([00:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=p6VUI3NO5xmykomsL0JMzOea9RUrNkp1kC0poP8kC6x7URsyCxS97B9PX4_OXsqTpnSXIr9lrUIGJoz0Wes1zQY0Qw8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=0.74)):

Well, now we've got four evenings in the epistle to the Philippians. So why don't you open your Bible straight away of that? And let me read the first chapter to you, *"Paul and Timothy servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi. Notice their address---in Christ Jesus at Philippi ---together with the overseers and the deacons. Grace to you and peace from God, our father and the Lord, Jesus Christ. I thank my God every time I remember you in all my prayers for all of you. I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you, will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you who share in God's grace with me, God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and in depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is best, and may be pure and blameless until the day of Jesus Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."*

([01:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GDDoqEf3VOPSFCmH94ug5qbCTgSXmeFs-5VfEHyitULnjF-be3TwkO6PY1jTTzm2iShHNHcjoTf_9bED57qSQGSBwSE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=102.98)):

*"Now, I want you to know brothers that what has happened to me has really 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. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly. It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of Goodwill. The latter do it in love knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached; and because of this, I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice; for, I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance."*

([03:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5AmMNL0Fb3mTvIKZ0pCAiRPs0wr9pOmBdxwO8dVdieLGsxRYf6_Fau_r2EkekDv_lvXg9z3IsS8725xH0xy0smLUw4g&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=181.42)):

*" I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage, so that now, as always, Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or death; for, to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I'm to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet, what shall I choose? I do not know. I am torn between the two! I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is much better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this. I know that I will remain and I will continue with all of you for your* *progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again, your joy in Christ, Jesus will overflow on account of me."*

([04:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4VjrfDTK5ZZb0rIbOngVDjA4-HhVQGLHXIchIlJwYzxVIXjdOMH3p89_8G8g_xw_o-dR0aUkUmLzk_r3F3UnYxJiZAM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=245.08)):

*" Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. And then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one Spirit contending as one man, for the faith of the gospel, without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you; this is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved, and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had---and now hear that I still have."*

([05:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=tBwZs4z3Wc1DdWiKDoN01qwo1GpGbQiMMX_LbG5aIWIvXeVwT7Gd9D1nm1RL5g2Ap4PsN7Mn8TlVILoO9KZdqi-Dl3o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=301.67)):

A few years ago, an archaeologist broke into a tomb in Northern Greece and unearthed a treasure trove of the most fabulous gold and silver ornaments, vessels, and furniture. It was second only to the tomb of Tutankhamun. And I'm afraid that tomb overshadowed this one. But it was second only to that. They had discovered the tomb of a King; and the King was King Phillip. And the ruined town of Philippi has now been found and excavated. It's around that tomb. Phillip of Macedon was the father of Alexander the Great, and indeed engaged Aristotle to be the tutor of his son, Alexander.

([05:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1zwU0j5mS7tKmkaGZpCURrHjTfcHTYZKmnlS4OoFKqkFxWfpmuFbuIG77bL340BIa-RSCOtVgTobPLORYjltF43anRI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=352.94)):

Now it was King Phillip who chose that place for the site of his capital, and he chose it very carefully. And this is important to understand the letter. Let me show you a little glimpse of Philippi.

A castle on top of a grass covered field

Description automatically generated Put the first transparency on for me. It's a beautiful place in a valley with the mountains all around, but it's quite important to understand why Philippi was there. That's a picture of modern Philippi with the ruins of the city that Paul visited in the foreground beautiful place. Now, why is it there?

I want you to use your imagination while I draw a map for you. From the Adriatic Sea right across to the Black Sea, there is a line of mountains. It's a barrier between the continent of Europe and the continent of Asia.

A close up of a map

Description automatically generatedThere is only one gap in that range of mountains where a river has cut through the range. And that's the gap where Philippa was built. It is strategic. Anyone who controlled that gap controlled the traffic between Europe and Asia. It's not surprising then that the Romans put their eye on it and said, we're going to have a colony there, and control the world through that little gap. And the Romans also built a motorway, or a Roman road, which was much the same thing alongside the range of mountains from West to East to link those two continents, so that you have a kind of crossroads a gap from North to South and a road from West to East--the 'Ignation Way'. So, whoever control there could control the whole area. It was strategically vital.

([07:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=U5odbWqXByFZf4cg-gbzDgRXYrlSjq-VxOsJ5VoEA7XiWK9eZo-5i33xy_P54jrPvUlTsrfTJ4XY5XCQpBQeAMTWrY8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=464)):

And it's not surprising that some of the biggest battles in history happened just there. It was precisely at that gap that Brutus and Cassius were defeated by Antony. It was precisely in that gap that Antony and Cleopatra were defeated. This was where the armies met. This was the vital crossroads to hold. And so the Romans made it a colony. It was a little bit of Rome, far from Rome---Roman law, Roman dress, Roman food, Roman culture, Roman entertainment. It was all there. It was a colony of Rome.

([08:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zOmGkYcatvcaZXgFiCOojIv9MqyjMeb5vhnC5_kYg-MmDsucBeO3VuyqC5XYjaDzMW1J77ewohwZsgIAuuBqg0KbGHo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=504.44)):

Somebody else had his eye on that strategic center, and that other person was God himself. And God wanted it for a colony of heaven---which is precisely what Paul calls it in the letter to the Philippians. God saw the strategy of it, and he needed a man to go and plant a church there. And he had the very man: a little bald headed, bandy legged Jew, with eyebrows meeting in the middle (according to one description we have); and that was God's choice to be the colonizer of this strategic center.

([08:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dDa3TierGbI5akB9LJ7lMZRCCcyYHl3eK_e6zvfXLviDZu2h4uk8riNhEXFJZKCAXmeHrNh3NedUSEcf8h5zoYK5SAk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=539.31)):

There was only one snag. This little Jew was too busy, running crusades in the middle of what we now call Turkey. And he was set on evangelizing the whole peninsula we now call Turkey. So God had to step in and change his plans. And Paul said, “Let's go and have a crusade in Asia.” And God said, "No!" So Paul moved on and said, "Well, let's go and have a crusade in Bethania." And God said, "No!" And God was driving him in a kind of zigzag course. I find that God can guide you much more easily when you're on the move than when you're sitting still. It's much easier to steer a mobile car than it is to turn the wheel of a static car. And Paul didn't sit and wait for guidance. He got on with the job and let the Lord shut doors in his face. And the Lord drove him in a zigzag course to the coast at Troas. And he thought, "Oh, where do I go now?? I've come to the sea!" And that night he had a dream. And a man of Macedonia said, "Come over and help us." And that's how the gospel of Jesus Christ came to Europe. And for century, after century, after century, Europe has been the most Christianized continent in the world. It is now one of the most godless; but for centuries, it was one of the most Christian. And this was the point at which Christianity came to Europe, and that crucial city in the gap in the mountains on that main West-East highway---that crucial city---Paul came to. He didn't even stop at Neapolis on the coast. He went straight on, because Paul's strategy was to go for the key city, establish a colony of heaven there, and let them evangelize the neighborhood.

([10:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=egwpo4oOADY0s-oyEmA8GQJep3TIBnybplshKJg4rG70sQ2l8xJAaByhRcjj1lAsQe6s7gGzQWxhG3Wi65027sC8sZo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=644.19)):

So he made straight for Philippi, and he usually began with a synagogue, but there wasn't a synagogue. You have to have 12 Jewish men before you can have a synagogue. What he did find was a Jewish prayer meeting of ladies led by a business woman called Lydia. And she was not even Jewish, but she was what's called a proselyte--- a Jewish convert. And she'd started this little ladies prayer group by the riverside. So the first church started with a ladies prayer group in Europe.

([11:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YKb6fH1kECIZqyEDWnGfGXfkqMX1CGoF2x0LuRDyxzJHtimWxa2Y3MYkOD8Mr5FU8XXRUzfmD-hZ0-OdNvutCSJnSZA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=676.98)):

For the next few days, Paul was constantly followed by a clairvoyant girl. He put up with her for three days and she kept shouting after Paul and his companion, "These men have come from the living God, and they're preaching the truth." Now you'd have thought that was good publicity, and everything she said was right. But in fact, when a demon-possessed person tells the truth, that can lead to compromise. And so eventually Paul dealt with her. And, as you remember, that meant that the two men who were making money out of her fortune telling lost their income. And soon there was such trouble that Paul was arrested for causing a riot, was flogged, put in prison.; and at midnight, he and Silas were singing. They weren't dancing in the dark. You can't dance very well when there are chains on your hands and feet, but they were seeing in the dark; and it was then that God took a hand. God didn't want them in prison. He wanted a colony of heaven there. So, he shook the whole prison and set them free. That's when the first man was converted---the Philippian jailer. Now there was a man in the church, and soon the other men, and the fellowship was balanced up that way. But Paul had to leave the city. Having been flogged and in prison without trial, he humbled and embarrassed the city authorities by saying, "I'm a Roman citizen, and what you've done to me is illegal." And so, he made them accompany him out of the city.

([12:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ynCR2kL99rJnEmCLLHegLkRgjXQMc-oDFs-9akcACccl_C5LaMNZzgb67B6anLv6erxa9bkKXwWFKIWCPbwbd6YBj2o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=774.011)):

Now that's the background to this letter, a strategic colony of heaven had been placed in the middle of the Roman colony at that crossroads between Europe and Asia. And Paul had a better relationship with that church than any other that he ever founded, a warm relationship. And they voluntarily undertook to support Paul in his ministry---the only church he founded that ever did such a thing, and they sent money after him. They wanted others to get the good news that they'd received. They wanted Paul to continue his work. Then they heard that he was in prison in Rome. They must've thought Paul got into prison wherever he went. But they were concerned, and they sent a letter to him expressing their concern. They did more than that. They sent him money, so that he could have food to eat. Prisons didn't supply food in those days---relatives and friends had to bring food in. And they also sent a man to be his companion and housekeeper while he was under house arrest, a man called a Epaphroditus.

([14:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Y-h0bLRsjjzZod7MO3IimUnf-ypnqavcC1pKAcEuur7EexNhGwjRUKcCk6Zly4Hs17tt1lwN2NSzjZ3njbmwcXDskaI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=846.64)):

Now that's the background we have here, a letter, which is essentially a thank you letter. Paul is simply saying, "Thank you," for all he’s received. Now I want to deal with this letter in four ways in the four evenings; I'm not going to go straight through chapter by chapter. I'm relying on you to read it, and read it, and read it, and read it whenever you get to spend a minute. It's not long, and you can read it through half a dozen times during this week. If you do that, you'll get far more out of these studies that I'm sharing with you.

([14:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fynJ3d8nHGu67aRRo5oWRfax3k28i8fz0OX5mNTyo4_0ZYRymSlAeeg5pk_8AuK8W66SioCQEQzHpZmWuJrmYLSm_os&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=881.95)): **Four Marks of the *True Church***

I'm going to take four major themes out of the book. And the themes are the four marks of a true church. The marks that I want to highlight are these: number one, **suffering** is a mark of the true church. Number two, **unity** is a mark of the true church. Number three, **righteousness** is a mark of the true church. And number four, **fellowship** is a mark of the true church. Now, if you like alliteration (I was told that the alliteration is the province of fools, poets and Plymouth Brethren. I don't know if that's true!!)--- but if you like alliteration, then here are the four themes in an alliterative way: **pain**, **peace**, **purity**, and **partnership** are the four marks of the true church. And I want to begin tonight by talking about the pain--the suffering that is the mark of a true Christian Church. This is not going to be the most popular study of the four, but it's perhaps one of the most necessary.

([15:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5ZNLKML_4HTxF4P9-xz_vCn1D5zPwgRJk-1Fdz7DyO5gRaquX4e7GqvGNslgMe6kk5NLyytVjGpmqvP9cDagaIDDGoo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=954.17)):

I used to get very depressed when I listened to other people's testimonies when people got up and said, "I came to Jesus and all my troubles were over". Did you ever hear that kind of testimony? I got depressed by those. I thought, "Why is my testimony so different from theirs? Because my testimony is just the opposite." I came to Jesus in 1947, actually, but when I came to Jesus, my troubles began. A few years later, I got baptized in the Spirit and my troubles got much worse. And it's quite the truth that in the last 10 years, I've been in more trouble than in the previous 30. That's my testimony. But thank God it fits with the promises of Jesus. Jesus said, "In the world you'll have big trouble," but he said, "Cheer up. I'm on top of it." I love that Jesus for his honesty. He never told us anything that was not even half true. He said, "If it were not so I would have told you." And he promised us trouble, big trouble. He said, "In the world, you will have trouble." And I notice that Paul was faithful to his Lord Jesus. And he preached the same thing in Acts 14. He went back to the churches in Turkey that he'd planted---the churches in Derbe, and Lystra, and Iconia; and it says, he reminded them, "That through MUCH trouble we shall enter the kingdom of God."

([17:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=k23CV5S6tkgFrWiEOoJ4GVCtn1JY9M0Y5qSXpP6Spzaur73salH8mFd86c0_JXi-kAF4NHPYhNu-uHkRDAlZ8Aih_-A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1051.26)):

Now that's not a popular gospel; much easier to invite people to come and have their troubles dealt with: "Come to Jesus and your troubles are over." That is NOT the truth. **You come to Jesus and your troubles BEGIN!** Paul did not preach a gospel of prosperity---of health and wealth as it's sometimes called. He preached a gospel of adversity. And that's the gospel I want to begin with tonight, because all the four major themes this week are connected with the gospel: suffering for the gospel, unity for the gospel, righteousness of the gospel, fellowship in the gospel. **The word ‘gospel’ goes all the way through this book. And it's a gospel of suffering. It's a gospel of the cross, a gospel that calls you to share the sufferings of Christ.** It's a gospel that spells trouble. Now at the end of chapter one----I wonder if you notice the verse at the end of the chapter I read to you. Paul says, *"For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but to suffer for him, as you saw, I suffered for him, and as you hear I still do."* You see when Paul went to Philippi, they saw him flogged and in prison. So they didn't have any illusions about what it meant to be a Christian. They didn't think it was going to be a feather bed or cushion. They knew that it was going to be tough to accept this faith. They saw it in the person who brought it to them, and now he's in prison, again, suffering for the gospel. And so they knew from the very beginning that there is a dimension of suffering when you receive the true gospel.

([19:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=iNX1lw7dzledSCcCe6vo48qKvi8xltMue7MiLKLXmPgl9vr9iLB6B4zpRnhwJQkmXQaGvJeHzFKSAConHgMUH7MdJr0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1163.16)): **Suffering is *Normal* for Christians**

Now, the three things I want to say about suffering tonight are these: **number one, suffering is normal for Christians.** One of the biggest differences between the early church and the church today is this, suffering has become a problem for the church. I see books in Christian bookshops on the problem of suffering. I hear sermons announced, 'The Problem of Suffering'. Why has it become a problem? In the New Testament it wasn't a problem! They rejoiced that they were worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. It wasn't a problem to them. It was something they rejoiced in, something they were glad to have. Why is it that we've changed so much?

([20:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=it7ymVxNnvguVrYCAd6Db4EavTN74cVtHysz_rfXsQroFUwgU25YHOSTFQR2kkbrkyFHV-bG4QHlZCbGt5EdaxUYMho&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1210.68)): **Suffering Is *Greater* for Christians**

**Second thing I wanted to say about suffering is that suffering is *greater* for Christians than for unbelievers**. You can expect to suffer more after your conversion than you did before. Now, why should that be? Well, there are two reasons. ***First*** of all, ***Christians are not promised immunity from the troubles of a fallen world.*** We are not promised immunity from cancer or from miscarriages. We are not promised immunity from air crashes or road accidents. We are not promised such immunity. I think of Fred Mitchell, the missionary flying back from the Far East killed in the first Comet air crash. I think of dear brother, George Hoffman taken from us in a moment the car knocking him down. Christians are not immune from the accidents in this world. Now that is not to say that God cannot in his will remove those things or counteract them.

([21:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6IvVgzEAWBENltTbVnBsJgXX6eJMnG7CxJmTD4d9F6GxVi8ZAzxMkJDzNvoDhK0hvzJPPYoR-3Bm1PlazhW6RbvL5YA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1280.47)):

My dear wife sitting down in the front row here was given a few weeks to live years ago. She had cancer---she had a malignant melanoma. The Lord had mercy on us. And she's here now with not a trace of it, but the Lord had mercy on us; but he hasn't promised to do that with every person who gets cancer in the church. And we are in a fallen world where things go wrong. There's no guarantee that if an earthquake happens, there'll be no Christian affected. There's no guarantee that the Christians in Bosnia will escape all the pressures that are on them. There's no guarantee of these things. There's no immunity. We suffer as others do. And, ***secondly***, on top of that, ***Christians also suffer, not only because they're in the fallen world, but because they are not of the fallen world*.** We are social misfits. We are the odd man out. And some of you are facing social embarrassment and worse, because you're the only Christian at work. You don't laugh at all the jokes the others laugh at. You are different---have a different sense of humor. They probably think you have no sense of humor. It's just that you laugh at different things. But we are social misfits. "The world hated me," said Jesus, "and the world will hate you!" So,we have a double dose of suffering. We get the normal accidents that happen in a fallen world. And we also get a world that doesn't like people who act as a conscience--- who remind them of God and remind them of goodness. So suffering is not only normal for Christians. Suffering is greater for Christians. Let's tell the truth. We must not delude people. We must preach the truth.

([23:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=lcWz5DvbMvWW5fF5nJdde6ai1JDwV6cwS51vcujSEzn1Zsoww0S2yk7Pw2kDbFpxVmmS9td5F1sg0-E6EQOQwETmOXs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1389.88)): **Suffering is *Good* for Christians**

And ***thirdly***, ***suffering is good for Christians***. Now, here we come to the heart of Paul's letter to the Philippians. It's not an easy heart, but this is it. Suffering is to be welcomed. And in this letter a little later on, Paul says, "I want to know Christ and to share in his suffering---not to share in his joy, but to share in his sufferings. I want to know him. I want to get to know him." And I want to tell you quite simply that you get to know Jesus a good deal more quickly when you suffer than when things are fine. You understand him better because you're going through it with him. It's not just being like him. It's being with him in it, sharing his sufferings---not just sharing your suffering with him, sharing his suffering.

([24:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-GumzB1ULJ3SltrlpwdQBE4jU9sHnbNRml2bsYNczElBmTeXRGEZBw6erV9RyVKWAM74RZZwJ5EEzbnZj_GK9V7KmpI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1448.21)):

Now there are two provisos to what I've just said. And the provides those are these: *number one, that the suffering is undeserved*. The New Testament is very clear on this, that if we suffer because we deserved it, then that is no credit and no glory to Jesus. We're talking now about Christians who may go to prison for fraud or incest---I'm quoting two cases. That brings no glory to Jesus. And that brings no edification to the person concerned. Peter says, in his letter, if you go to prison for doing wrong, that's not good. But if you go for doing right, now that is sharing the suffering of Christ; and we need to be very sure that we haven't done wrong and are suffering because of our own silly faults.

([25:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=p7wwZMYv8aVR1zFniPjcL2_7ot3A1ojVx8M7UJthkB7cJIE7GVwrLCVAIr6XOfhC6OXfqsRytmpn_rxrk3zAFBIdmZg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1501.43)):

That's the first proviso. But the second proviso is this: *suffering is good for the Christian, provided it is overcome*. Not just accepted, not just borne, but overcome; so that in all these things, we are more than conquerors. I said to a friend of mine sometime ago, "How are you?" He said, "I'm very well, over the circumstances." And I've never heard that answer from anyone else. And only a Christian would dream of putting it that way. "I'm very well, OVER the circumstances." It's one thing to resign yourself to suffering---to bear it and not complain or grumble. The world can achieve that. But the Christian overcomes it, and conquers it, and is on top of it, because that's what Jesus is. "In the world," he says, "you will have big trouble; but cheer up. I am on top of it." And therefore, someone who is sharing his sufferings, and in Christ, will be on top of it and not under it.

([26:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xWqS_pcw9LfnuGe2S1GT5jBoRxtRZ4GnBGVQAheAZ-GHQqfjHq8jsBq4c70f0A_dUzoxqVn7oWWGPFQYixJyPuWEYxM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1567.07)): **Paul’s *Two* Types of Suffering**

Now, Paul himself is a wonderful example of this, and I want now to take you into the letter. **There are two things in chapter one that Paul was suffering;** and we're going to look at the natural reaction to those two things, and the supernatural reaction, which we find in Paul himself.

([26:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3IlE_2jALb3P0eb7LEbrwH5Bv9LX2ot5-Fo0I4CpJo6KxgFikFDz8mLoqOOjGMKvGZgfIrysu_I_pn255GXUhIV34vg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1589.09)): **1. Suffering from *Unjust Treatment***

**The *first* thing he was suffering from was *unjust treatment***. Now that's one of the most difficult things for human nature to bear---to be treated unfairly. Now, we have three children. I don't think they're worse than anybody else's, but they, they learn to say 'no' before they learned to say 'yes'. We never had to teach them how to be cruel---only how to be kind. We never had to teach them how to tell lies---only how to tell the truth. Never had to teach them how to be rude---only how to be polite. And they learned a little phrase (I'm quite sure they didn't get it from my wife or me)... but they learned a little phrase very early on. "It's not fair!" And their little faces would screw up, and they would look bitter and resentful. Do you know, from early childhood, we get this sense of unjust treatment.

([27:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=oBRKiqP5wRf2t5uY70spMYh6Uy7qXB5VOSPKI1ApqOumGFuTIXihheN5XJVzPxWj6CB9l_zOzDIeBTFEeY09d6Pv-9Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1643.12)):

When my mother used to give two of us children, an apple, she would give one the apple and a knife and say, "You cut it in half. And the other has first choice." And so the first one would get the knife and very, very carefully. You know, if you had a balance scales and put the two halves on it, they'd perfectly match. The other one would be watching like this, you know. So, so quickly do we learn to say, "It's not fair." And sometimes we go right through life saying, "It's not fair! It's not fair!" And that expression on my children's face when they said it---I've seen it on picket lines, outside factories. Amazing how many people feel they've been treated unfairly in life? "Why did that happen to me?" "Why didn't I get promotion?" Why, why, why, why?

([28:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DoQ_meLTCW4_5nMhxSi1rn6WwGdSRMWSecFXGsjDYnVrJx0W4zaChAU2tqqfERM3pxwUMmDLkTu6WeSg-6WHlzK4ono&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1688.63)):

I was once asked to go and visit a hospital. The matron rang me up and said, "There's a man here who wants to see a priest. And," she says, "you're the only one I can think of. Would you come?" Well, I am a priest. We all are. So I went. And he was a man, quite elderly lying in the hospital bed. And I said, "I gathered, you wanted to see a priest. Well, I'm a pastor. Will that do?" I said, "What do you want to talk about?" He said, "Why has God let this happen to me?" I said, "Happened? What happened? What's God let happen to you?" He said, "I'm in hospital. Why should I be in the hospital?" And I said, "Have you never been in hospital before?" "Never! I've lived a good upright life," he said, "I've never been in a hospital." I said, "How old are you?" He said, "Ninety-two." I said, "Well, how long are you likely to be in?" And he said, "Ten days; why has God let this happen to me?" And here he is surrounded by young, pretty nurses waiting on him! I'd give my right arm for that. And here he is lying there. "Why?" he says, "Why? Life's unfair. God shouldn't have done this to me." 10 days in the hospital with everything done for him. And he's saying, "Why??"

([29:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=w2wJysbDxw6VX_W7Ol2NMMnu9fXs-zR_WeQEka5smeoB--rkPdrWugKuu9E_d7HvDhsFeSzCSffn1mnEr6jONuG9MP4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1763.35)):

Now you laughed at him; but laugh at yourself when you do it too. "Why does God do this to me? Why does he allow that? Why? It's not fair? It's unjust." One of the hardest things for us to bear is unjust treatment. Now here is a man, Paul, who has been wrongfully arrested and charged with a crime he never committed. And he's been kept four years in prison without trial (long waiting list of the court); he's been denied his freedom---two years in Caesarea in jail; two years in Rome. And now he's in the middle of the trial, and he is totally innocent. Now that's not easy to bear. The natural reaction is, at worst to be resentful and angry; or, at best to be resigned and apathetic. But listen, Paul didn't have the reaction of 'the Guildford four'.

([30:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DYACYlez-BXD0jwNVyDZ-IJjafb6IQPvFFqVbGfF6Qpt0SxD4srzsyY5icV-rDFESfiMfSfQ19SWJg8GVz3iv7aSIzQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1820.8)):

In the name of the Father, he tackled it in quite a different way. Now let's see what he did. **He did not fight for his rights**. That is the instinctive reaction. When you are unjustly treated---when you are unfairly treated---you react by fighting for your rights with a clenched fist, "My rights! My rights!!" Paul didn't do that, for all these natural reactions are negative reactions; and Paul's reaction was positive. And his positive reaction was to rejoice....to rejoice and say, "I rejoice." Now, many people think that he was trying to bolster his spirits. They think that that is emotional hypocrisy. When you're unjustly accused of a crime and kept in prison, even though you're innocent for years, the world says, "To rejoice in that is hypocrisy. You know, perfectly well you should be miserable. You should be depressed. You should be angry. You should be resentful." But Paul was not whistling in the dark. He was not trying to keep his spirits up, because he had very good reasons----very good reasons---for rejoicing. He had overcome the situation to such an extent that he had turned it to his own advantage. He was proving that in all things, God works together for good to those who love him. Not all things work together for good, they don't. In all things God works together with us for good, if we love him.

([32:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KZ9D6d9ZsPcPe5QZKf0tgU_ztIp8UGyL1VQU6FhmuA2brK8mIG9V4f-BmdRgEiXIuhjIHZD2o8m9-ylrAVlUrRGDWeg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1937.97)): **Rejoice: Suffering *Facilitates Your Ministry***

Now, **here are the reasons why Paul could rejoice in that unjust treatment of imprisonment without trial for four years**. ***First***, **the imprisonment actually maintained his career**. He lived to spread the gospel. That was his ambition: to get the gospel to people who've never heard it. And far from having that career interrupted, or even stopped, imprisonment was helping it along, because Paul was chained to Roman soldiers---three, every 24 hours---eight hours at a time. He had a captive congregation 24 hours a day; and a Roman soldier chained to a man who spoke in tongues more than all the Corinthians didn't stand a chance. And the result was, Paul says, the whole Praetorian Guard---he said the whole Praetorian Guard---are talking about me now. Do you know how many that is? That's 9,000 men, and Paul wasn't given to exaggeration. He said, the whole Praetorian Guard is talking about me. They know I'm not in for a crime. They know I'm here for Christ. And I get eight hours every day to talk to a new soldier. He said, "They're all talking about me." He said, "Even Caesar's household---there are Christians in Caesar's household now!" He'd always had an ambition to come to Rome and preach the gospel. And here he is getting it right into the Imperial household! No wonder he could rejoice! What an opportunity to be chained to soldiers of the Praetorian Guard.

([34:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=V41s1OdW9OJ6CcFLf9z_ZD3xz3ekrONFW2Rcqg5WGE5bC90z7TkeZxd5ep1r4xtplirEt3hx7Bk0869n6Ik5ZBUZjs8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2042.001)):

You know, I was in Czechoslavakia (or "Slovakia", as it is now) not long ago, and I met a wonderful little man. He's only about four foot odd. He was a coal miner. Well, he was the right height for those coal mines, but lovely little man. And they told me that this man had been 17 years in jail for being a pastor and for baptizing people. 17 years, he'd been in there. And not only had he been incarcerated for 17 years in a communist jail, he had been tortured---or they tried to. And when they took him into the torture chamber, and a soldier began to torture him, he just prayed. And the Lord Jesus gave him a word of knowledge about the soldier. And he said, "You know, God knows what you're doing in secret. And he told him. And the torturing soldier would flee, and send another soldier in. And he would say to this next soldier, "God's given me a word of knowledge about you." And he tells him something that would get him into trouble with the communist party, and he went. One after another soldier came in to torture him, and each of them he gave a word of knowledge to. The result was the whole group of soldiers in the barracks were talking about this little four-foot odd man.

([35:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dyQKzpd0cRALGNoFPOVX6w4HYPuzC4t-ACeeIhqMW_HesvBQ8KbGDoTkBqcqBD8MYve6vLLz30jDupcux6iD2S4Xv2w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2123.57)):

He (Paul) wasn't handicapped in his career. That's the first reason that Paul gives for this. I think

A person wearing a suit and tie smiling and looking at the camera

Description automatically generatedof Martin Niemoller, a great hero of mine, the U boat commander in the First World War who became a pastor in Germany between the Wars. I've stood in the pulpit of his church in East Bellin, where he preached; sorry, it's just over into West Berlin. And Martin Niemoller preached against Hitler during the thirties, and was made Hitler's personal prisoner in Dachau concentration camp. And he was years in solitary confinement. And his cell only had a little grating, a ventilator up in the wall next to the courtyard where the other prisoners were marched around for exercise for 20 minutes during the day. And Martin Niemoller would climb on his bed. And as he heard the footsteps of a prisoner past the grating, he would call a text from the Bible to that prisoner. And as each prisoner came, he gave him a verse from the word of God. And he went on. He wasn't frustrated. He was furthering the gospel. And that's what he did. Years after he was released, I had the privilege of having supper with that man. And his spirit was just unchainable. "The word of God is not bound," says Paul.

([36:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=skyVJDAX_lRst5C_wTCLyBtZxm2Ja3zFYWu4oO4yxn5ciUgSntU1n6wF_W5Bg5EV2Jonm1-rxP3pufQbOrpTeUlPwSQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2209.48)):

Not only that, not only was the gospel spreading inside the prison, but he said, my imprisonment in Rome has so stirred up the Christians in Rome, that they are preaching the gospel even more fearlessly than they did before." So Paul says even there, the gospel is spreading further and faster because I'm in prison.

([37:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=b87CZC0QeyWm6gJl6myzaoVW-YX3v_8HlPiuRnd450XgPrz7QVtQC_ErvKV7lcfnwJdKNRasOkT28q4pH5epC2LyvIw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2233.51)):

And then he gives us an incredible insight into a most ironic situation. He said, there are some Christian preachers who are jolly, glad I've been shut up because they want to take my place. They find me threatening, and they're jolly glad that I'm no longer free to preach so that they can take over. "And," he says, "I know they do it out of jealousy, out of envy. And I know they want to make my imprisonment even more difficult by the thought that I can't and they can; but," he says, "what does it matter? Christ is being placarded!" What an attitude. But there are people who preach Christ from all kinds of motives. Yes, and some of them want a big congregation and some of them want a big church; but, hallelujah, Christ is being preached. Whatever their motives, they've got the right message. And Paul says, "That just makes me glad that they want to make me unhappy....but it just makes me a happier. I don't really care what makes them preach as long as they go out and preach Christ. So," he says, "really my imprisonment, is just maintaining my career."

([38:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DlP-EBr62ZWP1cDorBAbjHLHT_o070IPoSPulhEtNFgxMqdFs9S7BWnJOLmD1zXKMRbgjSJXP7UBdGJg1iFuqx2R4zQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2304.931)): **Rejoice: Suffering *Matures Your Character***

**Secondly, "Furthermore," he said, "it's maturing my character."** He said, "When I share the sufferings of Christ, I grow; I get more like him." And I'm afraid it is true that when things are comfortable and easy, we tend not to grow; and when things are hard we do grow...if we respond to the situation and the circumstances in the right way.

([38:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zWeg5-Yxs8xTSxoyqx1KxWqDFx2pBlflkCSlaZlxXKE32i0G09D2zAhAScneEAnrqc2lS7JNfezb0iObdwKs5W7nviA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2332.12)): **Rejoice: Suffering *Magnifies Christ***

**And the *third* thing** he says, the reason I rejoice: it maintains my career, It matures my character, but above all **it magnifies Christ**. And he said, I want to magnify Christ in my body. And if my body lives, I can magnify Christ; and if my body dies, I can magnify Christ. I just want this body to be full of the glory of Christ.

([39:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zF8t9rKYRn5UTbth1TH5IQZaOVM9LPkYfE8IT3QuOixSEG7kWMbK6vakxzuxkDu3ZiIHmjeTdd9UdnJoZPHGnWgmEfg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2357.35)):

Well, now that's the fist thing that could have been a real trial to him: unjust treatment. You can translate that into your situation. It may be at a much lesser level, but some of you are unjustly treated by your married partner, by your boss. You feel that life has been unfair to you. Then, can you rejoice? Can you overcome that? Can you put Christ in the center of it and overcome it? And then you too can rejoice for good reasons. Not trying to kid yourself to be happy when things are not good; but saying they're turning out for good, they're doing good.

([40:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SUxy8RTIVDDwE5HchcamEbcm2NtLJWbqk1XX5-qPEpYmfWnNt8xb7SmeQXEXdLHtO_h6QG0BpWmEA7os8LnL1KpGDxI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2400.24)): **2: Suffering From *Fear of* *Premature Death***

**Let's look at the *other* thing**. The other thing that could have caused Paul, great stress was **premature death.** Now we've all got to die sometime. Somebody said that life is full of uncertainties, but death is full of certainty. That's true. As the poet put it: "Scepter and crown must tumble down; and, in the dust be equal made with the poor crooked scythe and spade" We've all got to die; and nobody knows who's going to be the next in this room...and it may not be the oldest. I think I'm the oldest on this platform, but I may not be the next; it could be anybody. Now, Paul was nearing the end of his trial, and he knew that the verdict and the sentence would soon come; and, he was under no illusions. He knew perfectly well that the sentence could be death and that his head could be chopped off in a few weeks time. Being a Roman citizen, he wouldn't be crucified, he'd be beheaded.

([41:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Qt8FVyukCJosjeUDYnbPmqi_cKPVwtOtJuLOt2wJ8WgEV1B1aFhP48KSUnLTCRas4JvMxdlIH8YqtFuhsnYWVf-iErA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2464.4)):

Now, it's one thing to face death when you're old and tired and weak and in pain. And I've had people say to me, who've been in that condition. "I'm ready to go Pastor, I'm ready to go." It's one thing to be ready to go at the end of a full life, when life is no longer the quality that it had. It's another thing to face death when you are fit, and active, and you still have unfulfilled ambitions, and you still have everything to live for....which is what Paul had. And he's facing premature death, or at least it's possibility. Now in the natural.....I keep saying, "In the natural," but Paul would have said, "In the flesh." But that is a little misleading in our language. The word 'flesh', we think it just means our body. No, it means 'in the natural'. In the natural, when you face premature death, your instinct is self preservation. Your instinct is to cling to life; or, even to curse what is causing you a premature death--as the dying thief did on one of the cross. But in the supernatural, it's the other way around!

([42:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jdLAV9K0bSklJRWvFN-NnD0Q4SxWh4x4-RAvHFvepukbtKfVLUxw4_RbaOFWWM_phXJGzc0p3igSysniBYQnwpi81hA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2545.94)):

I was one of the first to know that David Watson had cancer; and, three of us, Collin Urquhart, Bob Gordon, and myself, went to prayer. And we said, "Lord, why? Show us what you're doing here?" And we prayed until we felt we did understand. And I was deputed to write to David Watson and share what we felt the Lord was saying. Now that is between us and him. So I'm not sharing it with you; but I want to share with you one thing I did say in the letter, which apparently so struck him that he put it into his testimony, or autobiography, 'Fear No Evil". I said, "David, Paul came to the point where he was eager to go, but willing to stay." I said, "I guess, at this moment, you are willing to go, but eager to stay. I'm going to pray that God will turn that around, so that you are eager to go and willing to stay." It was such a simple little thing, but apparently it ministered to a need. And he came to that point and he wrote and told me, he'd reached that point. That's where Paul was, facing premature death: "I'm eager to go, but willing to stay." And he explained it like this. "I'm eager to go for myself, but willing to stay for others." That's an interesting attitude to death. Now, why was he eager to go? The answer again is he wasn't trying to whistle in the dark. He wasn't trying to cheer himself up. He was saying for me to live is Christ and to die is profit. That's the literal word he uses...usually translated 'gain'. If I die now, it's to my profit. When you live for Christ, if you die, you get more Christ. You see what it boils down to is this: if we are willing to die, but eager to stay, then we must ask ourselves, "What am I living for? Who am I living for?"

([44:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=H49APx3HB4f5ZWoiLp1OKN5fBQcctETJTtAGmqK49tuQjr9Qia2aKWlO4ps49PPQZLyXCjJbmzGPSmLFD3KwPnIvYqo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2692.67)):

And for Paul, though he had great affection for Timothy, for Silas, for the churches he planted, he did not live primarily for the church. For me to live is Christ. That's who he lived for. Oh, he loved others. But he lived for Jesus; and death was just to be closer to the one he loved most. To die is gain. See Christianity is a way of death as well as a way of life. There was a man in Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire, when I was ministering in that County, and his doctor told him he had about two weeks to live. And he wrote to all his relatives. And he wrote a letter, dear so and so, "Please come and stay with me for the next two weeks. Come and see how a Christian dies." What a testimony: "Come and see how a Christian dies." Now. Paul had seen this first in someone else, even before his conversion, Paul had seen the most incredible testimony of how a young Christian faced premature death. And the name was Stephen, the very first man ever to die for Jesus, a young man. And Saul of Tarsus, as he was then, was holding the jackets of the men while they picked up stones to put this young upstart to death because he had challenged the leading religious authorities and said, "You resist the Holy ghost." And they gnashed their teeth and they said, "We're going to kill him," even though it was illegal for Jews to kill anyone at that stage. They were so angry, they were even disregarding Roman law. And they took the young man out of the Lion's Gate on the East side of Jerusalem (now called St. Stephen's Gate); and there they stoned that young man. As he died, his face was lit up, and he saw Jesus. He said, "I can see you, the Son of Man, sitting on the right hand of God." And his last words were, "Jesus, into your hands I commit my spirit." And that's what first started Paul on the road to conversion. From then on, he was kicking against the goads. His conscience was pricking him: "How can a young man die like that? I couldn't die like that." And then one day he met Jesus on the Damascus road. And Jesus said, "It's hard to go on and kicking against those pricks. You know the truth. You have seen someone die for me."

([47:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=s9e5NJwHkuysJLvQazNTrKPTaZNdwYtdj3PXcjkDdsJicOATziU3bXoJYhuVjCDuCy5Mfrmnr-XJm2iZW_HGqGpzCPM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2877.34)):

I think the memory of that would come back to Paul when he faced own death. Mind you, he had an intuition---a strong intuition---that he would not die, that he would be released. And he was; and probably went to Spain as was his ambition. There's a strong tradition that he did. He then went to Crete and other places. And then he was betrayed by a Christian metal worker called Alexander. And he was arrested in such a hurry that he left his overcoat and his notebooks. And he was rearrested. And this time he knew it was the end. And he accepted that it was. He said, "I've fought the fight. I've finished the course. I've kept the faith. There's a crown of life waiting for me." Now that's Paul.

([48:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=RxVK-U3XT9wZtTtRHDNfOsK4RF5BFkF6jHpoiq4Q_SiGJysD2jJ1b-Rza8izzB1AHmkc1wSlfCGFgDWyvQMP9Ysuu8w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2926.26)):

Let me just close in my last minutes. There's a little green line down here and it goes on when I've only got five minutes. I've just noticed it.

([48:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=y9B82_vwz9uHhhJs_6GMatL48oHJ7kwPrWUcWKpSeQc7FaGgE-uzTTNuFKdDlM0tOLCQgLR6B6C88o9Ly0f-cWRvLY4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2936.28)):

I want to finish by showing you a photograph. Let's have the other transparency up. I want to show you a photograph of a man called Paul. No, that's not it. That's it. There's the man called A person looking at the camera

Description automatically generatedPaul. That's a photograph of him; but that's not Paul of Tarsus. That's a man called Paul Schneider. And he was a pastor in Berlin, like Martin Niemoller. And he dared to preach against Hitler and say, "This man is evil." And the congregation said, "We don't want to lose you as Pastor!" The town council came and said, "We don't want to lose you. You're a valuable pastor in this town." But he went on preaching the truth from Jesus. And one night, at three o'clock in the morning, the Gestapo came and they bundled him into a lorry, and they took him off to concentration camp. And he went off smiling in the lorry as he waved goodbye to his wife and his two year old boy. He never saw them again. He was taken to the concentration camp; and, because he tried to protect some Jews who were being whipped, they strung him up by his thumbs, and hung him up by his thumbs from a tree, and flogged him, and starved him to death. And then they put him in a coffin and they gave the body to his wife and said he died of pneumonia.

([50:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2r32c31FBY5lweUXYLE_iKCTu9svawgS1yPgTkKciyTQi6O3F3VlRnSvEDMjXtlymBPpKsHxwHFxv5n2WGBqoxW6WuY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3021.35)):

No, I've got copies of the letters Paul Schneider wrote from the camp to his wife. They are full of two words: 'joy' and 'gratitude'. All the way through his letters, "I'm filled with such joy. And I'm so thankful to God." A few months ago, I was in Berlin. I asked somebody to take me to his church. I found that his widow was still alive: Emily Schneider. He's a hero of mine. It's these men who show us the dimension of sharing the sufferings of Christ. Because, if we share his sufferings, we shall certainly share the glory and the resurrection that followed them. Amen.