

Joyful Preaching

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Date: 02 May 2018

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this evening, we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, Paul's letter to the Philippians in chapter 1.

I'm just continuing our study in this letter. We're going to look at verses 12 to the end of the chapter, but can we just take as our text the words of verses 12 and 13?

So Philippians 1 and verse 12, where Paul says, I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

Last week, we began our study of Paul's letter to the Philippians, and we began by considering the cover of a commentary, and the cover of the commentary, it had a promise, and we said that it was the promise, you could say, of this letter.

We said that the promise of Philippians is the same promise on the words of the commentary, the words of the commentary said, this is for you to read, gazing at the joy of gospel faith.

[1 : 22] This is for you to feed, helping you to meditate on God's word day by day. This is for you to lead, equipping you to teach the Bible to others.

This is Philippians for you. And we said last week that the promise Paul had for the Philippians is that this letter is for you to read, feed, and lead.

Read, feed, and lead. It's for you to read about having joy in the gospel. It's for you to feed upon the joy of the gospel. And it's for you to lead others to have that joy in the gospel.

But then the question arises, how do you do that? How do you read, feed, and lead? How do you enable yourself and how do you enable others to have joy in the gospel?

How can you have joy in the gospel when you're living in a place like Philippi? A place that's wealthy, a place that's worldly, and everyone around you is trying to find joy in everything else but the gospel.

[2 : 28] How do you read, feed, and lead people to have joy in the gospel? Well, in this section, Paul answers that question. He answers the question, how do you read, feed, and lead people to have joy in the gospel?

Because having expressed his pastor's heart in the opening verses of this letter, where Paul said that he had a deep love and a deep affection for the Philippians, and he thanked them for their partnership in the gospel.

He thanked them for their progress in the gospel. And then as we saw near the end of the section in verses 9 to 11, Paul had this prayer for them to be a gospel-centered church.

But in this section that we're looking at this evening, Paul reminds the Philippians about the need for preaching the gospel. And what Paul says in this section is that the only way for a church, or the only way that a church is going to read, feed, and lead people to have joy in the gospel is to preach the gospel.

Because the only way to advance the gospel is to preach the gospel. And in this passage, what we'll see is that Paul highlights four areas of preaching.

[3 : 42] He highlights four areas of preaching. And I'll just give you those four areas. Providential preaching, pretend preaching, progressive preaching, and personal preaching.

So four areas of preaching. Providential preaching, pretend preaching, progressive preaching, and personal preaching. So if we look first of all at providential preaching.

Providential preaching. Look again at verse 12. Paul says I want you to know brothers that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ and most of the brothers having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment are much more bold to

speak the word without fear.

So the providence that Paul found himself in when he wrote this letter to the Philippians it wasn't a providence that he had planned because as you know when Paul wrote this letter he was nearly 800 miles away and he was in a prison in Rome he was chained night and day to a Roman soldier awaiting to hear if he would live or die and yet what Paul confesses in verse 12 it shows us that Paul was a man who lived life with an eternal perspective he says I want you to know brothers that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.

Paul confesses that the providence of being imprisoned in Rome has actually worked together for good. Paul he always wanted to go to Rome he always wanted to preach the gospel in Rome.

[5 : 31] He wanted to go to Rome as this open-air preacher preaching the gospel in all the the amphitheatres and all the public arenas. But instead of doing that Paul he still went to Rome but he went as a as a prisoner in chains.

And you know despite this difficult providence Paul continued to preach. But his crowds that he preached to the message that he delivered it wasn't to large crowds it was to just the emperor's guards one-on-one.

In fact Paul tells us that he preached the gospel to the whole imperial guard the whole praetorian guard. And now the praetorian guard was an elite unit of the Roman army that served as the personal bodyguards to the Roman emperor.

And yet what's amazing is that Paul was given this opportunity to preach the gospel to them. In fact Paul was chained to them chained with handcuffs. Handcuffs that would only have stretched 18 inches.

So he was a foot and a half away from them. At any one time day or night Paul was just 18 inches from a Roman soldier. And Paul explains to us that he saw this not as an obstruction to preaching the gospel.

[6 : 56] He saw it as an opportunity to preach the gospel. Steve Lawson says in his commentary he says These high-level soldiers they became a captive audience to Paul.

He is chained to them but they are also chained to him. And he says Paul had a new congregation with every new shift.

Paul had encountered a difficult providence but instead of viewing it as an obstruction to preaching the gospel. Paul viewed it as an opportunity to preaching the gospel.

It was providential preaching. And Paul explains that the whole praetorian guard they heard the gospel. And many of them were converted.

They became brothers. That's how he describes them in verse 14. And what's remarkable is that it was because of Paul's chains. That many in Caesar's household were brought to faith in Jesus Christ.

[7 : 56] That would never have happened if Paul had preached in the amphitheatres of Rome. But this was the Lord's providential plan. And instead of viewing it as the obstruction he viewed it as an opportunity.

The opportunity to preach the gospel. And you know we should learn from Paul here. That no matter what difficult circumstances we encounter in our lives.

The Lord has put it there. And the Lord has put us there. And we shouldn't see it as an obstruction to the gospel. Or as an obstruction to witnessing for Christ.

We should view it as an opportunity. An opportunity for spreading the gospel. And witnessing for Christ. Because my friend. We worship and we serve a great God.

And a great King. And he can use us to advance the gospel. In any and in every situation. You know we often say that.

[8 : 57] We often maybe say it with a passing comment. Nothing is impossible with God. But do we really believe it? Do we live that out?

Do we believe that the Lord can use us to advance the gospel wherever we are? Whether we're a teacher in a secular classroom. Or we're an employee in a worldly environment.

Or we're just a parent confined to their home with their children. Or we're just someone who's retired. And they still have all these things that they need to do in their busy day. Because you know what we have to see here.

And what Paul's providence ought to remind us. Is that the Lord has providentially placed us where we are at this time in our lives.

And we are there to advance the gospel. We're not there by chance. We're not there by accident. We are there by divine appointment. For the purpose of advancing the gospel.

[9 : 59] And your circumstances today. Whatever they may be. They're not to be seen as an obstruction to the gospel. They're to be seen as an opportunity for the gospel.

And you know my friend. When you see that the situation you're in today. Is the Lord's sovereign purpose, plan and providence. When you see it. And when you believe it.

It will give you this confidence in the Lord. That will make you seek to live your life. In order to advance the gospel. And that's why Paul tells the Philippians here what has happened to him. Because he can see in the lives of the Praetorian guards. That they now have this boldness. They have this confidence in the gospel. The church in Rome has been filled with this new boldness. This new confidence to speak the word of God without fear. The fear of man. And Paul confirms this. He says this in verse 14. And most of the brothers he says.

[11 : 01] Having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment. Are much more bold to speak the word without fear. And what's so clear here is that.

Paul he isn't complaining about his providence. No he wants the Philippians to be confident Christians. Because of his providence.

He wants the Philippians to be confident in the gospel. He wants them to be confident that the Lord is able to work. In and through all our providences. For our good.

And ultimately for his glory. And so Paul writes in this section. Explaining that the only way to advance the gospel. Is through preaching. Providential preaching.

But then secondly Paul warns about. Pretend preaching. Pretend preaching. He says in verse 15. Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry.

[11 : 59] But others from good will. The latter do it out of love. Knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. So the former proclaim Christ. Out of rivalry. 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. You know it's often said. That every great preacher. Has many critics. Most preachers. Have their wives as the greatest critic.

But every preacher has many. Every great preacher. Has many critics. The reformer John Calvin. He had his critics. He was exiled from his pulpit.

By his own congregation. After only two years. As their minister in Geneva. Jonathan Edwards. Who was in America. He was voted out of his pastoral charge.

[12 : 54] After 22 years. By 90% of his congregation. Spurgeon. He suffered many discouragements. And even depression. Because of the criticism.

He received from those. In his own denomination. So it's safe to say. That history demonstrates. That every preacher. Who preaches the truth. Will receive criticism.

And the same is true. For the apostle Paul. Because as Paul explains here. There were other preachers. Within the city of Rome. Who were envious. And they were jealous.

Of Paul's preaching. What's sad about all this. Is that these other preachers. They weren't heretics. They weren't preaching. A false gospel. We might be tempted.

To think that they weren't. But they weren't. They were genuinely. Proclaiming the gospel. Of Jesus Christ. They were preaching. Christ. And him crucified. But the problem.

[13 : 50] Wasn't with the message. The problem. Was with their motive. Because these preachers. In Rome. They were proclaiming Christ. But their proclamation.

Was driven. As Paul says. By envy. Their enthusiasm. And their energy. For preaching. It didn't arise. Out of a love for Jesus.

And a desire. To advance the gospel. No. Their enthusiasm. And their energy. It came from. This desire. To be a better preacher. Than Paul. And Paul says.

They desire. To preach Christ. Out of envy. And rivalry. And the way they did it. Was by putting. Down on Paul. And I say that.

Because the word. Envy. That Paul uses. It refers to. A feeling of jealousy. That was expressed. By attacking. Someone's reputation. And casting doubt.

[14 : 43] In their character. And it seems. That these. Jealous preachers. Preachers. Whoever they were. They were saying. That Paul was in prison. Because he was a disobedient minister. He was there.

Because it was his own fault. They weren't in prison. But he was in prison. And they claimed. That if Paul was truly walking with the Lord. Then he wouldn't be in prison. And you know. It's sad to think. That other men. Who preached the same gospel. As Paul. And stood up. For the same truth. That they would try. And take down. And take down. Their brother. In Christ. But you know.

What happened then. And there's nothing new. Under the sun. Jealousy. In ministry. It's an awful thing. Envy. Between preachers.

Or elders. Or Christians. It's not. God honoring. And what's unbelievable. Is that. These preachers. Who weren't in prison.

[15:41] They viewed Paul. As a threat. Paul was in prison. For preaching the gospel. He's chained to a Roman soldier. Day and night. Waiting to.

See if he's going to live or die. But instead of wasting. His opportunities. For the gospel. He's now using them. And yet. His fellow laborers. In the gospel. They're criticizing. Paul for it.

And shunning him. Because they're jealous of him. And who knows. What they were jealous of. It could have been. His apostolic. Authority. It could have been. His intelligence.

It could have been. His gifted speech. It could have been. His influence. And his passion. For the gospel. Whatever it was. These preachers. Considered Paul. To be a threat. To their ministries. And what's frightening.

Is that Paul explains. In verse 7. 17. How mistaken they were. And that their motives. Were all wrong. He says. The former proclaimed. Christ. At a rivalry.

[16:36] Not sincerely. But thinking. To afflict me. In my imprisonment. Paul explains. That the motives. Of these preachers. It wasn't to promote.

Christ. Their motive. Was to promote. Themselves. And it seems. That these preachers. Although they preached. The truth. Although they preached. Christ. They were only doing it.

To see what they could get. Out of it themselves. Though they exalted. Christ. In their words. They used their ministry. To exalt themselves. And to humiliate.

Paul. They used. And abused. Their position. To shape. Public opinion. Against Paul. And to slander him. And to discredit his character. And ultimately.

To promote themselves. Their motives. Were all wrong. It was ungodly. So unlike Christ. And you know. Our motives.

[17:31] They are as important. As our message. Because it not only matters. What we say and do. It also matters.

Why we do it. But the only motive. A Christian should ever have. The only motive. A preacher. Or an elder. Or a Christian should have. Is the motive. For God's glory.

We should never have a motive. To promote ourselves. Or to exalt ourselves. Or to give ourselves a name. No. Our motive. Should always be. To lift up the name of Jesus.

And to give him the glory. My friend. Our motive. Should be the motive. Of the psalmist. As we were singing. In Psalm 115. That it's not unto us Lord.

Not to us. But do thou glory take. That should be our motive. Now although there were some. Pretend preachers. There were others.

[18:29] Who were genuine. Paul speaks about them. He says they preach Christ. From good will. They have pure motives. He says. They don't spread the. The anti-Paul propaganda.

In fact he says in verse 16. The latter do it out of love. Knowing that I am put here. For the defense. Of the gospel. And you know. What better testimony to have.

What a better motive. To possess. Than to be known as someone. Who preaches. Who preaches. And lives out the gospel. With a pure love. For Jesus Christ. And a passion.

To spread. The good news. And you know. Paul. He's so thankful. That these genuine preachers. They're willing. To stand with him. And to stand up. For him. They knew that Paul.

Was in prison. Not because the Lord. Was justizing him. They knew he was there. For the defense. Of the gospel. And they knew that Paul. Was someone. Who remained through.

[19:25] To the message. Of the gospel. And that's what we need today. That's what we need. In our day and generation. Because. I don't know. There's far too much.

Squabbling. And envy. And bitterness. And division. Within the church. Of Jesus Christ. And you know. As Paul is saying here. None of it. Serves to advance the gospel. It doesn't do.

The cause of Christ. Any good. And so what Paul is reminding us. As he reminded the Philippians. What he's reminding us is. If we want to advance the gospel.

In our communities. Then we need to stand together. We need to do it together. Not tearing one another down. That's not an option.

Because it's not God honoring. And it's not Christ exalting. Paul is saying. If you want to progress in preaching. You need to rid yourself of gossip.

[20 : 22] And focus. Upon faithfully preaching. The gospel. Of Jesus Christ. But you know. What was Paul's response.

To all of this. How did he respond. To all this opposition. And conflict. What did he say. To the pretend preaching. Says in verse 18.

What then. Only that in every way. Whether in pretense. Or in truth. Christ is proclaimed. And in that. I rejoice. Paul says.

What really matters. And what is of. The utmost importance. Is that the name of Jesus. Is exalted. And you know. It's such a witness. And a testimony. That. Even though he had been.

Thrown in prison. Chained to a Roman soldier. His fellow laborers. In the gospel. They're.

Slandering him. And yet. Paul. Is rejoicing.

[21 : 18] He rejoices. Knowing that. Christ. Is being proclaimed. And you know. It only demonstrates. And shows to us. The humility. Of Paul. That he rejoiced.

In his suffering. Because he knew. That through it. The name of Christ. Was advancing. And you know. This raises the question. For us. Whose reputation.

Is more important. To us. Is it our reputation. Or our redeemer. For Paul. It was the redeemer. But whose reputation.

Is more important. To us. Is it our reputation. Or our redeemer. And so Paul. He's talking about. The way to advance. The gospel. Is through preaching.

He talks about. Providential preaching. Pretend preaching. But then he talks about. Progressive preaching. Progressive preaching. Look at verse 19.

[22 : 18] For I know. That through your prayers. And the help of the spirit. Of Jesus Christ. This will turn out. For my deliverance. As it is my eager. Expectation. And hope. That I will not be.

At all ashamed. But that with full courage. Now as always. Christ will be honored. In my body. Whether by life. Or by death. For to me. To live is Christ.

And to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh. That means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose. I cannot tell. I am hard pressed.

Between the two. My desire. Is to depart. And be with Christ. For that is far better. But to remain in the flesh. Is more necessary. On your account. And.

Convinced of this. I know that I will remain. And continue with you all. For your progress. And joy in the faith. So that in me. You may have ample cause. To glory in Christ Jesus.

[23 : 10] Because of my coming to you. Again. And so as Paul sits. In his Roman prison. Writing this letter. He's certain. He knows for sure.

That what has happened to him. It has served. To advance the gospel. But Paul also knows. That he will soon be released. From his imprisonment.

One way. Or another. Either by death. Or dismissal. He has to. He must await Caesar's decision. But Paul is confident.

And he believes. That whatever happens. His life is ultimately. In the hands. Of the Lord. As one commentator says. He says.

Paul lays his head. On the pillow. Of God's sovereignty. And he sleeps well in it. Paul lays his head. On the pillow. Of God's sovereignty.

[24 : 04] And he sleeps well in it. And you know. Well. When we're worried. Sleep is often. The first thing to go. But we're. The commentator.

Reminds us. That Paul sleeps well. Because as he says. The spirit of Jesus. The Holy Spirit. He provides power. He provides peace. To remain steadfast. And to continue living.

As he says himself. With that. Earnest expectation. And hope. And what's remarkable. Is that Paul has this confidence. This assurance. This courage. That.

Christ. Will be honored. In his body. Whether it's by his life. Or by his death. Whether he lives or dies. Paul knows. That the name of Christ.

Will be exalted. And you know. It's clear from this statement. That for Paul. He sees everything. As an opportunity. To magnify Jesus Christ. His imprisonment.

[25 : 01] He views it as advancing. The name of Christ. His trial. That he's awaiting. It's all about serving. Jesus Christ. And even whether he lives. Or whether he dies. Paul sees these things.

As opportunities. To progress the gospel. You know. What a perspective to have. To live life. With an eternal perspective. And to be so confident.

In Christ. That whether in life. Or in death. Your heart's desire. Above all things. Is for the gospel. Of Jesus Christ. To progress.

Now when Paul speaks here. He's not boasting. He's not being arrogant. No. Paul's purpose. Is to affirm. To the Philippines. Who were fighting.

Their own battles. And facing. Their own struggles. In a wealthy. And worldly city. Paul's. He is affirming. To them. That it's possible. To rejoice. In suffering. It's possible.

[25 : 57] To have joy. In the midst of sorrow. It's possible. To view. Difficult providences. As opportunities. Rather than obstructions. And you know.

This is why Paul went on. To say. In verse 21. That. Well-known verse. For to me. To live is Christ. And to die is gain. For to me.

To live is Christ. And to die. Is gain. It was once said. That no one is ready to live. Until they are ready to die.

No one is ready to live. Until they are ready to die. It's only. Only when you know. That death. Will usher you. Into the presence of God. That you will live life.

With a fearless faith. And you know. That's what Paul had. He had a fearless faith. He was a man. Staring. Death. In the face.

[26 : 54] And yet. He lived with this. Unwavering. Mission. And this desire. To see the gospel. Advance. Death. Wasn't something that. Diverted his attention.

It didn't cripple his faith. It didn't take him. Off course. From his chief end. Because his chief end. Paul could see. That all these things. In his life.

They were the Lord's appointment. And they were there. For the advancement. Of the gospel. And you know. It's such a personal statement. That Paul makes here. For to me.

To live is Christ. To live is Christ. To live. He says. Is to advance. The gospel. To live. Is to serve. Jesus Christ. To live.

Is to progress. The good news. To live. Is all about. Jesus. And that should be. The testimony. Of every Christian. Because. If Jesus Christ.

[27 : 50] Is our Lord. Which he is. If Christ. Has redeemed us. From death. Which he has. If we have been. Brought from death. To life.

If we have received. The light. Of the gospel. If our confession. As a Christian. Is the same as Paul. Where he says. In Galatians 2. I am crucified. With Christ.

Nevertheless. I live. Yet not I. But the life. That I now. Live in the flesh. I live by faith. In the son of God. Who loved me. And gave himself for me. If that's.

Our testimony. If that's our. Confession. As a Christian. Then so should this. This should be our confession. For to me.

To live as Christ. Christ should be our life. Christ should be everything. About our lives. Everything about our lives.

[28 : 45] Should be about Christ. Everything we do. Everything. We attempt to do. It should be about seeking. To exalt the name of Christ. Christ. At every opportunity. In order to advance the gospel.

For to me. To live as Christ. Paul is saying. He's my priority. He's my focus. He's my first love. He's my all in all.

For to me. To live. Is Christ. And you know. When we can say that. Wholeheartedly. It's then. We'll have no problem. Saying the second half.

Of the verse. To die is gain. To die is gain. But you know my friend. If we're living for something. Or someone else. Other than Jesus Christ.

If our first love. Is something. Or someone else. Other than Jesus Christ. Then you know. We'll see death. As a loss. And not gain. We will.

[29 : 44] View death. As something. To be dreaded. And feared. Because it's only. When we have that. Singular focus. Upon Jesus Christ. That we will confess. With Paul.

For to me. To live is Christ. To die is gain. And what we see. In the verses following. Is that. It was actually.

A tough decision. For Paul to make. If he had to decide. Whether to live. Or to die. He says in verse 22. If I am to live. In the flesh. That means. Fruitful labor for me.

Yet which I shall choose. I cannot tell. I am hard pressed. Between the two. My desire. Is to depart. And be with Christ. For that is far better. But to remain.

In the flesh. Is more necessary. On your account. But even though. It would have been. A tough decision. To make for Paul. If he had to decide. To live or die.

[30 : 39] Paul knows that. In reality. It's not really. His decision. To make at all. Because he knows. His life. Is in the Lord's hands. And that's why he says. In verse 25.

He says. Convinced of this. I know that I will remain. And continue with you all. For your progress. And joy in the faith. So that in me. You may have ample cause.

To glory in Christ Jesus. Because of my coming. To you. Again. And what Paul says here. Is that whether he lives. Or whether he dies. That's not his choice.

To make. But what's necessary. For him. And what Paul is firmly. Persuaded about. Is that. While he lives. His purpose. Is to serve the church.

Of Jesus Christ. Paul knows. That his purpose. Is to build up. Other believers. In their faith. And he says. He's committed. To ministering.

[31 : 34] To other Christians. Such as. The Philippians. And many other churches. And he says. That he's committed. To discipling them. That's what Philippians. Is all about. It's all about. Discipleship.

He's committed. To helping them. In their faith. So that they too. Will seek. To advance the gospel. Where they are. And you know. What Paul is giving. To us here. Is the perspective.

Of. Living a Christ. Centered life. Because when we live. A Christ. Centered life. We will live. For Christ. We will see.

Our purpose. In life. As one. In which we are. To serve. The church. Of Jesus Christ. And we are to serve. Jesus. By serving others. By discipling them.

By getting alongside them. By getting to know them. By helping them. In their faith. But the overarching. Purpose. In it all. That Paul is talking about. Is that. These people.

[32 : 31] Whoever they were. The Philippines. That they. Progress in their faith. And that the gospel. Of Jesus Christ. Continues to advance. It's. As he says himself.

It's progressive. Preaching. It's the desire. To. Progress. Through the preaching. Of the gospel. And so Paul. He's saying.

That the only way. To advance the gospel. Is through preaching. And he's spoken. Spoken about. Providential preaching. Pretend preaching. Progressive preaching. And then lastly.

And very very briefly. Personal preaching. Personal preaching. He says in verse 27. Only let your manner of life.

Be worthy of the gospel of Christ. So that whether I come. And see you. Or am absent. I may hear of you. That you are standing firm. In one spirit. With one mind. Striving side by side.

[33 : 28] For the faith of the gospel. And not frightened. In anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign. To them. Of their destruction. But of your salvation. And that from God.

For it has been granted. To you. For the sake. To you. That for the sake of Christ. You should not only believe in him. But also suffer. For his sake. Engaged in the same conflict.

That you saw I had. And now here. That I still. Have. And so as Paul brings. The section of his letter. To a conclusion.

He encourages. The Philippians. To live. Christ-centered lives. He says. Let your manner of life. Be worthy. Of the gospel of Christ.

In other words. He says. Make your life. A sermon. Of God's grace. Be a walking. Bible. That speaks.

[34 : 25] Of God's salvation. Be a faithful witness. That emulates. That emulates. And imitates. Jesus Christ. Be a light. In darkness. That stands firm.

Upon the word of God. Be consistent. With your Christianity. Do not be. A contradiction. Let your manner of life. He says.

Be worthy. Of the gospel. Of Christ. And Paul says. To the Philippians. Don't be afraid. Of your opponents. Don't worry. About what they'll say.

Don't be frightened. To speak out. And to speak up. For Christ. Don't let anything. Be an obstruction. To the gospel. But let everything. Be an opportunity. For the gospel. So that the gospel. Will advance. And that Christ's kingdom. Will extend. And you know.

[35 : 20] It's wonderful to know. That this all came. From a prison. He's encouraging. Christians. To make. The best use of their time. In order to advance.

The gospel. And so Paul says. In this section. That the only way. That the church. Is going to read. Feed. And lead people. To have joy.

In the gospel. Is to preach. The gospel. Because the only way. To advance the gospel. Is to preach. The gospel. And he says. In this passage. That there is.

Four areas. Of preaching. Providential preaching. Pretend preaching. Progressive preaching. And personal. Preaching. And so.

Let us seek. To apply. This in our lives. That it may serve. To advance. The gospel. In our own. Community. Here. May the Lord. Bless these thoughts.

[36 : 15] To us. Let us pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. O Lord. O gracious God. We give thanks. For the encouragement. In thy word. The encouragement.

That was written. Even in a prison cell. And we are reminded there. Lord. That the Lord. One who is able. To do exceedingly abundantly. Above all. More than we could ask.

Or even think. We marvel. That thou art a God. Who uses our opportunities. And we pray. That thou wouldest give. To us. Opportunities. Opportunities. To speak.

About Jesus. opportunities to be a light in darkness opportunities Lord to be a faithful witness and if need be to stand on the side of Christ oh Lord help us to be faithful help us Lord to emulate Jesus to imitate him day by day to love one another and to love Christ that he would be our first love that he would be our great desire the desire in which we will be able to confess like Paul for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain oh Lord bless us together we pray uphold us and strengthen us by thy grace and go before us for Jesus sake Amen we shall bring our service to a conclusion by singing the words of Psalm 40 Psalm 40 in the Scottish Psalter page 260 we're singing from verse 8 down to the verse mark 10 the end of the double verse mark 10

Psalm 40 and verse 8 to do thy will I take delight O thou my God that art yea that most holy law of thine I have within my heart within the congregation great I righteousness did preach lo thou dost know O Lord that I refrained not my speech down to the end of the double verse mark 10 of Psalm 40 to God's words to God's words to God's words to thy will I take delight O thou my God that art yea that most holy law of thine I have within my heart within the congregation great

[39 : 09] I righteousness did preach though thou dost know O Lord that I mountainous segue I am worship previsor I have within my heart belle chief and have declared and shown Thy faithfulness.

Thy kindness, which most loving is, Concealed hath not died, Nor from the congregation great Have it Thy verity.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.