



## Philippians 1.12-14

- Paul's friends back in Philippi were apparently quite concerned about him, thinking he was discouraged and that God's plan had gone awry. Not so, the apostle responded. <sup>1</sup>

**12** But I want you **to know**, brethren, that the things (which have happened to me) have actually turned out for **the furtherance of the gospel**,

- **"Understand"** is from the word meaning "to acquire knowledge by experience." The Philippian saints, he desired, should learn something from his experience. <sup>2</sup>
  - **To know** <sup>(1097)</sup> (**ginosko**) means to know by experience.
    - The **present tense indicates that Paul wants them to know and to keep on knowing.**  
I don't want you to forget what I am getting ready to write.
    - The Philippian saints, he desired, should learn something from his experience so that they then might experience what he was experiencing. Paul had experienced difficult circumstances, in his journey to Rome where he was imprisoned (Read this story in Acts 21-28).
  - **Nothing ever "just happens" to a saint.** <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert P. Lightner, "Philippians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 650.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 39.

<sup>3</sup> In a sense Paul changed one letter in the word "Disappointment" and came to recognize his imprisonment as "His Appointment!" Instead of focusing on what looked like **disappointment** to the saints at Philippi, he set his mind on the things above and was enabled by the Spirit to recognize His **appointment!** Paul's Christ centered, Gospel centered mindset allowed him to turn lemons into lemonade (so to speak)!

- Things either come directly from God or they reach us from some other source by His permissive will ("filtered" though His hands of love).
- **“Pioneer advance”**
  - **Wuest:** But after mature consideration I desire you to gain this knowledge from (my) experience, that my circumstances have come to result rather in **the pioneer advance of the gospel.**
    - The word Paul uses for the advancement of the gospel is a vivid word.
    - It is **prokopē**; the word which is specially used for the progress of an army or an expedition. It is the noun from the verb prokoptein, which means to cut down in advance. **It is the verb which is used for cutting away the trees and he undergrowth, and removing the barriers which would hinder the progress of an army.** **Paul's imprisonment, so far from shutting the door, opened the door to new spheres of work and activity, into which he would never otherwise have penetrated.** 4
- (which have happened to me)
  - The words “which happened” are not in the Greek text and are not needed. Nothing ever just happens to the saint. Things either come directly from God or they reach us from some other source by His permissive will. 5

## WHAT AN ATTITUDE!

- **Joni Eareckson Tada and Steven Ross, When God Weeps, Why Our Sufferings Matter to the Almighty:**

“Suffering . . . sets the stage for offering something exceedingly precious to God:

**Hebrews 13:15–16**

**15** Therefore through him let us offer up **a sacrifice of praise** continually to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name.

4 William Barclay, ed., *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, electronic ed., The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: The Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), 20.

5 Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 39.

**16** And do not neglect doing good and generosity, for God is pleased with such sacrifices.

David, the psalmist, did it all the time. He sighs in Psalms 43.5

**Psalm 43:5a** Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me?

But before his soul can drag him under, David jerks it upright:

**Psalm 43:5b** “Hope in God, because I will again praise him, my salvation and my God.”

God is pleased with praise, but He swells with joy when the praise *his child* breathes has the aroma of a sweet-smelling sacrifice.

Nothing delights Him more.

How so? Let's say a woman with arthritis in her hands embroidered a set of pillowcases for you. The gift would probably mean more to you than if sown by a woman with nimble fingers.

Why? Because the arthritic woman expended extraordinary effort. Her gift involved cost and sacrifice. You'd weigh the extra hours she invested, the frequent breaks she took to rub her knuckles, the pain she endured with each tiny stitch. Most likely, you would be moved to tears. Her suffering “glorified” her gift, making it more valuable in your eyes.

If we respond this way to sacrifices, how much more is God enthused? A sacrifice of praise makes praise more glorious.” <sup>6</sup>

### Let's hear from Joni & Friends:

<https://youtu.be/3XFkVoi5CdU>

- 53 years after her accident, diving into a pool in 1967

**13** so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;

### Does your response to suffering influence others?

<sup>6</sup> Joni Eareckson Tada and Steven Ross, *When God Weeps, Why Our Sufferings Matter to the Almighty*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, © 1997, p108-109.

1. Encouraging them
2. Discouraging them

Peter knew that unbelievers were constantly watching his response to suffering:

**1 Peter 2:11–12** (LEB)

**11** Dear friends, I urge you as foreigners and temporary residents to abstain from fleshly desires which wage war against your soul,

**12** **maintaining your good conduct among the Gentiles,** so that in the things in which they slander you as evildoers, by seeing your good deeds they may glorify God on the day of visitation. 7

**14** and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are **much more bold** to speak the word without fear.

### **MUCH MORE BOLD:**

- **John MacArthur** gives an illustration of difficult circumstances in the life of John Bunyan furthering the progress of the Gospel:
  - “John Bunyan’s preaching was so popular and powerful, and so unacceptable to leaders 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. It was during that time that he wrote *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, the great Christian classic that has ministered the Gospel to tens of 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 and then unto the ends of the earth.”

## **NO TRIAL REACHES US APART FROM GOD’S EXPLICIT DECREE AND SPECIFIC PERMISSION:**

**Amos 3:6** Does a disaster occur in the city and Yahweh has not done it?

**Lamentations 3:38** Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that disaster and good will come?

**Isaiah 45:7** I form light and I create darkness;  
I make peace and I create evil;  
I am Yahweh;  
I do all these things.

### **1 Samuel 2:6–7**

**6** Yahweh kills and restores alive,  
He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

**7** Yahweh makes poor and makes rich;  
He brings low and also exalts.

**1 Thessalonians 3:3** so that no one would be shaken by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that **we are appointed for this,**

**Ephesians 1:11** in whom also we were chosen, having been predestined according to the purpose of the One **who works all things according to the counsel of his will,**

# The Rest of Victory

By Alan Redpath

There is nothing  
No circumstance, no trouble, no testing  
That can ever touch me  
Until first of all it has gone Past God,  
Past Christ  
Right through me.

If it has come that far,  
It has come with great purpose  
Which I may not understand  
at the moment  
But as I refuse to become panicky  
As I lift up my eyes to Him  
And accept it as coming from the Throne of God  
For some great purpose of blessing to my own heart,  
No sorrow will disturb me,  
No circumstance will cause me to fret  
For I shall rest in the joy  
Of what my Lord is . . .

That is  
**The rest of victory!**