

14 June 2026
THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS
"The Apostle's priority"

Phil. 1:12–18

I want you to know, brethren, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ; and most of the brethren have been made confident in the Lord because of my imprisonment, and are much more bold to speak the word of God without fear. Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. 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 partisanship, 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.

In today's passage, Saint Paul alludes to his situation as a prisoner. We hear no complaint from him, for the apostle has learned to see things from God's perspective. Therefore, even his captivity must serve a higher purpose—and indeed it does. In the Letter to the Philippians, Paul emphasizes that thanks to his chains, the Gospel has spread even further.

This is an important lesson for those called to evangelize, as well as for all who follow the Lord. For Paul, the mission entrusted to him by God was the priority. From this priority, he evaluates the situation in which he finds himself. Thus, the decisive question for him was: What contributes most to spreading the Gospel? At this point, we see how detached the apostle was from himself. He did not consider his own person or adverse circumstances to be important. What concerns him is proclaiming the Word of God.

Is he hindered by his imprisonment? As he considers this question, he recognizes that the Lord is using his captivity and observes that his guards and all those who watch over him can come into contact with the Gospel through him. Thus, this situation becomes for him a field of evangelization—an opportunity to proclaim the message of salvation to people whom he would otherwise likely not have reached.

And there is more: he realizes that most of the brothers have been strengthened by his suffering in prison. They have gained the courage to proclaim the Word of Christ, even in difficult circumstances. This is a cause for joy for the apostle.

Paul's personal witness—which we can generalize as courageously bearing witness to the truth, especially when accompanied by suffering—awakens the good and noble qualities in other believers. They feel encouraged to speak boldly and are able to overcome human reservations and everything that previously prevented them from bearing witness to Christ.

Let us apply these reflections to our current situation as Catholics in this world. Are we sufficiently aware that we have been entrusted with the treasure of truth, which must guide the lives of all people, thanks to the Gospel and the authentic teaching of the Church? This truth is not something we must seek; it is something we must simply learn to understand more deeply.

Is this truth not the standard by which every human act is measured? Do we bear witness to it, or do we make concessions to the spirit of the world, thereby weakening our Christian witness and distorting it until it is almost unrecognizable? Unfortunately, this is becoming increasingly common in our Church today. However, the truth sets us free (Jn 8:32). The Lord assures us of this. And it not only sets us personally free, but frees others as well, as today's passage makes clear.

St. Paul mentions various motivations and attitudes regarding the proclamation of the Gospel. It is evident that some do not do so with the right intention. The apostle does not hide the fact that this further increases the weight of his chains. Nevertheless, he refocuses on his primary goal: the Gospel must be proclaimed. Even if it is imperfect or motivated by dishonesty, St. Paul will not allow anyone to rob him of the joy that Christ is being proclaimed. Undoubtedly, we see the apostle's broad vision in this. However, this does not mean that the content of the proclamation is indifferent. In fact, when he learns of the spread of errors and false doctrines, St. Paul combats them with great firmness, since they attack the very essence of the faith.

The source of his joy is the Gospel. He dedicated his entire life to proclaiming it and evaluates the situation in which he finds himself from this perspective. We know how willing he was to suffer for the sake of the Gospel.

Although none of us can proclaim the Gospel as the holy apostle did, we can certainly learn from him to always keep the priority of our lives in mind and to be guided by it. As believers living in faith, our priority is God's will and His glorification. If we take this as our guide, our eyes will gradually open to see and face all the circumstances of our lives from this perspective. This will lead us to the kind of freedom we see in St.

Paul.

Meditation on today's reading: <https://en.elijamission.net/reconciliation-in-christ-2/>