that way? He would think they were a bunch of Frenchmen out there messing with the gospel. But look at how he chooses to look at it.

He says, what then, verse 18, in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached and in this I rejoice. This is a choice. I choose to see the glass half full.

I choose to concentrate on what is good. And we have that memory verse. Whatsoever things are good, think on these things.

Well, this is an example of that. He could have written a real bitter epistle here and just gone on for a chapter talking about the French and their bad artillery. But he doesn't.

He says, you know what, you've probably heard that there's these bad preachers around. I just want you to know that I think it's great because Christ is being talked about all over the Praetorian Guard, all over the community. People are talking about Christ.

How can that be bad? Well, it can be bad, but he says, I don't want to think about that. Let's rejoice. It's a good thing.

So now, verse 19, here's where we pick up tonight. For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness as always. So now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

And if you can get that whole sentence out in one breath, you're really doing well. And you just kind of get lost in the fog. If we break this down a little bit, this is really a great sentence.

This is one of these classically great Pauline Greek compositions, and it just lives and breathes and shines and shakes and vibrates in Greek. And it just kind of, to me, falls flat in English. But I'll just try to hit a few of the highlights of this.

He says, I know that this to me, and it's this whole situation. I'm in prison. People are preaching.

There's some people doing it all wrong and other people are doing it right. And I'm in prison, but I'm irradiating the area. I'm like uranium.

I'm like a radioactive thing and they imprison me and the prison gets lit up with the light of Christ. And he says, I know that in all of this, the imprisonment, the debates, the corruption of the gospel of Christ by these envious preachers and so on, he says, I know that this will turn out for my

deliverance. The word deliverance is salvation.

It's the very same word that's translated salvation elsewhere in the New Testament, *soterios*. And as we know, it very seldom does *soterios* mean saved from eternity in the lake of fire. It generally means deliverance.

And it can be, you got to look at the context to figure out what are you being delivered from? This will turn out for my deliverance. But the word turn out is a really interesting word in Greek. This is the Greek word *apobesitai* is the form that we have here.

It's *apobaino*. *Baino* means to go and *apa* means from. And this word is used for guys getting out of a ship.

And that's about the only way that it's used except here. So to try to find a non-literal or metaphorical use for it, you'd say, well, this will issue forth perhaps. Turn out doesn't quite catch it.

You can talk about sailors turning out, but if you turn out, you're in uniform and you stand in formation, you don't leave the ship necessarily. But literally in Greek, it's kind of startling because he says, and of course, in Greek, the word order is different. So he says, *oedegar hati tuta*, which means I know for that this.

And you can switch the first two really easily for I know that this. And then he says, we'll go out, we'll go off. This is going to, and it's more than result.

There's perfectly good Greek words that means this will result in, or this will produce, or this will end up with this. He says, this situation, my imprisonment, the envious preaching of the gospel of Christ and all this is going to leave. It's not permanent.

This situation is going to leave the boat. And when it does, I will be vindicated. I will be delivered.

He doesn't just mean that it's going to continue and it's going to produce more good. He says, this is going to stop being the case and have a result. He says, I don't think this is a permanent thing.

This situation is going to leave the boat. In other words, this will end up when it's over, might be a colloquial way to translate it. This will soon pass with the result that, would be another way to really kind of get at the meaning.

This will pass away and leave behind the result of my deliverance. That's a part of Paul's hope. He says, I don't think this is just going to go on forever.

I'm not going to be eternally in prison. People aren't going to eternally mess up the gospel. I'll eventually be able to get out and talk with these people and put some evidence on one side of this debate.

So what does this really say? Patience. Don't always need to react to the situation as it stands. Be patient.

It's going to issue forth. It's going to pass and change and it's going to leave behind a result. And Paul says, I know that that result is going to be good.

It's going to result in deliverance. This very thing that's taking place, the issuing forth of Christ in the prison and everybody knowing that my chains are in Christ and these debates that are going on about Christ and even the people preaching out of envy, this is going to turn into my liberation, my deliverance. I see this as a good thing.

Now that takes viewpoint. That's not something we come to by nature. There are two ways you can get this attitude.

You can get it from medication or you can get it from God. That's the only way you can have this level of optimism. I'm serious.

Listen, medication has its place. The older I get, the more I love medication. The right medication for the right thing is great.

I have no problem with that. Paul's not on any here. He's got an optimistic attitude because he's looking at it from God's viewpoint.

According to my earnest expectation, verse 20, he says it's going to turn out for my deliverance. I left out the last part of the verse. Through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Notice, he's still thinking about them even while he's talking about himself. Paul can't get on the subject of himself for very long. And this is a clue to objectivity.

If you are a subjective person, once the conversation turns to you, you can never get off that subject. Believe me, I speak from experience on both sides of the conversation. I have been the monomegalomaniacal person that couldn't quit talking about myself.

I have been in conversations, not with anybody in this room, not with anybody in this year, not with anybody in this decade. I am thinking back to my days of dating. And I occasionally, sadly, you just wish to be free.

You talk about Paul being in prison and hoping to be free. You get in a situation where somebody just will not stop themselves as their favorite subject. This is subjectivity.

What is the classic definition of subjectivity? Eyes on self. Eyes on things. Eyes on people.

Self, circumstances, or other people. Anybody that gets too focused in any one of those three areas is subjective and not objective. Objectivity maintains perspective.

Yes, I need to occasionally talk about myself. I need to occasionally address myself to other people. I need to occasionally address myself to circumstances.

But none of them absorb me. None of them define me. None of them become me.

I am a one-note opera. And it is the three movements of Sam's song. And it is nothing but endless subjectivity.

Through your prayer, as Paul talks about his situation, he says, look, you know I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. You have been partakers with me, and so on. All of this is going to issue forth.

It is going to pass away, and the end result is going to be my deliverance through. How is this going to happen? He says, through your prayers. You keep praying, and God will work this together for good.

If you want an interesting insight into the power of prayer, look at what Paul says here. One of the ways this is going to issue forth in his deliverance is their prayer. Paul knows the power of prayer.

Most of us who have been prayed for by other people know the power of prayer. It makes a difference. God listens.

God hears. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. The best thing you can do is find as many righteous people as possible, and get yourself on their prayer list.

Because it makes a difference. I will be delivered through your prayer, and then it says the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ. And this is another really interesting word, because this is epikoregia.

Epikoregia. Epi is another one of those intensive words. It means upon, but it's kind of like super in English.

We say, here's a man, here's Superman. Well, in Greek you would say, here's the epianthropos, he's the superman, he's the man squared, the man in spades, the man capital M. So epikoregia, and koregia comes from the word where we get chorus. And the word was originally derived because they had these groups of singers, and people would sponsor them, and would pay the bill so that they could sing.

They paid their bus fare, and so they talked about supporting a group as koregia. And epikoregia comes to mean furnish provision, to underwrite, to support in a tangible way something. So this is great, because Paul says all of this stuff is going to happen, all these good things are going to happen because you pray, and the provision made, the tangible physical provision made by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

This is what the Holy Spirit does. You get all of this weird stuff about the Holy Spirit. People wave

their hands, and giggle, and talk in tongues, and try to heal one another, and all these other weird things.

This is what the Spirit does. If you want to know what the Holy Spirit does, look at the Bible. The Holy Spirit makes tangible provision.

When I say tangible, I mean substantial provision. That's what God the Holy Spirit does. He is the liaison between God the Father in heaven and us on earth.

He transfers our prayers on high, and He transmits and executes the will of God. He enables and empowers. We are able to do what we're supposed to do, which is not heal, and chuckle, and talk tongues.

It is to live the life to which we've been called, to be objective, to have abundant love, to be patient, to wait for the deliverance of God, to issue forth out of the boat, to have that strength, and have that patience, and have that transformed mind. This is substantially provided to us by the Spirit. That's what He does.

He's practical. He's not weird. He is effective.

He is continual. He is substantial in the sense that He effectively accomplishes things on our behalf that we can't do when we are not believers or when we're not living the life and taking advantage of the provision that God has made for us. It is practical.

I am tempted to be fearful. I will not be afraid. I'm tempted to panic.

I'm not going to panic. I'm tempted to give into a bad urge. I will not do so.

Why? Because I am suddenly gritting my teeth harder and striving in my human strength to be a better person? No, because God the Holy Spirit brings to my mind powerful thoughts, powerful truths, recognition of realities that I have seen in the Word of God. I know that God is in His heaven. I know that my life is writing as an indelible record and that it is going to be evaluated at the end and judged.

I know that my purpose, the reason for which Christ died, is so that I could live a life that would serve and reflect God's glory. Because of that, I am not going to do this stupid thing. I could never latch onto those truths were it not for the substantial provisional ministry, providing ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Paul says, all of this stuff that tempts me to be irritable, that tempts me to want to go out and excoriate these envious preachers and try to escape from these praetorian guards and so on, I'm patient. I can wait. I'm happy.

You just keep praying and the Holy Spirit will keep supplying and providing the strength I need to

live the life that I've been called to. That's what it means. Well, we're coming upon one of the most misunderstood passages in the entire Bible.

And this is a good place for us to pause and take our break. Paul says, I've got an earnest expectation and hope in verse 20. With these prayers, with this provision of the Spirit, what is the earnest expecting and hoping? That's what we'll take a look at right after the break.