

Philippians 10-04-18b

Let's pick up our study now in Philippians chapter 1, we are at verse 12. We have reviewed the context and really the theme and purpose for which Paul is writing and it's expressed in his prayer that love may abound. We have seen the purpose of that love, we have seen the mechanism by which that love is grown and obtained and developed, epinosis and eistasis.

You might ask the question, well I know epinosis, I can get that in Bible class, where do I get that eistasis piece? It's not in this passage, but my suggestion is that this is where our meditation comes in. This is where thinking about the specifics of our life and the way the word of God applies. It's one thing to hear the truth in Bible class and assent to it and affirm it and believe it and say yea verily and have no disagreement whatsoever and say boy that sounds great, what a wonderful insight from God's word.

But, that's not the point. That just means, well I certainly enjoyed hearing that Bible class. There is a purpose in Bible class and in the same way that you kind of wonder if somebody goes to all of the trouble and expense to get a degree from college, well okay, those were interesting classes and you've accomplished that goal and you've undertaken to develop your knowledge and expertise, now what? You've graduated, what was the point of all of that? Well normally, not always, but normally now you're going to work in that field, you're going to use that education.

I have always been interested in the word of God, but I didn't go to seminary just so I could say wow that was sure a bunch of interesting classes. I went to seminary because I recognized that God had put me here to study and teach and this was a means to an end and to be able to do it well and to do it effectively and to do it accurately, I needed to gain that training and that information and grounding in the languages and grounding in the principles of hermeneutics and the nature of systematic theology I felt was very important so I majored in that. In the same way, coming to Bible class and gaining epinosis is not an end in itself, that doesn't define us as believers, it's the means to an end.

This is preparatory, this is provisional and the real work, the real result is in our day by day living in all of those gaps between Bible classes and part of that depends upon, the eistasis part depends upon how often we mentally, spiritually, heartfully revisit the things that we see in God's word when we examine it. Have to think about it, have to meditate on it. Psalm 1, it's one thing to keep yourself in the right place, don't walk in the counsel of the ungodly, don't stand in the way of sinners, don't sit in the seat of the scornful, but if you delight in the law of the Lord, you don't just go down and hear it once or twice a week, in that law doth he meditate day and night, and it is the believer who meditates on the word of God, who calls it to mind, consciously, intentionally, purposefully, who is going to be like the tree planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth that fruit, bringing forth that abounding love that functions in the realm of, and is fueled by, and is enabled by, epinosis and eistasis.

All of these things are component parts. I've been thinking about cars, I can hardly help it. I can still tell that I've been working on a car when I look at my fingernails and when I get little hints of gasoline. I don't know where it's coming from. I've showered twice and I've got a whole different set of gasoline, so I'm a little worried about these candles.

When you think about an automobile, nothing is more critical than the engine, and yet many things are equally critical if you want to drive a car, like the brakes, like the steering gear. I've

told you before the story of when I had a different Volkswagen, and it was from the 1950s. It was a 1956 automobile, and unbeknownst to me in those days, to buffer the shock of your front tires hitting cracks and bumps and impediments, there is some flexibility in the steering linkage, and so you have the steering wheel you're sitting there holding on to, and there's a shaft that goes down out of sight through the floorboard and connects in some mysterious way to the things that make the tires turn. Well, I hadn't really looked at that too close. Come to find out, there is two sets of yokes, Y-shaped things that are at right angles to each other like this, and the thing that connects them in that model was a leather disc, leather. Well, since I was driving it in the 1980s, and it had been built in the 1950s, the leather, kind of like the leather of the ball glove that a guy gave me when I was about three years old, I got one of those old-timey 1920s looking baseball mitts, they don't make them like that anymore. It looked like a big bear paw to me. It was flat, and now you buy them and they're curved like a pouch. This thing was flat. You could use it for a seat cushion, I always thought. I was a little kid. It reminded me of Yogi Bear. I thought, well, this is like Yogi Bear's hand, and it's just flat like this and it had a little pouch between the thumb. Well, that leather, that glove literally disintegrated. The guy must have played ball with it in the 1930s or something, and he was a friend of my dad's and he gave it to me. I could never use it. I could never bend it. I'd stick my little hand up in there, and the thing was like an inflexible, I never could use it. When I finally got old enough and I used it, the very first time I caught a ball, the ball just went right through, the pouch came right out, all the leather was rotten. You know, that leather just won't last.

Well, I was driving somewhere one day, went to make a left turn, and the wheel just went, it just started spinning like a, and I'm in the car and I'm traveling and I've lost all directional control. The wheel is just loose, and fortunately, it had turned partly to the left and I was going into a parking lot and it carried me off the street and up into this parking lot. I could not have stopped if there had been any cars in this empty corner that I was in, and it was just the grace of God that I went up into this space where there were no cars and I stopped. And of course I got out and looked to see what had happened, and, well, there was no longer a connection between the steering wheel and the tires, and it was this leather disc that had just ripped and separated and there was no link.

So, steering is important in a car, the engine is important, the brakes are important, but all of the pieces need to be there if you're going to drive. Everything pretty much needs to work, and you can say, well, nothing is more important than the engine. Well, if you're trying to stop, at that moment, nothing is more important than the brakes. If you're trying to steer, at that moment, nothing is more important than the steering. You really need it all. You need it all to harmonize. You need it all to be in balance. You need it all to be connected and all to be integrated and all to be working together. If you're trying to make a turn and there's a black and white behind you, you really need those blinkers to work. You need to be able to turn on your left flasher unless you want to get stopped and get a ticket. At that moment, sure hope the blinkers work.

Well, we need epinosis. We need Bible class. It's essential. There's nothing more important. But we need meditation. We need eistasis. We need to cross the bridge from the hypothetical and the theoretical and the academic knowledge of what God's word says to the difference that it ought to make. Ta, dia, tharanta. There is a different way to live. There's a different way to choose. There's a different way to talk. There's a different way to think. There's a different way to be. And in order to identify and approve that, select it, operate on it, vet that in our mind and say, you know what, of the two choices I've got in this situation, I'm obviously going to approve

this one, I am going to doki mazo this one, this is how I'm going to go, that reflects the glory of God, because that choice would only be there, that difference would only be there because of the word of God and the Spirit of God and the Son of God and the plan and purpose of God for us, being entered into a relationship with him, being in his family, having all of these resources, working harmoniously together, all of them important. Don't leave out the meditation. If you want that aesthetic, if you want that ability to see what the environment is in which these principles apply and which ones are more pertinent, what is the better thing, there's good, better and best. We approve what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. I could do this thing, nothing wrong with it, not sinful, no command against it, but look at this other thing, it's different and it's better. That's what Paul is praying. That's what he's trying to get at.

And so having set that as the background, having sort of sneaked that in under the guise of saying, by the way, when I pray for you, this is what I pray, it's kind of an indirect, some pastors preach in their prayer, and I think that's really kind of a sneaky thing to do. Oh Lord, and then you get three or four points of a sermon in there, and typically the guy will forget and start talking about God in the third person again. He's supposed to be praying to God, but he starts talking about God's will and God's word, and aren't you talking to God? Why are you talking to God about himself in the third person? Well, it's because you're preaching. You realize that people are hearing the prayer and you're just re-preaching your sermon. But Paul informs them of his prayer so that they understand what his heart is, what his understanding is of what they need. We pray for what people need, right? You don't pray for what they don't need. Oh Lord, please give my rich friend some more money, we don't pray that. We pray please give him the wisdom to be a good steward of what he's got. Poor friend, Oh Lord, please meet their needs, provide for their sustenance and so on. We pray for needs, and Paul says this is what I pray for you, because I know this is what you need, and all of us need this. We're in this. I think most of us are in this sort of intermediate ground. We're not neophytes, we're not babes in Christ. We don't need the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. What we need is to get better at using what we know, get better at glorifying God in our daily walk, and this is what this prayer is aimed at.

So then in verse 12 he continues and he says, But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard and to all the rest that my chains are in Christ, and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. So he has moved now from talking about them to talking about himself, and occasionally this is a useful thing. What is his thinking in this regard? Paul does nothing by accident, he had plenty of time to sit in prison and contemplate that he was going to write a letter to one of these churches and figure out what to say and how to say it under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he produced these inspired letters.

What is his tactic here? What is he doing? This is not an accident. Paul didn't do like a lot of us do, especially now in the days of email and texting, you just rip off the first thing that comes to your mind. Paul carefully thought out his letters, and he makes a transition.

He tells them what he prays on their behalf, he's talking about them and what will benefit them, and he says, I want you to know something about me. Why? Why would Paul introduce himself? There's always a reason why a speaker is going to introduce himself. Hopefully it's a good reason.

So he begins and he says, when he says I want you to know, this is an interesting word because there are lots of words for wanting or desire, there's thumia and epithumia, and there are many different words for this. This is the word boulamai, boulamai. This is the word from which we get volition, boulamai.

And boulamai means to want, to persist in, to insist on, or to command. The colloquial or connotative meaning here is, this is my intention. Why would you command someone? What is the link between want, persist, insist, and command? All of this has to do with intention.

I give this command because I intend for this thing to be accomplished. I want to do a good job. I intend to do a good job.

I persist in a thing because it fulfills my intention. I persist in a thing because it fulfills my intentions. This is the focus of my desire.

This fits into my plan. Boulamai, the gloss on it in a quick reference is to plan. So I persist, I insist that you know, I intend for you to know.

I've talked to you about my prayer on your behalf, and I need for you to know this. I intend, I want you to know this. But it has the connotation of very deliberate intentionality.

To know, and this is Gnosko, he has just talked about how knowledge works together with aesthetic, with eistasis, to move in the direction of fuller, deeper, more expressive love. He says, here's a thing to feed into your knowledge. And there's a, there's kind of a fuzzy transition between gnosis and epinosis.

They are almost interchangeable, but not quite. He says, I want you to know, I intend for you to know, I plan for you to know, I almost command you to know. Brethren, Adolfois, Adolfos, Philadelphia, this is an expression, and we tend to forget.

People have been calling each other brother in the church for centuries, millennia. And yet, it was sort of an innovation to think about people that had come from different backgrounds and cultures, and some were Israelites and some weren't, or Jews and not. And to say brothers, a term of familiarity, of familiarity, of relationship, united by a common thing.

You know, St. Crispin's Day, you remember that thing about, you know, we few, we band of brothers, united in warfare, united in fighting for a common cause. Brothers in arms, they call it. Well, we don't want to lose sight of the fact that relationship with Christ relates us to each other.

And that's anybody, any believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is related to us familiarly. Brothers, I need for you to know that. Then you have some italics there, things which happened, and if you leave that out, it says that the things to me have actually turned out to me is kata-eme.

Kata generally means according to, or with reference to a thing. I am 61 1/2 inches tall, kata, according to the yardstick, the ruler, the measure, with reference to a thing. You compare them.

It's almost para, it's almost alongside. I put myself alongside the ruler, that would be para. Kata means with reference to, things with reference to me.

And it's just ta, the stuff. Ta means that, it means the, it means that, with reference to me. Ta kata-eme.

So he's basically saying my circumstance, my situation is a good colloquial way to render this. I want you to know that my situation has actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel. And this again is kind of an accommodation to English.

In Greek this says that the things according to me more unto progress of the gospel have come. Malone means more. Ace, once again, conceptual, with a view toward the progress of the gospel.

Procopane to euangelio. Sounds like gobbledygook there, but procopane is a word that means something making a steady advance. Paul uses it in another place when he's talking about we're children of the night, we're not in darkness and we shouldn't be asleep.

And in English it says the night is far gone and the morning is coming, therefore wake up and get ready for the return of the Lord. But that's procopane. The night has advanced.

And he just uses the aorist there. He says the night advanced and the morning has come. And then he uses the perfect.

So he talks about the night as an ongoing condition and the morning has come. That's an event. It reminds me of one of the figures in Morse code for the letter G. It's like golf.

There's a stick and then a dot. And so you have this long dash of the night. The night has progressed.

And it's just an aorist. The morning has come. And that's the little dot.

So here he says I want you to know that my situation has actually come about for the advance, the steady advance, the advantage so to speak. It is steadily getting better and better of the gospel. The Evangelion, this is not only the good news of Jesus Christ for salvation, but it's purpose.

We were talking about how Bible class is not an end in itself, it's the means to an end. Salvation is not an end in itself. It's largely forgotten in Christianity around us.

We think, well, we just got to get people saved. We got to bring people to Christ. It's not an end in itself.

It's the means to an end. You get saved for a purpose. You come to Christ and faith in Christ for a purpose.

We don't just sign everybody up and say, okay, now you're a Marine. Now you're an Army guy. Now you're an Air Force person.

You do that for a reason. You don't just want to sign them up. You want them to engage, to get trained, to do jobs, to support and defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic and so on.

There's a reason for it. There's a reason for conversion. There's a reason for the gospel.

It's not just to get somebody saved. It's to do all these things we just studied in the earlier part of this chapter. To learn to reflect the glory of God by abounding in love more and more through Epinosus and so on.

So that gospel, that whole good news message, that whole package of what's possible in Christ has steadily advanced, procopane, in Paul's situation, by means of Paul's situation. Now, why would this be anything to talk about? Paul is an Apostle. What does Apostolos mean? Apo means out, send out, out from.

Stello means to send. An Apostle is one sent, sent forth, sent out. He's sent out.

Well, where is he? He's locked up. How can you send somebody out when they're imprisoned? He's in chains. So, if he's an Apostle and he's used to traveling from town to town, establishing churches, building them up in the faith, spreading the good news, doing all these things, and now he is stopped.

He is chained. And you would think, well, that's the end of that deal. That whole Christian movement's kind of come to a sudden halt because the main proponent, the progenitor, the Apostle of the Gentiles, has been locked up.

The opposition has stopped the progress of the Gospel. Paul says, you know what? I need you to know, I intend for you to know, that my situation, you would think that this would have put a big roadblock in the way of the Gospel. It has actually continued to advance in my situation, because of my situation.

It's counterintuitive. You stop the Apostle and the Gospel spreads? How does that work? He says, look, I need you to know what a great thing this is. My situation has turned out for the progress of the Gospel, despite all expectation, all human expectation.

He says, look at this. So that my chains, my desmus, and they are manifest, they are evidence, phanero'o means to shine out, to show forth. It has shown forth to the palace guard and to all the rest, but the first part in Greek, you don't get to it until later in the sentence in English, but in Greek, the third word in verse 13 is desmus, so that my chains.

This is the point. Everybody is thinking, everybody has heard, all these believers, the Philippians have heard, that Paul is locked up. They are probably going to be concerned and depressed over this.

Oh God, please free him. Oh God, please get him out of jail. What's going to happen to the Gospel if Paul is not loose? Paul says, look, I need you to know that my chains, and he puts it right up in the front of the sentence.

That's the emphasis. My bonds, desmus, have shown forth in Christ. They have become a testimony.

They have become a manifestation in Christ, phanero'os en Christo, among the whole praetorium, and to all the rest. The ones who are incarcerating him and locking him up, this is kind of like if you took a piece of uranium and you said, boy, that radiation is going everywhere, we need to lock that thing up, and so you put it in a can, and then it just irradiates the can. You lock him up in the praetorium, well now the praetorium is all lit up with the glory of Christ.

Whatever you put Paul in, the Gospel just starts shining forth from him. Stick him in prison, and it shines in the prison, and becomes manifest. You can't contain it.

You can't bottle it up. That's his point. My bonds have just amplified.

It's like hooking him up to an antenna, and the prison has become a broadcasting station for the Gospel. He says, I need you to know this. I want you to know.

Don't be discouraged. Don't be disheartened. Don't interpret circumstances in the old way.

There is ta diapharanta. There is a difference. Don't think of it in human terms.

Now you think about this. How does this work out in our lives? We say, oh wow, looky here, I've just had a setback. I was really expecting this to come through.

I was really expecting this to prosper. I had made this investment, and I thought, wow, this is going to do well, and it did the opposite. I thought that my efforts in this area were going to blossom and bloom, and it just got cut to the ground.

I thought that this was going to turn out, and it's just that much worse. Sometimes what looks like a setback, what looks like a hindrance, is actually procopane. It's progress.

It's God's unexpected, counterintuitive way of accomplishing His purpose, because God's way is different. We need to grow to where we can identify, and appreciate, and approve, dokimadzo, that different way of thinking, that different way of living, that different way of looking at circumstances. Any schmo, any schmuck, any unbeliever, any uninformed, godless, faithless believer can do the default.

Where are the people that can identify the difference, and live and operate in that? That's what God is looking for. That's what Paul is praying for. He says, look, I'll give you an example.

That's why he goes personal in this next section. He says, my prayer for you is that you can get this viewpoint, that you can begin to identify this unique spiritual perspective, where the reversal you see throughout the scripture, the last shall be first, the first shall be last, the elder shall serve the younger, all of these unexpected things. Let me give you an example.

He says, I need you to know this. I intend for you to understand that you heard that I got locked up. So much the better.

The gospel has progressed because of it. They just hooked me up to an antenna. The whole praetorian guard is now shining the gospel.

Who would have thought that? You take the very infrastructure of the Roman hegemony here, you take their very lock keepers and key holders, and light them up with the gospel. How are you going to contain that? You start getting the gospel spreading amongst the praetorium, who's going to stop them? Paul says, this is great. It has shone forth.

This is the verb that's used of the glory of Jesus Christ, of his shining face in Revelation, to be manifest, to appear to all of the praetorium. It's translated here, palace guard, but they've debated, well, is this the actual Roman praetorium in Rome? Is he in Rome in prison or is he in Ephesus or some other place? It doesn't matter. It's the Roman guard.

These are not Jews. The Jews tried to expel Paul and tried to stymie him, and they sort of turned him over to the Romans. They figured, well, it worked with Jesus.

Let's see if we can do it with Paul. And now Rome is starting to light up with the gospel and all the rest. So that, verse 14, when you say, most of the brethren of the Lord, pleionas, this is increasing numbers, more and more of the adolphon, this is referring back, he says, the other brothers in the Lord, in curiae, having been persuaded.

This is your perfect participation. This is your participle. More and more of the brothers, having been persuaded by my chains, by my bonds, my desmos, exceedingly more perisoteros are daring fearlessly to speak the word.

Now why would this be? Why would Paul getting locked up encourage and create daring to speak the gospel? What has been the understanding of being a Christian and coming forth and standing out as a believer in Jesus Christ? Capital offense. You're flouting the Caesar. You're flouting the Roman Empire, and it's worthy of death.

Jesus was crucified, and now you're preaching in the name of Jesus. You will be crucified by the same Romans that did away with him. They'll do away with you.

And Paul says, you know what? You think my being locked up is a bad thing, but not only is the good news shining forth in the praetorium and everybody in its vicinity, but brothers are realizing that here's the leader, and all they did was lock him up. He hasn't been executed. That would have been a big discouragement.

Wow. Don't want to say the name of Christ. Get your head cut off.

Get crucified. Paul is just being held, and he's being held pretty luxuriously. He's not suffering.

He's just being contained. He's being limited, but he's not in a dungeon. His bond is his incarceration because he's a Roman citizen, and because of that, people are saying, hey, it's not that bad.

We can speak the name of Christ, and I can risk that. I don't want to die, but imprisonment, the Romans are not as vitriolic and as unyielding as we at first thought. And so they're encouraged.

They say, you know what? This is manageable. We can handle this level of oppression. And so they're becoming more and more bold to speak the word.

So he goes on to say, some indeed through envy and strife and others through good thinking announce Christ. K. Russo. Preach.

Proclaim. Christ. And he says, now this has resulted in the preaching of Christ by two different groups of people.

There are some who do it through what you have translated here as envy and strife. Phanon is a real interesting word, the first one translated envy. It's P-H-T-H-O-N-O-N.

Phanon. And it's almost an onomopoetic word. Somebody looks at somebody else and they're upset.

This is the word used when Pilate says to the crowd, shall I release unto you Barabbas? It says because he knew that the Jews, the leaders of the Sanhedrin and so on, had turned Jesus over

out of phanon, out of personal resentment, out of jealousy of his popularity. It's a selfish, it's a self-interested attitude of wanting to put somebody else out of the way. That's what phanon is.

Envy doesn't quite get it. Jealousy doesn't quite get it. It is self-interested suppression of someone else.

I want to climb on top of you because I feel that I'm threatened in some way. I want to get you out of the way. I want to rise above you.

I want to climb over you at whatever cost. That's phanon. It's a great word in Greek.

We just don't really have a good English equivalent that expresses all the baggage that it contains. I could take you to other passages, but that will suffice. Just think about the reason the leaders of the Jews turned Jesus over to the Romans.

They just couldn't get past him. They couldn't refute him. They couldn't confound him.

They couldn't embarrass him. They couldn't argue him from the scriptures. He just became such an annoyance because he was drawing the people away.

They thought, we've got to contain this guy. We've got to get rid of this guy. Let's turn him over to the Romans.

That's phanon. Paul says, look, some people are preaching Christ out of this. What? How do those two things combine? Let me offer you a thought.

Recently we did this study where we took some time and went to Bart Ehrman and we looked at all the atheistic attacks and so on. When there is contention theologically in the Christian community, let's say between your Calvinists and your non-Calvinists. By the way, don't fall for this weird thing.

Don't call non-Calvinists Arminians. That's a Calvinist ploy. People who aren't Calvinists, very few of them are actually Arminians.

But it's a convenient label where Calvinists can pigeonhole and tar with an improper brush people who don't agree with them. They say, oh, you're Arminian. Very few people are actually Arminian.

But non-Calvinists don't hold with the five points that God has left us with no ability to choose anything but sin, total depravity, that he has unconditionally, out of a mass of totally equal and indistinguishable people, just randomly seemingly chosen certain ones and unconditionally elected them, and that Jesus only died for those people and didn't die for anybody else. Because that would be sort of wasting his work. If he died for these people that God hasn't chosen to save, why would Jesus die for them? How does that work? You can't make that fly, so you've got to have limited atonement.

As soon as you have unconditional election, you have to have limited atonement. Then irresistible grace. Those that God has chosen and that Jesus died for, well, God has to pull them in.

He grabs them and pulls them in. They have no say in the matter. And then once he's done that, well, obviously, they've got to just keep going and getting better and better, because that's what God has done for them.

God is going to be at work in them and willing to do, and they're just going to get better and better. Well, people disagree. So you've got Calvinists and you've got non-Calvinists contending and arguing and debating over these things.

What does the scripture teach? Why would you think the scripture would teach one thing? And so you have these debates. Well, what is the result of that contention, of that debate? Why would you even bother to cross swords with these people? Because even though many times the debate takes place not really because people are so interested in the truth as they think they've got a really good argument that they can overcome. There are people who just like to win an argument.

And there are people who will go research a thing and get some arguments. And if they can go one level deeper than you, they'll try out their arguments and win the debate. Whether they're right or wrong, they don't really care.

They just love to win a debate. They like to come in and knock your legs out. You're used to using a particular argument, and they've seen you use it three or four times.

Well, they go find something that eviscerates that argument. So the next time you make it, they say, well, you know that that study was done by a guy that's now locked up for fraud. And they love that.

They just love to win. And the truth has really taken a real back seat to just winning. Paul says that's what's going on.

Because as the gospel is spreading, and the good news of Jesus Christ is going out, there are people who are coming in to try to debate this, to try to suppress it. And what they want to do, they're contentious. They just love to win an argument.

And they're coming in trying to win. And they're talking about Christ and the things of Christ out of this selfish desire to prevail. And you would think that that's bad, in the same way you would think that Paul is locked up, and that's bad.

He says, you know what? It's not bad. And it's one of these glasses half full or glass empty things. Do you want to get all wrapped around the axle that people have bad motives in bringing up these debates and engaging in them? Or do you want to focus on the good half, the full half of the glass, look at all of the debate going on about Christ? Let's take a current example.

Healthcare, need I say more? The thing has just been huge. It's been dominant. It's been a giant elephant in every room.

It's been a cloud of locusts obscuring the light. It's been all over the place. Nobody can say anything for five minutes without healthcare entering into it, it seems like.

What has that done? You can say, a lot of people are discussing this, and you've got people who are just in the talk radio business, and any issue that will capture attention they want to talk about, because that improves their ratings. Well, one thing that the debate has brought about,

and you can say all kinds of bad things about it, but one thing it has brought about is, what does the Constitution say the government has the power to do? What is the truth of the foundation of our government? And whatever else you want to say, it has renewed attention and renewed a focus on, what do the founding, definitive documents that create our government say you can and cannot do? And this is a good thing. It's good to know what the limitations are on the presidency, the Congress, the judiciary, and sometimes things are going easy and you kind of forget.

Well, try to find the good. Really, the upshot of all of this, we don't know what the praetorium was, we don't know exactly the nature of these discussions and debates and this kind of preaching that was done out of fawn on. Paul doesn't enter into what the details were, but he says, look at it this way.

Whether it's imprisonment, whether it's rancorous debate about Christ, look at the good side of it. You've got a choice here. What's the difference? What's the thing that you can document and that you can approve? Look for the good that comes out of it.

Well, whatever else you want to say, here's a good thing. What's our memory verse? Whatsoever things are good, think on these things. Everything is mixed.

Look at a relationship. There are profoundly gratifying, wonderful highlight honeymoon moments, and there are memories we like to forget. Well, what are you going to think about? Think on these things.

Whatsoever is good, pure, lovely, of good report, think on these things. That's ta dea foranta. That's the difference.

Okay, Paul's locked up. Well, is there anything good that came out of that? Well, they evangelized the whole praetorium and everybody else in the vicinity. Well, look at the debate and the rancor and the division that's been stirred up by the preaching of Christ.

These peaceful synagogues where all the Jews were there and happy and had a few proselytes coming in and the water was smooth. Now there's this big debate. Well, should we keep going the way we've been going or should we move in the direction of this new Christ preaching? And there's all of this debate and there's people who are just debating it because they just want to win.

They've been in charge and they want to stay in charge. They've been leaders and winners. They want to keep on being leaders and winners.

Paul says, look, look at it this way. It's furthering the gospel. By whatever means, Christ is the focus of attention.

He's what's being talked about. How can that be bad? Yeah, in other places, Thonon, by the way, is in almost every list of Paul's vices. When he talks about envying and drunkenness and strife and jealousy and contention.

When he's talking to Timothy and Titus and he says, avoid foolish arguments and disputes about words. Thonon is in that context. Thonon is a sin.

It's a bad thing. Almost every list of vices, Thonon is included. But Paul says, look, Christ is being preached out of Thonon and I still think it's good.

Why? Because rather than focusing on that bad motive, I concentrate on the good part, which is Christ is the topic. He's the issue of the day. And that's a good thing.

We have a choice. How can our love abound more and more? Look at a situation. It's got some bad.

It's got some good. I've been talking about cars all day. I drive an old, old car.

It's got some really bad points, like no air conditioning. Like sometimes it doesn't always start as I would like or run as I would like. It's peeling around the edges and needs some cosmetic work, starting to rust around the windows and so on.

Well, I wouldn't be motivated to do anything with that vehicle if I didn't think about the good. It's got value. It's a great machine.

I've enjoyed it over the years. It was a wonderful provision of transportation for us when our girls were little. It was laid out just right.

We could easily get to the car seats. It's served us really well. I have a lot of sentimental attachment to it for that reason and because I put a lot of blood and sweat into making it run.

When I think of it, I could only think of the rust. I could only think of what's broken. I could only think of all the grief and bark knuckles that it's caused me.

But I choose to think of the good stuff. It's a choice. You and I have a choice.

Every single day, our life is all about choices. That's what Paul is emphasizing in Philippians chapter 1. To these intermediate growing believers, he says, look, I pray for you that you'll get into these choices and that you'll make the good ones. Let me show you some examples.

You think about my imprisonment. You think that's bad. Look how good it is.

You think about these arguments and the strife that's been caused by the preaching of Christ. But look at the good. Choose the good.

Think on these things and the peace of God that passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. This is a privilege we have that no unbeliever has, that no faithless believer has. There's no option.

There is no different choice to make because you have to have the epinosis. You have to have the eistasis. You have to have that love.

You have to have the foundation. We've got that. So let's avail ourselves.

Let's choose those better things. That's Paul's appeal. That's his example here in this chapter.

Well, this brings us to verse 19 and 20. And we're coming up to this great famous verse 21, for me to live as Christ and to die as Gain. And as you know, there's quite a lot of grist for the mill in that section.

So that's what we'll pick up in our study of Philippians next Friday night. But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for your grace and the compassion that you have expressed toward us in not only delivering us from judgment and from oblivion, but in setting our feet on solid ground and pointing us in the direction of life and prosperity and inheritance, and giving us not only the goal and the hope of these things, but also the means of attaining them. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will impress these things in our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.