

Introduction:

- Dismiss Kids (Parents, if your kids are new, feel free to escort them back)
- Greeting (Connect Card?/Next?)
- Sermon Text & Page # in Bibles we Provide (Free Gift to You)

We live in a culture of speed. When we want something, we usually want it with the quickness. This is especially the case when dealing with technology. I was reminded of this when I started looking for Home Internet for our family just two weeks ago. Our 2 year contract was ending with one of the major providers in our area, so I did a little research, compared prices and services, and made a decision to go back with our old provider, who also had been communicating their love to us in the form of about 12 pieces of mail, telling us how badly they wanted us back. Well, they got us back. So I did a flip, flop, flip over the past five years, and I'm saving \$\$\$ (much paper) and (cut our bill in half) AND, check this out, I doubled our internet speed.

We went from about 28MBS to 54MBS of download speed and my upload is even better than that. This is a vast improvement from the days when Dial-Up Service was the only option. Some of you kids weren't even alive then. It really sounded like a call being made... dead dial tone, numbers punched in, phone started ringing... and then it would say: "You are connected."

Amazing stuff. Thankfully, today we can get any webpage we want within seconds. After all, who waits to wait nnnnggggghhhhhh... do do do da do doo dooo... ring... ring... ring... ring. Who wants to wait unnecessarily?

FCF: Sometimes this is reflective of our approach and urgency in getting people the gospel.

Far too many churches and far too many Jesus people are getting the gospel to others with dial-up speed.

Not Paul. Philippians 1:12-18. He devoted his entire life to getting people the news about Jesus and getting it to them with the quickness. When it came to the advancing the news of Jesus, Paul would not allow the gospel to just chill and move forward in slow motion. No. Paul advanced the news of Jesus and he...

The Point: Advance the News of Jesus even through adversity.

This is what Jesus people do. *Read Philippians 1:12-18*

**"Advance the News"
Philippians 1:12-18**

- The Philippians were concerned for Paul and his mission, because they knew he was confined in a Roman prison.
- That's why he wanted to quickly reassure them on two fronts:
 - 1) The news of Jesus is still advancing. AND
 - 2) Consequently, I'm okay, because in a time where I should be at my lowest, I'm actually rejoicing because the news is advancing.

I. Allow nothing to stop the advance of the news (12-14).

Before I get too deep into what's going on here, did you guys hear the news about Brady? TMZ is reporting that he was frustrated about the two picks last night, ending up getting in a fight with his wife (TMZ is reporting). Giselle managed to take a jar of avocado oil and smash his throwing hand. Now he's out for the AFC Championship.

No, that didn't happen, but that's exactly what is going on in Philippi.

God's best player was taken out of the game, or so it seemed. What they didn't know is that Paul always had his jersey on, you know what I'm saying? He'll put up 450 yards any day of the week.

- *Verse 12:* "Now I want you to know," what is actually going on "has actually served to advance of the gospel." There's the key phrase.
 - Some translations say: "Progress of the gospel"
 - The Greek word was sometimes used in reference to "blazing a trail before an army."
 - And this would have been a great surprise. Paul says, you can't stop the Word when Jesus people are living like Jesus.

T: Here's two pieces of evidence...

Evidence #1: Paul's Prison Opportunity (verse 13)

- Prison is not fun. The threat of death is not comforting. Surely Paul experienced mental, physical, emotional and spiritual anguish,
- BUT *he says*, "As a result..." Did you catch that? The news was traveling forward, not simply in spite of the adversity, but *because* of the adversity.
- Can you imagine the conversations between the guards and the prisoners?
 - Guards: "Why you are here?"
 - Prisoners: "Theft, Insurrection, Murder..." And then they get to Paul :): "What about you?" Paul says: "Jesus." Guards: "What?" Paul says: "I got these because I talk about Jesus too much." Guards: "Jesus? Who's Jesus?" Paul: "Glad you asked."
- Here's a lesson for advancing the news... It is not hard to figure out who God wants you to tell about Jesus. Just look beside you. The person you spend time with is a person God loves.
- Do you see what is happening? They thought they could stop Paul, but as Paul says in another place:

- **“Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. *But God’s word is not chained.*” (2 Timothy 2:8-9)**
- We almost get the sense, Paul might have been compelled to write a Thank You note to those who put him behind bars. .

Dear Jews who hate me in Jerusalem:

Thank you for having me arrested at the temple several months ago. While I have not enjoyed every moment of being in custody, I have had some phenomenal experiences. You thought you could keep me quiet, but you supplied me with a captive audience. In fact... You just got me to the Emperor, because Caesar’s guards are hearing about Jesus, believing in Jesus, and now taking that news to his household (as it says at the end of this letter in 4:22).”

Sincerely,

Paul, a prisoner of Rome & proclaimer of Jesus.

Just as a side note. God works in ways we can’t see. He can take any of your difficulties and turn them into opportunities!

T: That was Paul’s experience... Not only was he advancing the gospel while imprisoned, but

Evidence #2: Others were More Bold to Talk Jesus (verse 14)

- We might have thought other believers would have been intimidated to talk Jesus in light of Paul’s imprisonment. “Hey, look what happened to him for being so committed to Jesus.” No... it emboldened other Jesus people.
- Somebody had to step up, and they stepped up with swagger. They were confident IN THE LORD. Confidence comes from God.
- Some people call it **“Godfidence.”** “Godfidence” knows that God’s ETA is earlier than yours. He’s already working and he is in you to work through you each moment.
- That’s why they were “Much more bold” or as another translation says: they “dare[d] all the more.”
 - To be “daring” indicates a willingness “to show boldness or resolution in the face of danger, opposition, or a problem.” (BDAG)
 - Talking Jesus is risky business.
 - “Truth or Dare” to tell the Truth. Catch that?

- **“Truth or Dare”** is a game where you have to tell the truth when asked a question or Dare to perform the requested action.
- **Truth: How much do you talk about Jesus?**
- **Dare: Tell the Truth.**
- Truth: 2 times last year. (Not very proud of that?) Let’s triple that - make it six this year. Why not? Let’s dare to be more daring...
- Paul says: **“MOST of the bros & sisters...”** were doing so around him.
 - Did you see that? **MOST** of the Men & Women. (not all, **MOST**): I don’t know about you, but I don’t want to miss out on this. I want to be among the **“Most.”**
 - And I’m not sure if you love what I love about verse 14 as much as I love it! But I hope you will!
- Who advances the news? Jesus people. Not Jesus Professionals.
- This isn’t just Paul’s mission. This isn’t just the pastor’s mission (you know what I’m saying?). This is our mission. We all have to be saying: **“This is *my* mission.”** MINE! M. I. N. E.
- What if the vast majority of the Jesus People known as Redemption Hill Church took a huge step forward this year?

And don’t miss this: **“Courage is contagious.”** - Hansen

- Because they saw Paul’s example of talking about Jesus even while imprisoned, they were more confident and fearless.
- Who will be the four or five, the nine or ten, who will step out first? I believe if we see 10 more people consistently displaying courage: **“Yo, here’s a resource. Hey man, no pressure, but can I tell you my story. Souper Sunday.”**
- I believe when that happens, 9 or 10 will be come 30 or 40. Why? **“Courage is contagious.”** - Hansen.
- And when 30 or 40 take care of business, it will be 90 to 100. Why? **“Courage is contagious.”** - Hansen.
- And then we’ll be reppin like Philippians 1. **MOST OF** the Church engaged in risky business, and all of the sudden, we’re seeing more people become Jesus people than ever before. Don’t you want to see it happen?
- Let’s ask God for courage and boldness for one another.

The news about Jesus is going forward. The question is: **Will it go forward through you?**

T: This discussion of the gospel advancing raises another concern the Philippians had for Paul. They knew Paul would have been grieved to hear that people were advancing the news with two different motives in relation to Paul's imprisonment. Look at what he says in vv. 15-18.

Not only should we allow nothing to stop the advance of the news of Jesus. We should also...

II. Rejoice every time the news advances (15-18).

Some of the brothers and sisters were completely united with Paul and advanced the news out of love for God and Paul. BUT.

Some people allowed twisted motives to mix into their good deeds. They actually "preach[ed] Christ out of envy and rivalry." It seems these people were not spreading false teaching, but were jealous of Paul's expansive ministry.

What a huge warning for us?

- Ungodliness can creep into our most godly acts.
- We can sing these songs, serve people, read the entire Bible in 2017, and even tell people about Jesus because we want to appear more significant in the eyes of others. We can do it so people think the work we're doing more important to God than the work of other people.
- Selfish ambition will kill our sincerity (as verse 17 tells us).

Listen to this: lurking in every human heart is the desire for a "greater name." (Gen. 11 - Babel). We want more than other people: more fame, more respect, more pats on the back. Instead of finding contentment in what God has designed for us, we compare ourselves to others and want to be greater.

The nasty curse of comparison is the root of selfish ambition, envy, and rivalry.

- Let's consider this together: when others around us thrive, do we thank God in happiness for them or do we question God upset that didn't get what they got?
- Comparison leads to envy, and envy (unrepented of) quickly moves to bitterness.
- This is true for us on a personal level, and it can be true of churches.

- We want to be a church that loves what God is doing in Boston, not just our tiny slice of it.
- This year, if every other church that advances the news of Jesus grows and we don't, who wins? We win! Why? because we are FOR them!
- We are not competitors but teammates.
- **PICTURE:** Two weeks ago, I prayed with about 12 other pastors from around Greater Boston to pray for our city and for each other's churches. I love these guys. I want to see them thrive. I want to see their neighborhoods and cities forever changed. That's how Paul went about his business, and this is ultra clear from what he says at the end of verse 17 & 18.

I love this: "supposing they can still up trouble.."

- I love that...! You "Suppose" you can stir up trouble. You "suppose" you can bring me down, but you're actually bringing me up.
- Why? Because the most important thing was happening. The news about Jesus was pushing forward. That's all he really cared about. Paul didn't matter in comparison with that.
- "The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Advance the News - We've talked a lot about communicating the news, but we haven't talked much about the content of the news.

- The gospel is the good news about Jesus.
 - This is the news of news!
 - God made us to enjoy an unbroken, completely harmonious relationship with him.
 - We chose our own path and severed our relationship with God through sin.
 - But that didn't stop God's love for us. God came near by sending his Son, Jesus, to do what we could never do. Live. Die. And not stay dead...
 - Now, we can experience life as God designed it, now and forever in a harmonious relationship with him once again.
 - This news is robust! In reflecting on these words, the renowned scholar, N. T. Wright said: “[Paul was] **proclaiming a new and very subversive message. The soldiers were used, of course, to the ‘gospel’ of Caesar – the supposed ‘good news’ that a new emperor had taken the throne, bringing (so he claimed) peace and justice to the world. Now here was someone out of the blue announcing that there was a different ‘gospel’: that Jesus of Nazareth had taken the throne of the world, and was summoning every man, woman and child to bow the knee to him.**” (N. T. Wright)

The news of Jesus was paramount to Paul and it caused him to “Rejoice.”

- Even while imprisoned, Paul could rejoice because he loved Christ's glory more than his own. Paul didn't need his name in lights as long as people knew the name of Jesus.
- Does the news of Jesus excite you? Does it move your emotions (Make you laugh? Make you cry?)?
- Do you celebrate when more people hear about Jesus?
- The message of Jesus moved Paul. He loved it more than anything.
- **[Pic] Jesus People** rejoice when the news of Jesus reaches more people.

There is nothing better than more people hearing about Jesus and choosing to follow Jesus. Nothing. Do you agree? If so, would people conclude that by the way you live?

Conclusion:

The gospel is advancing in Medford, and it is advancing through Redemption Hill, and we are only scratching the surface of what is to come! I want to invite a new friend of mine to join me. Her name is

KERI PELLETIER [Redemption Story Graphic]

Who is your Keri? Pray for them. God, give me an opportunity, and lets rejoice together!

Pray.