What Then? - Pt. 2

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Let's turn our attention to the book of Philippians.

By way of reminder of what we have already seen in this passage, we saw in verses 12 and 13 last week that God is always doing more than you see.
In spite of your circumstances, and no matter what your eyes or heart are able to discern, the Lord is doing. He's always doing more than you can see. Verse 14, we looked at this truth, that people are always benefiting from your ministry more than you know.
They were watching Paul, and through his experience, through his courage, through his obedience, more and more of the brothers were being strengthened. And so let's look at this passage together, and then we will continue on in verses 15 to 18.
Verse 12 says, I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. So it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.
[1:30] And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Verse 15, we'll pick up here this morning.

Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.
The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then?
Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. So from last week, number one, God is doing more than you can see.
Number two, people are always benefiting from your ministry more than you know. And today, number three, make note of this. Enemies are always attacking more than you realize.
[2:32] Enemies are always attacking more than you realize. Verse 15, some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, and others from goodwill.

So, while we begin by affirming the truth that God is working more than you see, that's good. People are benefiting from your obedience more than you know.
That's encouraging. We have to also understand this truth, that enemies are always attacking more than you realize. That's just true. We just have to understand that.
That there are those who may, in some cases, claim the name of Christ, as we see here, or others who would deny the name of Christ, but regardless, there are enemies that would seek our demise.
But while that's true, we don't lose heart. 1 John 4, 4 reminds us, little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he that is in the world.
[3:35] And we remind ourselves of John 16, 33, where Jesus said, In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart, I have overcome the world. So God is always working.

People are always benefiting from our obedience, and enemies are always attacking. But while that's true, we remind ourselves, our God is greater than all.
Now, in this specific context of Philippians 1, what's happening is you have other preachers who are looking at Paul, and they are attacking him.
They're coming against him. He describes in verse 15 that they are doing it by preaching Christ from envy and rivalry. Now, this is actually fascinating to me because what Paul is saying are these other preachers, they are preaching a doctrine that is accurate, but their motives are sinful.
They're preaching things that would be sinful.
[5:04] people who are teaching with Sunday school classes of all ages all throughout the day. Wednesday nights, we have a huge team of volunteers that teach us with Moana. But we've got

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people all over our church that every single week teach.

And being right doctrinally is extremely important, and it is essential. But it's not the only thing that matters. We want to also make sure that not only is our doctrine right, but that our hearts are right. The people that Paul is referring to, some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry. These people he's pointing out, they don't deny the deity of Christ.
They're not denying the sinfulness of man. They're not denying the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. What they are doing, though, they are preaching things that are true, but from hearts that are selfish and worldly and sinful.
We want to be careful with that. We want to make sure that while we are striving to grow in our doctrine, that our theology is sound, that we are also people who are growing in obedience to the Lord and love for the Lord and a joy with wherever God is at work and moving.
[6:31] We don't want to do ministry out of envy and rivalry. Look at those words again in verse 2, and they just stand out to us. Envy and rivalry. We don't want those words to define who we are.

Now, at this point, we have to be very careful. Because it is true that false teachers, enemies, are more active than we realize.
And to pretend there aren't false teachers, that there aren't people trying to lead others astray, would be a real dangerous assumption. And so we do have to be on guard.
And we do need to call out error. And there are people who use parts of things that are true and mix them with error to lead people astray.
We've got to be very careful about that. In fact, I'll just put a plug in here. Last Sunday night, in our evening service, Joey mentioned this, had him share about this.
[7:38] But on Wednesday nights with our teenagers, these last number of weeks, Joey's been preaching to our teenagers in their Wednesday night service about different denominations, some of which we would have agreement with, some of which we would have smaller or lesser disagreements with, as well as others that are deceived and teaching things that are completely wrong and dangerous.

And I commend you. You don't have to have a teenager to listen to those. Those are all on our website, through our podcast. I encourage you to go back and listen to those. He's done a great job of helping us be clear of what we believe, biblically, why we believe it, and how to interact with people of different denominations or people that may completely be a part of religious groups that deny the faith outright.
I commend those messages from our Elevate service to you. But we've got to be careful here because we want to make sure that we stay biblically balanced. On the one hand, we do want to be aware that there are people that teach things that are false, and we don't want to pretend that just because someone uses the name of Jesus or someone quotes a scripture that what they're saying is true.
We've got to be on guard. At the same time, on the other side over here, we don't want to be filled with envy and rivalry, and just because someone does something a little different than we do, we don't want to regard them as enemies.
So we don't want to divide over preference or opinion or personality or style, but we do want to make sure that we're teaching the truth and defending the truth.
[9:13] But just make sure in your heart that envy and rivalry are never fair descriptions of the way that you are serving or doing ministry.

While there are some who do things out of envy and rivalry, we could apply that. If this were a sanctuary today of pastors, pastors, I may pause here and talk to them about the danger of being envious of other churches or being jealous of other preachers and to not live like that and to recognize wherever God is truly at work and He's blessing, let's rejoice in that.
Let's give thanks for that. Other Bible-believing churches are never our competition, ever. And we want to remind ourselves of that. But at the same time, I recognize you don't have to be a preacher, as Paul is describing here, for this warning to be true because it is possible within the church to look at other ministries and maybe be envious or jealous or to be a Sunday school teacher and think, man, that class is larger than mine or that class is getting more new people than mine or that class has more notoriety than mine or maybe you serve in a way in the church and you wish that you had more recognition or you look at other people in the church that maybe have more leadership opportunities, whatever it may be, you don't have to be a preacher to struggle with envy and rivalry.

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Any kind of ministry can be a place in your heart where envy and rivalry take place. And so we just want to be careful to know that the enemy's desire would be for your heart, even if your doctrine stayed pure, for your heart to be led astray by envy and rivalry because if we're ministering out of those motives, God is not pleased with that.
And if the enemy can't get your doctrine to be wrong, he will try to get your heart to be off. So be careful with that.
[11:26] The Sunday school class next door is not the competition. The other ministry in the church is not the competition. The other staff member is not competition.

The person that has this recognized leadership spot in the church, he, she's, not your competition. Let's be faithful with our doctrine.
It's essential. But by itself, it's not sufficient. 1 Timothy reminds us, keep careful watch over your doctrine and your life, what you believe and how you live, what you teach, and the motive with which you serve.
He says, though, also, there are others who preach rightly and do so, he says here, with good will. This is important because we need good role models.
We need people who just serve faithfully. I was reminded of this this morning. This is true every single Sunday, but there are a few.
[12:38] Well, today, there are actually hundreds on the platform. Typically, that's a smaller number. But there's just a few that maybe most everyone in this sanctuary would know their name. That's true.

Yet, today, how many people right now as we worship in here, how many people right now are teaching children and teaching teenagers and half of our adults that are upstairs in the adult wing right now that are teaching because they've prepared all week?
Did someone greet you at the door today? If they did, praise God for them. Did somebody unlock the doors and was someone here to get the sound and technology up and running?
Was the church clean? Were the bathrooms prepared? All these things. And if we minister out of envy and rivalry, it means we're always looking and competing with each other.
That's not a heart of worship. But if we're ministering out of goodwill, out of a desire to please Christ and serve each other, that's such a powerful thing to experience.
[13:48] I need to tell you, too, that while we're not immune from this and we've got to be on guard with this all the time, I do need to tell you as a congregation that honestly, I don't see any of this in our church.

I don't say that in a way to say that we're above it. All of our hearts can be susceptible to temptation and sin. I just want you to know, I don't see any of this. I don't hear staff members arguing with each other.
I don't hear people lobbying for leadership positions. I don't hear people complaining about other ministries. I don't experience any of that. And I say, to God be the glory for that.
I'm so thankful that that's true. But we do have to be on guard about that. We do have to be careful with our motives on that because pride is so subtle.
And let's not pretend that we're above giving in to the temptation of pride. I'm so thankful that our church seems right now to be living far above that.
[14:54] But let's make sure we stay vigilant on that and in our own hearts. Let's protect ourselves from that. And if you sense any envy or rivalry welling up within your heart, immediately take that to the Lord in confession.

Do not take that lightly. He says in verse 16, the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.
It's important to understand. Paul's purpose was to defend the gospel. This is a military term. It means that he was appointed to a duty. He was assigned to a station.
This just reminds us that it's God, our commander who gives us to the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts. It's God who calls us to our ministries.
It's God who opens doors for us. And all we want to do is be faithful to defend the gospel. Be faithful at the spot he's given you. Be faithful at your stand.
[16:01] And in some ways, you may sometimes think, but what God's given me is small. Remember what we looked at last week. People are always benefiting from your ministry more than you know.

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God is always doing more than you can see. So don't keep score by how many people come to your Bible study. And don't keep score by how big your Sunday school class is.
And don't keep score by how many people in the church know your name. If you want to be consumed with something, be consumed with this, just being found faithful.
Whatever God has entrusted to you, be faithful. In verse 17, he says, the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.
Here's what's happening. There were other preachers who were looking at Paul, and they're looking at his situation. Here he is. He was two years in prison, then shipwrecked, now two years under house arrest.
[17:18] And there were people who were lobbying things at him that were not fair and were not accurate. Now these people, all the while, according to the text, they would consider themselves Christ followers.

They're not people that are denying the faith. They're still preaching Christ, but their heart is full of envy and rivalry. And what they're doing is they're saying, well, look at Paul's situation and using that to hurl accusations at him that aren't fair and aren't accurate and aren't true.
Now you need to understand that so you know where Paul is going here. What they're saying is, Paul, there must be something wrong with you. Why else is the Lord afflicting you this way?
Paul, there must be something wrong in your heart. Why else are you under house arrest? You say that your motive is to preach Christ. You say your motive is to spread the gospel.
And yet, isn't it interesting that if that's what you're trying to do, the Lord has silenced you in jail. And so these men who would claim to be believers are looking at Paul's life and trying to add insult to him and add accusation to him and trying to ruin his name and ruin his reputation because of the circumstances that he's in.
[18:45] And why are they doing that? Because they're full of a sinful heart. They're not denying the gospel.

They're just not showing lives that have been changed by it. Envy, rivalry, selfish, selfish, selfish, selfish ambition.
These are three terms that we need to pray to make sure are not true in our hearts, in our ministry, in our church, in any way. We do not want to minister, teach, serve, sing, pray, greet, evangelize, do mission trips.
We don't do any of those things out of a motive of envy or rivalry or selfish ambition. Enemies are always attacking more than you realize.
Which leads to one fourth truth here in this section in verse 18 that brings it all together. God is always glorified through your life more than you can imagine.
[20:01] God is always glorified through your life more than you can imagine. Let me go back and read verse 17 and just the first part of verse 18.

The former, so we're talking about those who would maybe teach right doctrine but from sinful hearts. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.
So again, what is Paul saying here? They're not preaching heresy. If you were to take notes from these preachers' sermons, as far as we know, what they would say would line up with Scripture.
Here's the problem. Their hearts are so full of sin that they are described as men full of envy, full of rivalry, full of selfish ambition, and insincere.
Now, I do think that should bother us. I do think that we should be on guard against anyone who is trying to do ministry in a selfish way.
[21:17] That's not a small thing. But the point Paul is making here is that his ministry is not about his name. His ministry is not about his freedoms.

His ministry is not even about his reputation. The most important thing to Paul is one simple thing, that the truth of Christ goes forward.
Again, there are times we have to call out false teachers and biblical elders and overseers and shepherds in the New Testament are called to defend the flock.
And so, it's not at all that we are just turning a blind eye to these things. But in context, what Paul is saying is, I can spend my time defending myself or I can spend my time making much of Christ.
And given those two choices, he says, it's not his name that matters, it's Christ's name. So, listen to it again. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in

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my imprisonment.
[22:33] Verse 18, what then? What then? T. Gar in the original here, what then?

So what? That does not mean that their sin's not a problem.
That does not mean they're not accountable to God for their sin. That does not mean there's not discipline for their sin. That does not mean that envy and rivalry and selfish ambition and insincerity are small things.
What it does mean is Paul is saying if they want to try to hurt me, so what? Because his ministry is not about himself.
He's told us what their desire is. Their desire in verse 17 is they want to afflict Paul. Paul. Paul's already in prison. Isn't he suffering enough?
[23:38] Well, these other men want to add more pain to him by saying he's got sin, by saying that the Lord is punishing him, all these kinds of things.

He says, they're trying to afflict me in my imprisonment. So what? In other words, he's not consumed with what man can do to him. His heart is clean.
His conscience is clear. His focus is on the glory of Christ, not himself. And so those kinds of things, it's not that the sin is not a problem in their lives.
It's just that that sin is in no way going to deter him from where he finds his joy. church, you need to understand what he's saying here.
That the sin, the motives, the accusation, the disobedience of other people, it's a big deal, but it should not rob us of our joy because our hearts are not consumed with ourselves.
[24:43] Instead, our desire is for Christ to be glorified through us. This should impact the way that you receive criticism. This should impact the way that you understand other people's sin.

This should impact the way that you respond when someone treats you unfair or unkind, whatever it may be. Paul says, what then?
You want to accuse me of sin? He says, the Lord knows my heart. You want to accuse the Lord of punishing me? I don't know why the Lord has me in this situation.
What I do know is the Lord's always doing more than I can see. What I do know is people are benefiting from my obedience. They're becoming more courageous. What I do know is God is always at work in greater ways than I can understand, and God is being glorified through our life more than we can even imagine.
What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed. I'm ashamed, and in that, I rejoice.
[25:53] Here's the secret to a life of joy. Cultivate a love in your life that if Christ is glorified, you are joyful.

In Paul's life, if it were his earthly comforts that brought him joy, he'd have no reason for it. In Paul's life, if accusations that were unfair and untrue were going to steal his joy, he'd have no joy.
He's made that clear. That's what they're doing to him. But his response, what about it? I've lost my freedom. What about it?
My only concern is that Christ is proclaimed. There are those who are unbelievers who deny the gospel and they may come after Paul. He says, what about it?
As long as Christ is proclaimed. In this context, this is even people who would claim to be Christians. Their life, their words, seem to indicate at least a massive disconnect from the gospel they preach and the way that they live.
[27:03] Regardless, these are people who don't deny they claim to be Christians, but they're using Paul's situation to try to hurt, injure, and afflict him and his response is, so what?

I just want to proclaim Christ. It's not about his preferences. It's not about his privileges. It's not even ultimately about his reputation.
It's about Christ being proclaimed. And look at the end. And in that, I rejoice. And friends, this is the true secret to a life of joy.
When you can get to the place where you say, my greatest joy is Christ being glorified in my life and Christ is always being glorified in our obedience in more ways than we can imagine.
So as long as we are obedient, Christ is magnified. And as long as Christ is magnified, our joy increases. Therefore, what can man do to me? this is how you want to live.
[28:07] Above the fray of the world. Above the fray of envy and rivalry and selfishness and insincerity. Above the fray of people trying to afflict you.

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Above the fray of worldly peer pressure trying to get you to disobey. Rise above that and just live your life in such a way that Christ is glorified through what you do.
And if that's your greatest joy, there will always be a path forward. Or as one author put it, this is so helpful.
If you ask, why is this happening? No light may come. But if you ask, how am I to glorify God now? There will always be an answer. If you say, God, why am I going through this?
[29:14] God, why am I suffering this way? God, why are these people turning against me? God, why are people that are envious and insincere allowed to seemingly win in the moment?

God, why am I having to endure this trial? If that's our first question, we may not have any response or answer. But if we change and ask a different question, God, right in the midst of this, how can I glorify your name?
There will always be a path forward. God, why is Paul in jail instead of free? Don't know. Not in the moment.
But what can he do? How can he glorify Christ? Well, he can share the gospel with a security guard who's chained to him. He's allowed to receive visitors.
He can encourage them. He's allowed to write letters. He can, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he ends up penning parts of the New Testament. If he just says, God, how can I glorify you? There's always a way forward.
[30:24] If your question is, why is this happening? You may get stuck. If you flip it and say, how can I glorify you in this trial? There's always a path forward. And as Paul pens that statement, it's not as if the soldier he's changed and says, you know what?

Good point. You're free. You can go. No, his circumstances are the same. He's still under house arrest. He's still being falsely accused. The circumstances haven't changed any.
And yet, look at the end of our phrase, at the end of the verse, and in that, I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice. because the greatest joy in his life is just proclaiming the truth and doing it from a sincere heart.
so friends, so friends, don't get consumed with your circumstances. Don't get consumed with what enemies would say.
Don't get consumed with attacks. Just live for the glory of Christ. Christ. And if you feel any sense of envy, rivalry, selfish ambition, or insincerity creeping in, confess that.
[31:53] But if you see that around you, you may have to respond to it. And you may need to go with love and confront someone in their sin, but as for your obedience, don't ever let somebody else's sinfulness be your excuse to stop living for the glory of Christ.

They're not your standard. Christ is. And in that, we rejoice. And in that, we'll find our purpose in life. Lord, we are so thankful that your word helps us. We're so thankful that it encourages us and gives us understanding. I pray that you would help us to not only have heard the word today, but to do what it says and to walk in obedience to it.
We pray that in Christ's name. Amen. Before you leave this morning, if there is a question you have, if there is a prayer need you have, if there is a way that we can serve you, if you'd like to talk to someone about your walk with the Lord or how you can know Christ or how to share the gospel, use that connection card that's in your bulletin, share with us your needs, share with us your prayer request, you can drop it in one of our giving boxes.
We would love to respond to you and sit down with an open Bible to help you, to encourage you, to do our best to disciple you. Let us know how we can serve you in response to that.
[33:26] Tonight, five o'clock, we've got our evening service. We'll be singing together, studying through the book of Nahum in the Old Testament. I encourage you to be here at five o'clock. We'll look forward to seeing you then.

Love you, church family. God bless you. You're dismissed. You're dismissed. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
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