



Links Players

Chained For Christ

Now, I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear. (Philippians 1:12-14)

When injury keeps us off the golf course, we are left disappointed and frustrated. Being sidelined while wanting to enjoy the game, the beautiful outdoors, and friends can discourage a person.

The same is true of ministry. There is no greater joy than being in the middle of what God is doing in the world! At times, though, we experience limitations and constraints beyond our control. Family and work obligations, limited resources, consuming relationships, and health issues can limit our freedom, leaving us less available to be used by the Lord. Or, so we think.

While we may feel trapped or ineffective in moments, God is never limited by our circumstances. He can use what little we think we have to give in the most challenging circumstances for the Gospel.

Even while in prison, the Apostle Paul was highly effective. Paul spent his last few years under house arrest in Rome, chained to a Royal Guard. Though limited in mobility, Paul remained incredibly productive right up to the end of his life.

Under house arrest in Rome, Paul welcomed visitors daily, explaining from morning into the evening how and why Jesus was the promised Messiah and savior of the world (Acts 28:17). It was during this period that Paul penned letters to the early churches in Ephesus, Philippi, Colossi, and to Philemon.

Consider the reach and frequency of these letters over time and their impact on the world! Paul's chains did not limit God!

After being released from house arrest and moved to the Mamertine Prison, Paul would write his final letter to his protegee, Timothy, from a dungeon. Paul's life strategy and his worldview were explicit right up to the end of his life when he writes to Timothy:

I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the

crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

Paul would be executed in AD 68 on the Ostian Way, three miles outside Rome.

Like Paul, our days are numbered. Our greatest limitation is time. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we can maximize our efforts while there is still time! Despite any challenge, we can contribute what we can in any circumstance—prayer, service, written encouragement, phone calls, hospitality, giving, teaching, friendship, and counsel.

Fortunately for Paul, he could see the local impact of his ministry while under house arrest. At the end of his letter to the Philippians, he writes:

Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. (Philippians 4:21)

“Especially those of Caesar's household”—from prison confinement to the palace guard to Caesar's house—the good news about Jesus made its way!

God is not limited, though we may feel limited. The Lord can and will use us. Ask him to show you what to do. Give what you can. And in the end, we can say to Paul, “What has happened to me has served to advance the gospel.”

Prayer: Lord, use my current circumstances to advance your message of love and grace to a lost world.

—

Boo Arnold

Copyright 2024 Links Players International

The Links Daily Devotional appears Monday-Friday at linksplayers.com.