



**SERIES: Philippians (May / June)**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Saturday, May 8, 2021**

**Scripture: Philippians 1:12-14**

**TITLE: Don't Waste a Trial**

Some of my hardest trials have been the greatest leverage to sharing the Gospel. When our middle son was undergoing chemotherapy for cancer and the subsequent reconstructive surgeries, we were constantly in the hospital surrounded by hurting people. Though we struggled like everyone else, we had hope and peace through every moment. The people in the hospital noticed. They would ask us, “You seem at peace though your world is falling apart. How can I have that peace?” My wife and I have shared the Gospel and the testimonies of God’s goodness countless times, despite the challenging circumstances.

Paul had a similar experience while he was in chains. Listen to this in Philippians 1:

“And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. <sup>13</sup> For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ. <sup>14</sup> And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God’s message without fear.” (Phil. 1:12-14, NLT)

Paul is writing from house arrest in Rome. Paul was chained to a guard twenty-four hours a day. This made escape impossible, but it also made privacy impossible. Yet, Paul didn’t take the chains as a muzzle, but rather an opportunity for sharing the Gospel to a captive audience.

Paul was passionate about the Gospel. It cost him his past life and his future life. He knew that the truth of the Gospel was real and worth it all. So even though he was awaiting trial in rented quarters, and chained to a guard, he made every effort to evangelize the guards, and anyone else who came to visit. That’s why he says, “everyone here, including the whole palace guard.” Paul may be in chains, and may be confined to his efficiency apartment, but he is making the most of every minute.

I wish I could say I made the most of every moment at the hospital with my son. I didn’t. But I did, and continue to, use the trials of our life for the expansion of the Gospel and for the glory of God. And I share this with you not to boast, but like Paul, to encourage you to do the same.

Testimony transmission is Gospel motivation. When we share about the leveraging of trials for the expansion of the Gospel, it motivates others to do the same. That’s why the people around Paul gained great confidence to share the Gospel without fear.

That's why I have a special challenge for you today. I want you to do two things: first, share in the comments below how you've leveraged a trial to share the Gospel and the testimonies of God's goodness. We want to encourage each other to share the Good News without fear.

Second, how can you leverage a trial or circumstance you're going through right now for the expansion of the Gospel? Chances are you're facing one or more trials. People are watching and wondering how you are navigating with joy and hope. So don't waste your trial - Leverage it, no matter how heavy the chains.

Now that you have the challenge, go win the day.