

# Rise Above

09 - Living the Simple Gospel: Philippians  
Church on the Park | Sunday, 12 FEB 2017

**Text:** Philippians 1:15-18

**Theme:** Rise above the darkness of people's motives and see the light of Christ.

**Intro:** Here is one of the most fascinating and peculiar passages of Paul. It's fascinating because even though people are causing Paul immense trouble through preaching out of an impure heart, he still rejoices. It's peculiar because Paul usually condemns those with impure motives. We also know Paul is also very strong against false preaching. Take, for example Philippians 3:2 and 18, as well as Galatians 1:8-9. So why would Paul rejoice under these circumstances?

## 1) Like an airplane climbs above gloomy clouds, rise above people's dark motives (Phil 1:18).

- *First, what's the **situation**? What exactly is **happening**?*
  - It's pretty much what we find today. Some **televangelist** preaching Jesus and also taking up a huge offering for their new jet.
  - Some people get really **angry** at the **corruption** and think all Christians are fake.
  - I remember the **newspapers** all over Australia said that our Bible School was "making a killing through raising the dead."
    - The reality is we were surviving on the smell of an oily rag.
    - But they bunched us with other big 'ministry' schools.
  - The situation for Paul is that he's in **greater physical distress** because of these men. Maybe the guards give him an extra beating when they hear about these **competitive** and **proud** preachers.
- In light of this, it's easy for you to **trip up** and get the **wrong conclusion** about this passage.
  - Paul does get genuinely **distressed** by people preaching with **impure motives**.
    - **Jesus** is all about the **heart motivations**. And Paul clearly **condemns false prophets** in Philippians and other places like Galatians.
  - Therefore, this passage puts us in a **conundrum**.
    - *Do we just praise God and **rejoice**, not caring about impure motives?*
    - *Or, do we have a **dark and gloomy attitude** that condemns false motives?*
    - Or...is there **some other** way to resolve this.
- Paul chooses a **whole different perspective** that seems very strange to us.
  - **What** he is **saying** is this:
    - This whole thing of **selfish ambition** in preaching **distresses me** at the **deepest levels**. **Competition, making a name for yourself, building your own kingdom, profiting from the Gospel**, using **Jesus** as bait for **personal gain**—all of this **grieves** me.
    - But, I'm not going to **let** your dark and gloomy **motives** keep me from **rejoicing**.
    - God is actually **using** you to **proclaim Jesus**. There is **some light** shining from this **dark cloud**. **I don't rejoice in your sin** and I sure don't want anyone **following** you, but I **thank God** Jesus is becoming more well known.
- In the same way, **rise above people's dark motives and see the light**. And even if a light is small and flickering, thank God that there is some light.
  - The Father can even use false prophets like **Balaam**.
    - **Don't follow them** - please run from their churches - but **thank God** that he can turn the enemy's evil for good. Rejoice that Jesus is greater!

## 2) Focus on the light rather than the darkness, the wheat rather than the chaff (Phil 1:15-18).

- If you learn what I am sharing today, you will live a life of **joy** and **praise**, rather than anger and **frustration**.
- *How can I apply this more personally?*

- *What about many of our **religious upbringings**? Or what if you came from a **church** with **impure motives**? Do we you **mad** at it or do we **rejoice**? What should you **proper response** be?*
- Let me share about **my own life** and I hope not to offend anyone.
  - I grew up Catholic. Once I got saved and found Jesus personally, I was so **angry** with the Catholic church. I was angry with what they taught and I never wanted to go into the Catholic church again. Mainly, because they believe in salvation through good works.
  - After many years, God showed me that **my attitude** was **immature**. **He** then began showing me **all the good I learned** through my parents and the Catholic church. I learned about **Jesus**. I learned about the **Trinity**. The **Bible** was read. I learned to **honour God** in everything and do good works. I actually learned many good things.
  - Yes, there are some bad things in the **Catholic** church, there are also bad things in **Protestant** churches. But, I now **rejoice** in the **good things**, the light I received.
  - Don't **stay** in a **bad place**, but also thank God for the good in the bad place. This is not to say that all Catholic churches are bad, some are great communities. What I am saying is if something is quite bad, then rejoice in whatever is good and move on.
- Let's look at this in the life of **Joseph**.
  - Listen to Joseph at the end of his life in **Genesis 50:19-21** (cf. Gen. 45:4-8).
    - What Joseph's brothers did was really **wrong**. But Joseph **focuses** on what God did through it.
    - Consequently, **Joseph** can **rejoice (even through his tears)** and **minister life**.
    - He sees God **allowed** it for the **saving** of **many**.
      - This is what I mean by focusing on the light rather than the darkness, the wheat rather than the chaff.
  - **Focus** on the light and not the darkness. **Don't ignore** the darkness, just **rise above** it. Don't let it be your focus.

### 3) See Jesus in the midst of the fire (Daniel 3:24-27)

- In every **fire** for the believer, there is **Jesus waiting** to be **seen**.
- He **protects** and **preserves** you through the **fire**. He gets you through the fire without being burnt.
- Not only will you **see Jesus** in the **fire** through **faith**—your faith will **cause others** to **see** Jesus in the fire.
  - Notice all the **high officials** and **Nebuchadnezzar** see Jesus too.
- The book of **Philippians** is all about **Paul seeing Jesus** in the **fire** of his **prison**. He wants **you** to **see Jesus too**, wherever you are, and **rejoice**.

**Conclusion:** 1) Rise above people's dark motives, 2) Focus on the light rather than the darkness, and 3) See Jesus in the fire.