

# What Right Church

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And so we do work out there, manual labor, just cutting with machete and hauling and digging and dealing with trash. Tremendously difficult, grueling energy, weight loss work. You just end up just completely sweated out. But we went from there finally, that we were going to unload the cargo from the ship, 5,000 tons of everything needed to build a center down in Honduras. And we moved to Mon Pleco.

Mon Pleco, kind of a small industrial port in there. And I would end up going to church at night during the week, and a lot of other people would go to church during the week also. And because most of the people walked, you ended up passing other Christians in the street on their way to other churches. And it was always a little bit of a weird experience. I went to churches in Mon Pleco where there was no music, no instruments, women wore things on their head, and everyone sat down and was quiet all the time.

I went to other church where it was never quiet and most people weren't in their chair for most of the time. They were writhing on the ground and shouting and such. And so these people would have to pass each other on their way to their respective churches. And it was almost as if they belonged to the other camp. And I was never sure whether you should greet them in the street or just walk by them politely, something nasty to them, or.

I didn't know how to really approach the situation for people who went to other churches. Right. And so here we're going to come into a spot In Philippians, Philippians 1, and we see. I gave my best idea of where Paul was last week. And my personal

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belief still is that he was in Judah, in Caesarea, and that he had been jailed there as a result of a tumult that had started because the temple guards believed that Paul had brought a Gentile into the temple itself and that there was a great uproar.

They were in the process of stoning Paul when the Roman authorities came and rescued him out of their grasp, brought him to the temple. He gave a defense, but later was transported to Caesarea when a plot was found out against him. And they took him to Caesarea. And there he was jailed and interrogated by Felix. And later, I can't remember that.

King Agrippa, Right. And so I believe that he is there. And there's a couple other reasons that I'm going to talk about that I think that that is where he is, but in there he is saying that people have become confident to speak the word of God boldly because he is in that position, that it has not ended up as a defeat, but rather it has given encouragement to other people who see him suffering for the gospel. It's giving them encouragement to be more bold in their faith, to speak it without fear. But we're going to see here that not everyone preaches the gospel for the correct reasons.

Now, I know you and I would like to think, as I was walking from one church to another, that the church that we participate in was the correct one. And our doctrine and the way we preach is the right one. And everyone else's who don't maybe go to the same church we do is kind of on the outskirts or kind of twisted or kind of preaching a gospel that may not be right. But I think there is in this something for us to learn because we don't always necessarily would be prideful to think, think that our viewpoint is the right one. In the day when Jesus Christ comes back, it's his authority and His Word, and he's not going to ask any one of us.

It's his authority. So in preaching his gospel, we'd like to see some things here. In verse 15 through 18, chapter 1 of Philippians, verse 15 through 18 it says some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, some also from good will. The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely supposing to add affliction to my chains, but the latter out of love, knowing that I am pointed for the defense of the gospel. What then?

Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached. And in this I rejoice.

Yes, and will rejoice. Let's just ask God to soften our own hearts. Father, we do come to you. O Lord. I partly understand that we're not as correct as we think we are, Lord.

That we, out of different selfish ambitions, use religion to accomplish personal means. Lord, I just ask you to enable us to see it, to perceive it, Lord, to hear, Lord, how to move on from it, O Lord, that we might be healed and be able to preach out of a correct heart. Lord, we just thank you in Jesus name. Amen. So you and I are all preaching some way, somehow talking to people, engaging with them.

And Paul is saying here in verse 15 that it is not always a correct way that we speak to other people regarding, let's just say, religion or Christianity. There are other motivating factors that are involved that we have to be concerned about. In verse 15 it says some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife. Envy and strife. It's interesting.

How could there be people around Paul as he is in jail, preaching out of envy and strife. If we look back at the situation a little bit, I don't think it's too difficult to see. If you remember, Paul and Barnabas had been to Jerusalem one time before. They were sent from a town called Antioch. And a prophet called Agabus was come out of Jerusalem.

And he prophesied that the whole world would be under a famine during those days. And so the church at Antioch determined to send relief to Jerusalem through the hands of Paul and Barnabas. And that they did. They sent a gift back to the church in Jerusalem because they were in a financially difficult position, having been ostracized by the Jewish community. The Christian believers were in a difficult spot.

And so they went back to Jerusalem. But there was a second time that he went back to Jerusalem with Barnabas. And Galatians in chapter two kind of describes that. It says, then after 14 years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, the first time bringing the gift, and also took Titus with me. I went up by revelation and communicated to

them the Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run in vain.

And not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in, who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage, to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with me. So here he is referring to a difficulty he is having with Jewish believers. If you remember, also in Antioch there came individuals from Jerusalem at this later time, and they were preaching that Gentile Christians must be circumcised and observe the law of Moses. Paul had no small dissension with them regarding this idea that basically these Gentiles had to become Jews.

And there was a conflict here. As a result of this conflict, it was determined that they should go back to Jerusalem and present their case. And that is found in Acts. Let me just see if I can find it here real quick.

If you remember, Peter was there.

It says in chapter 15, verse 5, or verse 4 and 5. And when they had come to Jerusalem, Acts 15, 4, 5. And when they had come to Jerusalem, they received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all things that God had done with them. But some of the sect of the Pharisees, who believed rose up saying it is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses. Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.

And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them, men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the Gospel and believe. So Peter stands up after this discussion is taking place between the Pharisees who wanted everyone to be circumcised and observe the law of Moses, and Paul, saying, no, they are saved by faith, by grace alone. And so there's this dissension happening within the Christian church. Peter stands up and says, hey, look, you remember how the word of God

originally came to the Gentiles through my ministry back in Caesarea when he visited the centurion there. So we see that there is a dissension within the church in Jerusalem.

At that point. There is, I'm sure, as a result of any dissension, enemies are made. And here now, in the same area, Paul, who had been in conflict with these Pharisees, who saw it as an opportunity for them to extend their authority over the Gentile believers through the teaching of the law and circumcision, which had to be done in a Jewish way, that they would have been the ones to exercise that authority in the church. Now they find themselves in Judea. And now Paul is in jail.

He's in jail. And they find. The way I see it is they see the opportunity to harm Paul through the preaching of their version of the gospel? And I wanted just to bring a relationship, this into relationship with how we communicate the gospel in areas where we have had conflict with others who view the gospel in a different way than we do? Different way.

Have you ever found yourself undermining the faith of a different group of people? Not directly to them, but to others, talking about them, explaining the weaknesses of their position or the fallacies that they have Here we see that this group of people is preaching from envy and strife. Envy meaning that they see something that the other group possesses and are attempting to undermine it because they're jealous of it.

Strife. That there is a way in which we spread our gospel that is antagonistic towards other people and is a kind of a concealed attack against a group to. To undermine them. I think in my life, I can see this happening in different ways in my own life. It says, some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife.

To recognize this is a possibility in our heart. It inflicts us with a Disease that we're going to see has consequences. But not only do some preach from envy and strife, some also preach from goodwill.

The difference between preaching from envy and strife is different from preaching from goodwill. Both of these groups had been encouraged by Paul being in prison for

different reasons. But the other is preaching from goodwill, a desire to provide and to give something, the gospel to other people. Different motivations for preaching. When we look at our own lives, when we have the opportunity to share, and especially with other people who have never heard the gospel, we have to be careful that we're not tainting our message with an attack against a specific group of people or people who have a specific doctrine, but from a goodwill, a desire to share the truth and the greatness of Christ's gospel with them.

Verse 16, it says, the former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely supposing, to add affliction to my chains. So here we have what I believe is these Pharisees who had been hurt from the previous conflict that they have had with Paul, now preaching their form of a gospel and desiring that through it. That the pressure intensity would come upon Paul, that their version of the gospel, of this legalistic gospel that they preached, would come to preeminence. Their goal in it was to undermine Paul in his position as a person.

If you remember, Moses was in the desert and they had just come through the Red Sea. And Miriam spoke against Moses because he had married an Ethiopian woman. This brings up a real interesting study is whether or not that is someone that he just married, or it was the previous wife who was the mother of his two children from before. Remember that she circumcised his two children with a stone and then says, you are a man of blood to me. I would probably say the same thing if I had to do that work with a sharp rock.

So he had married an Ethiopian woman. And Miriam Moses sister had spoken against Paul.

And remember what happened. She became leprous, as white as snow. And Moses pleaded with her. And God's response was, if her father had spit in her face, wouldn't there be some sort of consequence? And Lord says, look, she will be leprous for three days.

What they didn't understand here, these individuals who were preaching from selfish ambition, their desire was to attack the individual for who they were. The interesting thing is to attack an individual who has been called in some way. Whether or not anyone's perfect, I don't think we can all say. But anyone who has been called by God is to attack God themselves. Here we see that they were willing to attack Paul in order to lower him, that they might raise themselves up.

I am sure that you have been involved in this process before. In my house we see this all the time. An example of childish behavior is one by which an individual thinks that by attacking his brother and sister and chopping out their legs from underneath them, ridiculing them and making fun of them, showing how stupid they are, that they actually appear brighter, stronger and taller. That's childish behavior. I've had 10 kids and not only do I get to experience that, I get to experience it in my own life.

Also, this is something we take part of. These individuals who are preaching were attempting to undermine others, thinking that by doing so they would lift themselves up. It's interesting. Jesus, when he was walking with his disciples, his disciples saw individuals who were preaching. And the disciples said to Jesus, Jesus, we saw individuals preaching who were not one of us.

Should we go and restrain them? Jesus says, no, let them be. Whoever preaches, I can't remember exactly how it goes, but whoever preaches, whoever gathers, gathers with me. But anyways, Jesus said, don't restrain them. Verse 17 it says, but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.

We have to recognize that the gospel being preached and effective comes from a source of a loving heart, not a critical, angry one. It is interesting that some of our greatest reformers struggled in this area. Not that the Reformation wasn't necessary. It was, but it was a dead fly which putrefied the perfumer's ointment. Because out of their heart still existed an anger and an angst towards other people, people like John Calvin, taking an individual who was of a different religious persuasion and having him executed killed.

Martin Luther, railing and condemning and blaspheming other people because of their persuasions. This is not something out of love. I'm not saying there isn't a way to lovingly do things to protect the integrity of the gospel. But it is not based on a desire to undermine people and attack them. The gospel moves forward out of love.

It says, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. It is not saying that there isn't a way to defend the gospel.

In verse 18, I'm just going to kind of go towards closing here. It says what then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or truth, Christ is preached. And in this I rejoice and will rejoice. Paul is saying, hey, look, as long as the Gospel is being presented in some way, it's a Cause for me to rejoice.

The message of Jesus Christ being presented to the world is the antidote for sin. Now, we know that it is not always accurately presented. But the question is whether what Paul is saying is that in when it is presented, it does have some impact. I remember the story of Gladys Alleyward, right? She was a lady from England who was called to be a missionary in China.

And she ended up getting there. And under a series of circumstances, ended up with a tremendous load upon her. She was an English maid. That was her prior experience for a missionary. And she ended up supporting this big missions group.

She had a governmental post as official foot unbinder for the babies and the young women who had their foot bind in China. But she had finally had a male figure to help her in her gospel presentations. And so she started an inn for muleteers. So everything was transported by mules. And she started an inn.

And they would go out and grab the head mule and drag it into the inn. And then all the other mules would come in. And that was her mission. And so after dinner, they would tell Bible stories to these muleteers in China. Well, as the cook that joined her in this ministry.



He started also telling Bible stories. But he was very bad at it. And he got mixed up all the time. And so Gladys would be just like, oh, my, Noah didn't do that. Or that wasn't Moses.

So the story is confused. But it was enough that Christ was being preached. That message, even though slightly skewed, was still a message proclaiming the gospel. That made a difference there. Paul's desire is that in any way possible, Christ is preached in those individuals that you and I struggle with.

That appear to be preaching out of selfish ambition and such. I know that you and I struggle with different people. And probably people struggle with me. And I'm okay with that too. But the truth is that the desire that the gospel would make an impact on the society that is around us.

No matter how it's being preached. Jesus is not chained that wherever a door is opened, he uses it to make a difference. He is not chained in any way. The knowledge of Jesus Christ being spoken, even from impure motives. Is better than no knowledge of Jesus at all.

But what if there is a thing that we need to deal with? I believe the answer to if we're being called in defense of the gospel. There are opportunities to speak, right? But we're given that, I think, an indication that if you are being called to say something, I don't think it's right. To undermine them to other people.

But here we see in Galatians, back to Galatians, that Paul himself was one who stood up for the Gospel and stood strongly in Galatians, chapter two. We're going to see how Paul deals it.

So after this Jerusalem council, Peter himself had come to Antioch in verse 11, chapter 2, verse 11. Now, when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face because he was to be blamed for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles. But when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they

were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, if you, being a Jew, live in the manner of the Gentiles, as not as the Jews, why do you compel the Gentiles to live as Jews?

So here I think we're given a really straightforward idea that we are not to undermine the gospel by personally attacking people who may have a calling of God in their life to preach the gospel, even if it's slightly different. But if we feel that the gospel is being undermined, then we do have a responsibility to say something to their face. We have to be willing to address hypocrisy to the person themselves, not talking about them behind their back or undermining them to other people. If we have a desire to stand for the truth of the gospel, then we should take courage. And Paul here takes the person who seemed to be the head, the rock, the little stone upon whom God seemed to give some authority in his church.

Peter ends up, or Paul rebukes him in front of them all. We see later on that Peter shows his integrity by responding to this rebuke and even talking positively about Paul and his gospel. And it made a difference in Peter's life when Paul was willing to rebuke him. So I'm just going to go to Philippians, just to close one more time here. Philippians an encouragement for us.

The goal is to see Christ gospel move forward, not necessarily our particular denomination or viewpoint. The way we view things. It says, the former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely supposing to add affliction to my chains, but the latter, out of love, knowing that I am pointed for the defense of the gospel. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretence or truth, Christ is preached and in this I rejoice.

Yes, and will rejoice. I think we could all say without hesitancy that our country, our community, our family needs the gospel of Jesus Christ. It needs it to infiltrate it and move it and change it. Let's move that forward by love and not attacking those who may hold a different persuasion around us. Let's pray.

Oh Father. Lord, I pray you would motivate us in a positive way to move that gospel forward in the way that we believe. You're reaching us. Lord, forgive us for our envious and strifeful are attacking words against other people. Forgive us and restore a blessing, Lord, to this church.

Lord, to us as individuals, we ask in Jesus name, Amen.