

- I. Difficult circumstances provide opportunities to advance the gospel
 - A. Paul faced many difficult circumstances
 - B. Paul’s difficult circumstances did not stop the gospel
 - C. Paul’s difficult circumstances provided a way for the gospel to advance

“For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrances he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 28:30-31)

- D. Paul was able to minister to the palace guard

“All the saints, send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar’s household.” (Philippians 4:22)

- E. Paul was able to influence many as they heard his story

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.” (Romans 1:16)

- II. Difficult circumstances provide opportunities to encourage others
 - A. Believers were encouraged to speak the Word of God
 - B. Believers were filled with courage

“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.” (Acts 4:31)

- C. Believers were experiencing victory over fear

- III. Difficult circumstances provide opportunities to refine our priorities
 - A. Paul was faced with preachers causing him trouble
 - 1. They were envious of Paul
 - 2. They were promoting themselves
 - B. Paul was encouraged by the preachers who supported him
 - 1. They acted out of love
 - 2. They knew Paul was in chains for Christ
 - C. Paul’s response to both groups is joy that Christ is preached.

1. The preaching of Christ was Paul's priority and passion

"I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel." (I Corinthians 9:16)

2. Paul's joy did not come from his circumstances
3. Paul's joy came because Christ was proclaimed