**Week of January 20, 2019**

**Philippians 1:12-21**

12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; 13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; 14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. 15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16 The one preaches Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel. 18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. 19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

**Understanding the Scriptures**

The Apostle Paul was writing to the Philippians to thank them for their gift and to encourage them that even though he was in jail, he maintained his joy, which was anchored in Jesus Christ. Being sent to prison while innocent would typically cause the average person to be sorrowful or bitter, but not Paul. He was joyful because he saw his imprisonment as one more opportunity to spread the Good News. When Paul was unable to move about as he normally would, other Christians became bolder in their witnessing about the Gospel. There were other reactions that took place among the people after Paul’s imprisonment. Some people who took on the responsibilities of spreading the Good News had selfish motives and only wanted to build reputations for themselves, while others were genuine in their efforts and truly wanted to assist in the work that God was doing through Paul. Paul concluded that God could bring good out of both motives, because either way, the Good News was being shared with the people. Paul understood that right actions with wrong motives could be used to persuade people to come to know Jesus.

Paul knew that his situation could result in release or execution. He also knew that the final outcome was beyond his control. Because the Philippians prayed for him and he trusted that the Spirit of Jesus Christ was still working on his behalf, Pal looked toward being delivered from his imprisonment.

Paul realized that he might gain release which would allow him to continue his ministry of spreading the Good News. He also realized that he might be executed for the cause of Christ. Either way, Paul desired to conduct himself honorably by always presenting himself as a bold witness for Jesus Christ. Paul declared that to live is Christ and to die is gain. In other words, Paul’s mindset was that as long as he was living, he would spread the Gospel but if he died, he would be with Jesus.

*Lesson is a reprint from the Sunday School Publishing Board*