

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Date 10th July 2022 Hymns Ps 40v1-5 T- Ballerma, 324, 430, Read: Philippians 1:12-14
Text Philippians 1:12

Series: Philippians (22) Title: What we need to continually Understand

Among the different places that Paul visited on his missionary journeys, Paul desired, as he said in **Acts 19:21** **"I must also see Rome."**

Rome was a key city of its day, a door of opportunity, a door to be unlocked, opening into more areas to spread the gospel.

Paul wrote in **Romans 1:15** **"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."**

The word **ready** means **eager**, it speaks of Paul's passion, eagerness, willingness to spread the gospel in Rome.

He desired that Jews and Gentiles, know acceptance with God is only by faith alone in Jesus sinless life, precious blood and victorious resurrection.

But as Paul set out for Rome, the journey from a human view point did not to go plan.

The whole account is recorded from **Acts 21-28**.

On the way to Rome, Paul was arrested, then he experienced ship wreck, bitten by a snake, and then when Paul finally reached Rome, he was there as a prisoner, put in a cell, chained to a Roman guard, waiting to be sentenced to death.

The journey was long, and dangerous. It seemed one trouble after another, one set back after another.

From a human perspective anything that could go wrong, went wrong and worse than ever imagined.

The plan and path in going to Rome turned into trials, trouble, met with obstacles, opposition and resistance.

When the Philippians heard news of Paul's imprisonment, they sent a message to him by Epaphroditus no doubt expressing their concerns.

Paul now begins to answer some of the questions which were troubling the Philippians.

Paul has a love for saints at Philippi, and labours for them in prayer and preaching, taking his example from Christ the good shepherd.

In **John 13:33** Christ is soon to accomplish their redemption on the cross and then ascend into heaven, "**whither I go, ye cannot come, so now I say unto you...**" **John 14:1** "**let now your hearts be troubled, why v2 I go to prepare a place for you v3 I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also.**

Christ brought troubled hearts to think upon the blessing and benefit of His redemption.

This is example Paul follows

By Paul's response from **verses 12-14**, the saints at Philippi were confused, troubled, distressed, discouraged, and anxious.

There was a lack of knowledge not only about Paul's situation, the furtherance of the gospel, but above all They failed see the hand of God in the situation.

They failed to understand how it was God's will to bring Paul to Rome having suffered so much along the way.

They didn't know what spiritual good and blessing could come from Paul's time in prison, and how the gospel would be advanced in the Rome.

They had misunderstood, misinterpreted and misapplied the moving's of God.

It appeared everything had come to a halt, it seemed this was the end of gospel ministry to the people in Rome.

Therefore, Paul in this letter to the Philippians, touches these pressing matters, that they have the mind of Christ.

Notice the opening words of **verse 12** “*but I would ye should understand brethren....*”

The word **understand** means *to know*.

But also this word **understand** is in the **present tense** indicating that Paul wants believers to understand, to know and to keep on understanding and knowing.

In a sense we might say, to get someones attention, I want you to get this or I want you to know, to understand this, what I'm about to say you need hear it, listen up.

This is what Paul refers to, I want to you know something, I want to understand what I'm I about to say, “*the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;*”

Men and woman here is a word for us today, what we need to know, because we often forget what we need to know when we need to know it.

What do we need to continually understand.

I FIRST THE THINGS WHICH HAPPEN UNTO US ARE APPOINTED BY GOD.

In **verse 12**, Paul uses the phrase ‘**the things**’ to sum up all that has happened to him up until this point.

Such things’ cover a multitude of the different aspects of Paul’s ministry and life, but most especially he is referring to those

things that caused suffering, those times of hostility and opposition and particularly to his present situation, as to the fact that he was in a prison, in Rome for the preaching of the Gospel.

(You will notice in verse 12 the words *which happened* are in italics, that means they are not in the original Greek, but they have been put there by our translators to help us understand the flow of thought and in reading.)

in the original Greek language, the phrase the things ta kata eme" read, **the things concerning me**, or as the translators wrote *which happened*.

The same phrase the things is used by Paul in Ephesians 6:21 only translated as "*my circumstances*" or in Col 4:7 as "*my affairs*".

Paul is stating all that happens to me, all that concerns me, all my circumstances, they are appointed by God,

continually understand this, all that takes place in our life is appointed and ordered by God.

You see, when your circumstances change, when your journey in life is different than what you had planned, when you feel people results, and projects are against you,

when serving God and you face trouble, know, IT is all appointed, permitted ordered by God, as Job said in Job 23:10 ***But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.***

Unsaved one, the truth still applies to you, all that occurs in your life is appointed by God.

God appoints things which happens unto the saved and unsaved for the same purpose, that is to glorify God.

God is glorified when sinners are saved by His grace and God is glorified when His people are strengthened in that grace

Believer continually understand Such things which happen unto us are appointed personally.

Notice the word of **verse 12** “*the things which happened unto me...*” Paul’s life was one of trial and persecution.

He was a preacher of the gospel, and follower of Christ, He was persecuted in various ways for righteousness sake.

Take some time to read his list of sufferings, mistreatments, in **2 Corinthians 11:23-28**, which included ship wreck, beatings, carry burdens, and much more and even in jail.

The circumstances that come into our lives on the way to heaven will be different for each.

God has appointed a different path in life for each, different background, jobs, locations.

Not all are called to bear the same burdens as Paul or have the same experiences of a literal jail or ship wreck, though I know there is at least one person in here who has been bitten by a snake.

But the point is what happens to me/you personally, what circumstances arise in my life are appointed by God, and each circumstance us suited to us, fitted for us, designed by the Lord for us personally.

The events in Paul life are under the direct control and sovereignty of God.

This is not hap hazard, blind fate, that is how the world views life, stuff just happens or its bad luck,

We may not fully understand how God works but we know God works.

Our times as Paul and David are in the Lord’s hand.

At such times, keep before, as David did, as for God His way is perfect. believer this not only strengthens you in weakness, but also as Paul is doing using scriptural truth to strengthen others in the Lord, the Rock of salvation.

Unsaved one, come to Jesus for the cleansing power and be washed by faith in the blood of Christ.

Has He appointed something in your life, in order to bring you to Himself, Oh turn while the Saviour in mercy is calling for soul will soon be required.

Believer continually understand Such things which happen unto us are appointed periodically.

When Paul speaks of Himself in **verse 12** “***the things which happened unto me...***” he refers to all that has occurred in that stage of life, but it will also includes all that will take place onwards, in future days.

As Paul set out for Rome, his circumstances changed, at different times.

Throughout his journey more things kept happening to him. More opposition, obstacles, but also opportunities to serve God giving Him all the glory.

And so it is with our lives believers, in each stage of your life, childhood, teenage, adulthood, then in late years, there have been trials and troubles and thorns on the way. Things have happened unto you.

Yea, things are happening to you now, your circumstances have changed and keep changing which impact and effect your age limitations, health, hospitalisations, work, home life, education, finance, bills increase.

Circumstances and situations you face now that never would have faced at any other time?

There pressures, demands from every side. at times it may be a isolated trial, or one trial in which the duration is long, and smaller things are added.

You ask why at this time of my life.

But again, continually understand the things **things which happen unto you are appointed periodically.**

God knows your life from beginning to end. He appointed the day of your birth and death, be assured since He has appointed all that happens in between, **then He knows when, where and how much and how long to try His people.**

Such things that happen periodically to teach that in every age of life God's grace is sufficient, youth to adulthood, to senior years.

Think of the years the disciples spent with Christ, the things which happened unto them, the storms, hard situations, confronted with difficulties, when in need of food, Christ met the need. He is the answer to issues of life.

He wants us to know,

He is able to deliver us out of what and where He places us in. He is able to remove the burden He gives. He is able to calm the storm, supply in times of need, sustains in time of weakness. Strengthen in times of weakness.

He makes the crooked path straight. He makes a way where there seems to be no way.

You see, older, mature, Christians can look back through life and teach younger Christians, in my circumstance, through mountain and valley experiences of life, when it seemed impossible to go forward, to get back up, though I didn't understand at the time, but looking back I can say God was in control.

Younger Christians you can know when things enter your life at different times and stages, God is in control.

This is what Paul is getting the saints at Philippi to understand.

**II SECOND, THE THINGS WHICH HAPPEN UNTO US ARE
ADVANCED BY GOD,**

verse 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.*

Paul is writing to assure troubled hearts that God has a purpose in all He does.

The Philippians are viewing *the things which happened unto* Paul, as being a hindrance, set back to seeing the furtherance and flourish of the gospel in Rome.

However, Paul responds with a Godward view. **He views his own circumstance, through the lens of God's sovereignty.**

The words **fallen out** means *to turn out*, the things that have happened unto me have **turned out** for God's providential purpose.

Paul is teaching that God turns obstacles into opportunities, He turns what seems to be against the gospel into the advancement of the gospel.

He uses the circumstances which we think frustrates the gospel and uses it for the furtherance of the gospel.

This includes worldwide, national and local situations including covid. He can and has used it for the advancement of the gospel in many ways.

Christ has died for a people, and that people will be saved. All who the Father has given Christ is for whom Christ's blood was shed, and they will be gathered in, for when Christ returns, He ***shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing His sheaves with Him.***

The whole time Paul was going to Rome, it was God who was directing, permitting and bringing Him to Rome, for the purpose of ***“...the furtherance of the gospel.”***

The word **furtherance** means ***advancement or progress despite obstacles.***

The idea is to drive or press forward. We will look more at this word next week, God willing.

Paul was limited, but God is never, Paul was bound but God is never.

The authorities thought they could silence the messenger and stop the message from advancing, but they didn't take into account the message of redemption is God's message, that's why Paul could write to Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:9** ***Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.***

While Paul was chained to a Roman guard we read in **Acts 28:23-24** ***“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. ²⁴ And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not...”***

The word of God, the furtherance of the gospel is not bound or limited to any place, even our City of London among Londoners, the areas where you live, the people you meet, the bus re-routes, the train cancellations, transport delays, God brings all things together, arranging our circumstances unto the furtherance of the gospel.

Isn't exciting to think you could share the gospel with someone, not even knowing they may have a family member or friend praying for them.

The things which have happened, are happening and yet to happen in our lives, is advanced by God, He uses it unto the furtherance of the gospel, for others to hear the gospel, for souls to saved, for believers to be strengthened.

Roman 8:28 “*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*”

This is what we need to continual understand and know