

Sharing God's Grace – Teaching Notes

(Philippians 1:18-29; 8/1/10)

Introduction: A key idea in today's Sunday School material is that Paul wants the believers to live the Christian life, whether he returns to them or not. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to continue to live the Christian life, in spite of the circumstances that confront us.

Body:

Read Philippians 1:18-20

I. Consuming Passion. In this section of the Sunday School material Paul rejoices about Christ being preached. Whether the messenger's motives are wicked or pure, Paul resolves to rejoice. He believes things will work out for his good. It should be noted that Paul is under house arrest for preaching the gospel.

Applications –

- Rejoicing about the word. Notice in vs. 18 of the Sunday School material that Paul rejoices about the gospel being preached, in spite of the motives and messengers that surround the preaching. On one hand, it can be distracting to think that people have ulterior motives for preaching the word of God. It seems like some preach only for money or their personal fame. It can be distracting to think that a person doesn't practice what he or she preaches. It is hard to hear an adulterer preach about "thou shall not commit adultery." But on the other hand, the power of the gospel is not in the messenger or his or her motive. The power of the gospel is in the gospel and God. *Let's strive to rejoice in the word of God being preached, taught, and shared, in spite of our concerns with the motives and messengers.* In addition to the Full Gospel and many non-denominational churches popping up with suspicious motives and messengers, we are urged to rejoice about the word of God going forth. There are some who will not listen to us, but will listen to them.

- Hoping, in spite of troubles. Notice in vss. 19-20 of the Sunday School material that Paul had a hope in God that gave him great boldness. There is something about believing that God will fix things in our lives that gives us what we need to get through our circumstances. As much as Paul and we want others to pray for us, it is good to know that the Holy Spirit is working with God the Father and the Son to take care of God's people. *Let's work on developing the hope and faith needed to get through our situations.* Prayerfully studying and obeying God's word with the support of other believers will help us develop this kind of bold hope and faith.

Read Philippians 1:21-26

II. Confident Expectation. Paul talks about not knowing if he wants to live and minister or die and be with the Lord in this section of the Sunday School material. He resolves to live and minister. He wants the best for his readers.

Applications –

- Desiring God's will. Notice in vss. 21-26 of the Sunday School material that Paul appears to be conflicted about whether he wants to live and minister to others or die and be with the Lord. Many church goers don't really understand this conflict. They simply want to live and often not for the sake of ministering to others but for their own selfish agendas. However, as we grow in

the Lord, we get more excited about being with the Lord and less excited about how much good are we really doing in this world. Paul resolved to do God's will, which he perceived to be for him to live and minister. *Let's work on developing a desire to do God's will.* Being thankful for what God has done, believing that God will bless our obedience, and seeking to avoid God's punishment of our disobedience should move us to seek to be obedient. Whether God wants us to live on and sow a few more seeds or to transition from this world into the next, we should be willing to obey God.

- **Showing appreciation.** Notice in vss. 25-26 the expectation that there would be some rejoicing in the Lord about Paul's continued ministry. Unfortunately, too many church goers wait until the servants of God die, before they demonstrate any significant emotion towards them. At funerals, we like to talk about what a great Pastor he was or a great Sunday School teacher she was or warm and encouraging personality he was. *Let's stop waiting until people cannot hear us to show them how much we rejoice and thank God for them.* Not only are Pastor anniversaries along this line, but tokens of appreciation for faithful ministry workers like Sunday School teachers, ministry managers, and the like are along this line as well. It is a blessing to have faithful servants of God in our lives.

Read Philippians 1:27-29

III. Consistent Conduct. Paul wants to hear that his readers are doing well in this section of the Sunday School material. He's not sure if he will return to them or not. He doesn't want them to give into the adversaries.

Applications –

- **Christian living.** Notice in vs. 27 of the Sunday School material that Paul urged the readers to live like Christians. In so many places, in the Bible, we see the urging to live right. It is not enough to know right. At the core of right living are the commands to love God with all that we have and to love others, as we love ourselves. To love God includes obeying God. Such obedience includes worshiping, tithing, and obeying biblical principles for every area of our lives. Loving ourselves includes health and wealth stewardship. Loving others includes evangelism, service, and striving to make sure that systems are godly. Loving God and others also includes obeying God's will for us to work together in unity, as mentioned in the text. There should be a level of unity of faith and works that is unmistakable in the church. *Let's work on living like Christians ought.*

- **Encouraging one another.** Notice in vss. 28-29 Paul urges his readers to not be terrified by their adversaries but to realize that suffering for the Lord will pay off. Paul could talk about suffering because of his personal experiences with such. It is important for the strong to share with the weak, so the whole body can be strong. When we withhold our testimony or give too much attention to secondary issues like procedures and traditions, we miss the mark of God. *Let's work on helping one another stand fast in the faith that says, "after suffering, comes great blessings."*

Conclusion: Let's strive to continue to live the Christian life, in spite of the circumstances that confront us. God has much for those who obey His will.