

The means that achieve the furtherance of the Gospel (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Pont, Philip

- [0 : 00] I seek your attention also to Paul's epistle to the Philippians chapter 1 and verse 12.
- The epistle of Paul to the Philippians chapter 1 and verse 12. 2 I note $\alpha\tau\epsilon$ classical verse 13.
- It is a very precious letter, this letter to the church at Philippi. It could almost be described as a spiritual love letter.
- For there was evidently such a union and such a bond between the apostle and them. Oh, the evidence of it is so clearly to be seen.
- Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart. Inasmuch as both in my bonds and the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye are all the partakers of my grace.
- [1 : 37] For God is my record, how greatly I longed after you all in the bells of Jesus Christ. What a sweet love there was, what a spiritual love.
- Between the people of God and Paul. And in divine providence he was instrumental in setting up the church at Philippi.
- You remember how he was directed by a vision. And a man from Macedonia stood in that vision and said, Come over unto Macedonia and help us.
- But the text, verse 12, was written when he was in prison. It wasn't some afterthought by the apostle in some prosperous place or under a sense of freedom and liberty and the Lord's blessing on his ministry.
- He was shut up in prison. As he said, so that my bonds in Christ or my bonds for Christ are manifest in all the palace and at his Caesar's abode and in all other places.
- [3 : 03] Now, there is one thing, my friends, that we must ever settle. And may it never leave you or me.
- That whatever and however is the pathway, nothing in this world or nothing from the pit can ever prevent or overthrow the furtherance of the gospel.
- It has been declared and it has been declared in Old Testament times. But I would suppose we might say that it is more particularly declared since the day of Christ.
- But since that day, there's been opposition from all sorts of characters, religious and profane, of the preaching of the gospel.
- But there's been and there cannot be and neither shall it ever will be that it shall be overthrown or hindered or brought to nothing.
- [4 : 09] The furtherance of the gospel. Because the will and purposes of God in salvation shall be continued and completed. And whether it's in your soul or in others, my friends, nothing, not a power in earth or in the pit, can bring to halt, to hinder, to overthrow or even to cause to come to nothing.

The furtherance of the gospel. Because the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to them which believe.

And those which believe are those who are influenced and taught and led and brought along by the Holy Spirit of truth. Nothing can overthrow this furtherance of the gospel.

Nothing at all. And powers, well, what does the poet say? Powers of hell shall never against this prevail.

And that is God's own promise. And it cannot fail. But then, my friends, too, isn't that a mercy?

[5 : 30] Isn't that a mercy? Oh, whether you've been in the way a long time, whether you've been in the way not so long, whether you're influenced now by the blessed Spirit of God, what a mercy that it can't be overthrown.

The furtherance of the gospel. In the decrees and appointments of God, there is a people who shall be brought into divine life by the Spirit's work.

And they shall be taught of the Spirit. They shall be led of the Spirit. The gospel shall be their meat and drink. And the substance and center and some of the gospel shall be preached in their heart by the blessed Spirit of truth.

Their salvation shall be assured. Because it is God's work and God's work alone. And nothing shall prevail against it. And nothing shall cause it to halt.

Nothing shall hinder it. When they were building the temple, you know, or when they were rebuilding the temple, the work came to a halt for a season.

[6 : 41] But not this work. Not this work. What he's begun, he will continue and will finish that work. Being confident of this very thing, we read, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it.

Or as the marginal said, will finish it. Until the day of Jesus Christ. And blessed be God, not only between the beginning and the end, there will be a maintaining of that work.

What mercy there is therefore in these words. How thankful we should be. Though we fear this, that and the other in these days.

And surely the days are days of fear and trembling. And you that know the work of grace or know the opposition to the work of grace, often fear whether you will come to nothing.

But my friends, the word of God says that you will never, never come to nothing. I would that you should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.

[7 : 55] Well, I suppose, my friends, if you had a nominal religion, or I did, the threat of prison would quench the spark, wouldn't it?

And yet in the Church of Christ, down the ages of time, they tied them to a tree and burnt them. It didn't quench the spark of grace. It didn't put that light of life out within their soul, you know.

They suffered for Christ's sake and died for Christ's sake. And nothing overthrew it. But the text also speaks of it being these things and many things they must surely be in the experiences of God's people that shall be for the furtherance of the gospel.

Whereas it was perhaps thought and sometimes feared that it will come to naught, instead of retreating, it was advanced, the gospel was.

And we have it all sorts of places as an example. But the best example of this, you know, is found in your souls. That's the best example.

[9 : 11] I can tell you what it's written in the word of God. You can read it for yourself. You can marvel at the mercy and goodness of God and so on. But my friends, the evidence of the truth of this text is to be known in your soul and through the way and pathway, experience and teaching of the Spirit as you go on in this journey of life.

There is an example or two which you may want to hear or I would bring before you. In the days of David, when he was harassed by Saul, and he surely was, he was raised up of God.

God rejected Saul, disposed him from the throne of Israel and gave the kingdom unto David. And from there on, his life was a threat from the jealousy of Saul.

And do you know where the poor man came once? This is where he came. And you, those of you who walk this path will understand his feelings.

He came to this. One day, I shall fall by the hand of Saul. But he never did. He never did. Then let me read you something else, my friends, which is also descriptive of the blessed operation of the Spirit in keeping alive the souls of his people.

[10 : 44] In chapter 8 of the Acts of the Apostles, we read that, So as for Saul, that is Saul of Tarsus, he made havoc at the church, entering into every house and hailing men and women, committed them to prison.

Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. And I would wonder whether this good apostle was ever brought to see that his work against the gospel of Jesus Christ, his satanic evils of persecution and trouble against believers in Christ Jesus, well indeed, as it says here, it fell out rather to the furtherance of the gospel.

Now that is the purposes of God. And in the appointments and leadings of God and the blessed Spirit of truth in your souls, in the teaching of his word, in the way of revelation, in the leadings and guidance of the Spirit of truth, and into the tribulations and trials of the way, he has, my friends, but one purpose.

One purpose. The purposes of the world is to bring to nothing God's work. The purposes of Satan is to bring to nothing God's work.

The purposes of your old nature is rather believe Satan and pour distress upon the Spirit, and indeed under the suggestions of Satan.

[12 : 30] Would it be far more easier, more comfortable if you weren't gathered with the people of God? But the purposes of God, my friends, is this.

And the dear apostle Peter expressed it in his second epistle so ably and so simply. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

And the truth is to bring to nothing God's work. And the truth is to bring to nothing God's work. But then, I believe there is some word here to each of us. Because, my friends, so often we side with our old nature.

So often we take the side of Satan. We listen to his insinuations or his suggestions. It's rather like Asaph in Psalm 73.

He was a godly, gracious man, was Asaph. But for a few moments, my friends, while he said himself, my feet had almost slipped.

[13 : 41] Almost. And that's as close as he came. Almost. And because he envied the foolish, when he saw the prosperity, the wicked. But there was something, my friends, in Asaph's soul that couldn't be overthrown.

And, oh, do hear this rightly too, my friends, that your own sinful self won't overthrow God's work. But then we must speak of this understanding.

But I would that you should understand, brethren, and that is only as the blessed spirit of truth gives us his understanding. It's not as though we weigh the things up in our natural mind and ponder over them and see what good shall come out of it and whether it will be good or evil.

It's nothing of the sort. My friends, the dealings of God in your soul or your circumstance or your pathway is void of understanding until the blessed spirit of God shows you.

You go back to that well often expressed. Chapter 24 of the Gospel of Luke. These good men, these followers of Jesus Christ, had seen or heard of the crucifixion and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

[15 : 06] And it all brought them to confusion. They thought it was him that should be raised up in the nation of Israel.

And so they pondered and so they reasoned. And the more they pondered and reasoned, the more difficult it became. We read there that they talked together of all these things which had happened.

And it came to pass that while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. And so they expounded to Christ what it was that they couldn't understand.

They said this, But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel. And beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done.

Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre. For when they found not his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

[16 : 21] Well, my friends, the best of saints, the most gracious of people, can fall into that sad place and wonder. But I would, ye should understand, since all that I made shall work for my good, the bitterest sweet, the medicine is food, though painful at present, twill cease before long, and then, O help, pleasant, the conqueror's song.

I would, ye should understand. But you'll only understand, my friends, when the enlightening of the Spirit gives you understanding.

Oh, that's only. Until then, you'll charge God with foolishness. When the Lord so appears to go contrary to your natural mind, and he often seems to do so, my friends, the old nature will see it to be as that he intends to overthrow and bring to nothing the work of grace in the soul.

But, O the understanding, I would, that ye should understand, that the blessed Spirit might shine on the pathway, that he might, indeed, make us to prove that all things work together for good.

You know, this man didn't say it was a doubtful issue. He said, for we know, for we know that all things work together for good. Well, how did he know?

[18 : 08] He didn't see the end of it. No more than you and I can see the end of these things. We know that the end of the work of grace is heaven. And we know that the blessed saints of God are brought into the immediate presence of Christ at the dissolution of the body.

Oh, it works together for good. But how does the trials and the troubles work together for good? How do these mysterious things that come into the path? How profitable can they be?

Or can they ever be profitable? My friends, what I have to try to preach to myself as well as to you is that the Lord will grant us understanding in these things.

Instead of flying out against the will and purposes of God as though we didn't know what he was doing, my friends, but rather may you and I be found in the 46th Psalm again.

It's the dear Lord servant preached here the other Wednesday night. Be still. Be still. And know that I am God.

[19 : 20] And the Lord in the name you will need grace to be still. You will need much grace to be still. You will need more grace to be still than to go on. But the Lord grant you the prayer for grace that you may be still and watch his hand.

He's never done anything wrong yet in his people's lives, my friend. All that he's done, all that he's said shall be for the furtherance of the gospel, not for the overthrow of the gospel.

The furtherance of the gospel is for the blessing of the souls of his people. The honour and glory shall be to Christ. And the effect of the gospel shall be humility before the Lord.

My friends, these things that come against us, we need much understanding. Watch the Lord's hand indeed. Don't fly out against it without first seeking divine grace to ponder why it is and how it should be.

Oh, look at the world and you'll be in rebellion as Asaph was. But look to the Lord and ask him that he might show you his purposes, his dealings, and indeed his mercy in it.

[20 : 40] But I would, you should understand. Oh, you that know the trial of faith, you that know the pathway of satanic suggestions and temptations, may you be enabled, it's only grace that will enable you to do so, to look above all these things and look to the footstool of mercy.

And then the poet comes in and he will all explain, nor will you seek his face in vain. I would, you should understand.

My friends, that won't come out of the natural mind. Not at all. Don't look for it on this vain earth either. God, I'm going to tell you something else too.

Keep this matter before the Lord and the Lord only. Don't go around seeking advice even from the most gracious. Don't look to the best of friends that you might be solaced or comforted, supported by whatever they say.

Look to him who is the comforter, to do the teaching and to teach in your heart and to bring you into the knowledge that these things working together for good to your soul and for his eternal praise.

[22 : 00] I would, you should understand. Oh, my friends, it's far better to wait on the Lord and wait for him. Far better to listen to him rather than to man.

Oh, they'll tell you what to do. They'll tell you because they're not in your path so they can easily tell you what to do. my friends, the best advice the scriptures have for us and that's where you should look for advice is Bastille.

I would, you should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.

Where did the things come from? Where do these things come from? Well, we don't believe in chance. There's no such thing as that in this world for the people of God.

Those out there believe in it. It's either bad luck or good luck according to them. And it so happens and this happens as my friends as an overruling providence that marshals every circumstance.

[23 : 10] Though now for a season if need be on heaviness through manifold temptation what happened to Job. You know there was a most dreadful statement made of Job in this town, in this city.

They had something on in the church up by the market. And I heard the canon who is the minister of that church say a lot of unfortunate things happened to Job.

My friends ordered. Decreed. Appointed. That's what it was. My friends and all these things for you and I if we're a child of grace are appointed.

Decreed. Job lost all his children. All his possessions. All his health and strength. Had a wife that told him to curse God.

My friends all these things were not haphazard. Not by chance. Not by anything like that. divine appointments. The will and purposes of God was being done.

[24 : 21] The permissive will of God was to be seen. And pray you may against it my friends it will never be overthrown not his will. I would you should understand.

Well we don't seem to get very far but I want to begin my friends to speak of these things that God sends. And this is where it comes from from a child of God. You won't find anyone in the world that can possibly understand this walk and pathway of a child of God but it comes from God.

It's for their purpose. It's for their good. It's for their profit. My friends these are the things which come into the pathway which the Lord is the author of and the finisher.

He is the provider and the supporter. If you look at a very if you look at that occasion in the Apostle Paul when he was beset with this he said it was given unto me who gave it then only his God.

permitted it to come to pass. There was given unto me a thorn in the flesh a messenger of Satan to Buffet and thrice did he pray against it.

[25 : 44] But there was and I use the word reason I don't want to be in the purposes of God. That's a better word. In the purposes of God why was it? Why was it?

Lest I should be exalted above measure. That's why. Oh the pride of the heart of the Apostle was still dormant there you know.

It was still there when he was called by grace. It was the new nature of grace that was put there not the removal of the old nature. He was as liable to pride now in this time of great blessing to his soul as he ever was.

but there was given unto him a thorn in the flesh a messenger of Satan lest I should be exalted above measure. Well call it what you like my friends but it was ballast.

It kept him dependent on his God and his God never failed him nor forsook him. He gave him what was necessary and he gave him what was to the blessing of his soul and it was never removed and he said unto me my grace is sufficient.

[27 : 01] That will balance out these things my friends. That will balance them out. Well in those sacred pathways of experience you will and I will learn grace this way.

You go and I don't say this in any sense of judgment my friends but you can take courses on religion.

You can go to university and learn the doctrines. You can go and spend five years of your time I suppose being indoctrinated with the ways of religion and various religions there are.

My friends but you know and I say it very carefully two weeks in the school of Christ will indeed teach you more than that. Some of these religious people send their men away to be taught to preach and I suppose they come back after a while bettered by their education and so they take up the work that's given them.

My friends I wonder whether it touched their soul. How can you preach? You know this dear old apostle Paul he speaks in one place of being able to comfort those with the comfort that they themselves were comforted with and he didn't learn that in any school of Damascus.

[28 : 32] He learned that in the school of Christ. I would you should understand brethren that the things which happened unto me and they've come from God decreed of God appointed of God disappointed they are disappointments they may be castings down they may will have the effect.

Oh distress and trouble of soul but what does it do for you? Let us take one blessed example before we close my friends. The work of invincible grace convinced me of my sin and lead to Jesus' blood.

When he began to teach you you're a sinner. When he began to show you the evil of your own heart and he doesn't stop my friend showing you that till the day that he takes you to glory.

But who can understand that work of conviction and that convincing of a sinner that he is a sinner? Who can understand that?

What the first thing Satan will say to you well you're out of the secret because you're such a black sinner. How can such sinners expect mercy from a gracious God in Christ?

[29 : 44] Christ? And he'll so labour your poor soul with all the dark and dismal distressing signs, signs from hell my friends that sinners, well they can't expect mercy.

How can they expect mercy so black and so vile and so ruined by sin? Well if God begins to convince you of your sin, my friends, it's a furtherance of the gospel within you.

If you know what it is to be utterly lost and that's a very painful experience, my friends, you'll know what it is to find out in self there is no hope.

No hope and no help either. These people who can lift themselves up and take up with Christ, these people who can accept the Lord Jesus Christ as the saviour, my friends, are a deceived people because old nature can't do it.

It hasn't got living faith in it. My friends, the blessings of the Lord is through his Spirit's teaching and he'll teach you the ruin of sin.

[30 : 59] But for the purpose and my friends, things which happened unto me, no coincidence, not I was in the wrong place at the wrong time as people will say of disasters.

The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel. Well, let's just keep to the apostle for a minute as he travelled on at Damascus Road, as he was led by the hand into Damascus blind.

And this is for the furtherance of the gospel. behold, he prayeth. And he put life in that man's soul. And he prayed as a sinner for the first time.

And I believe he prayed like that dear publican did. My friends, for the furtherance of the gospel, has he put a cry in your heart that wasn't there once? And what's the content of that cry?

What is the substance of that cry? What is the need of the soul that makes you cry, brings you to the throne of grace? Well, the poet ended those verses of a hymn that says, give me Christ or else I die.

[32 : 12] My friends, that's the purpose. For the furtherance of the gospel. Oh, how he works in the hearts therefore of his people and blesses them with spiritual life, gives them solemn views of their standing.

Out of Christ almighty power can do nothing but devour. Bring them into the knowledge of their polluted state by nature. Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.

Death is stamped on all things. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I would you should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel. will you will disturb your old nature.

Will interrupt that sleep of death. Thankfully, mercifully, forever will it be interrupted. It will give you sad views of yourself and of your condition before a holy and a just God.

[33 : 20] It will make you feel the worst of sinners. It will make you cry for mercy. mercy. It will bring you often to the footstool of mercy. You'll dread the night and you'll dread the day because it's only one day nearer to the judgment you'll feel.

And God will be just to overthrow you and bring to nothing you feel. Ah, but it's for the furtherance of the gospel. Oh, that's what it's for. The Lord's work has an end to it.

My friends, whatever work you do will come to an end. Whatever work I do will come to an end. His work will never end. Whom once he loves, he never leaves, but loves them to the end.

But then, my friends, it brings you to need that mercy which is in Christ Jesus. Oh, what a wonderful word mercy is to a sinner, isn't it?

The undeserved favor of God. And such that feel the need of mercy in themselves know they can never merit mercy.

[34 : 31] And there's never been a sinner that has. Such a sinner that knows his sinnership, my friends, looks to the Lord as the way of salvation on one ground and one ground alone.

And that is the drawing of the spirit. spirit. There's a lovely word, you know, in the gospel concerning the woman with an issue of blood. There was living faith.

What a poor woman she was. She was a dying woman, I believe, by her condition. Her life was ebbing away. She tried to be better and to try to get better, but to no avail.

When she heard of Jesus, she came behind him in the press. If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be made whole.

What blessed faith is that? My friends, it's a God-given faith. That's what's so blessed about it. Perish I shall if I don't. I can but perish if I go.

[35 : 34] I am resolved to try. For if I stay away, I know I must forever die. I would, you should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel.

Oh, such sacred, such sacred teaching, my friends, and from him who makes no mistake, and in the purposes of goodness of God, he brings them into places where they wouldn't choose, wouldn't pray for, brings them into low places in their own soul's experience to reveal his son.

Oh, you read what it says. We must come to a close, but you read what he said in the, in his letter to the Galatian church. verse 1. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my conversation in time past, in the Jews' religion, how I held it beyond measure.

I persecuted the church of God and wasted it, and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals. In mine own nation, being more exceeding jealous of the tradition of my father, that when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen.

[37 : 17] That's where it comes from. That's the author of it. And for the purpose of the furtherance of the gospel, I would you should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.

Well, there we must leave it. The Lord bring it together with us tonight, and grant his spirit's aid. Amen. God willing, Mr.

Izzard will preach on Wednesday evening, and I hope to be here next Lord's Day. Shall we close with hymn 513?

In mounts of danger and of straits, my soul for his salvation waits.

Jehovah Jireh will appear and save me from my gloomy fear. He in the most distressing hour displays the greatness of his power.

[38 : 43] In darkest nights he makes a way and turns the gloomy shade to day. Pym 513. Let's sing.

Without the stars My soul pinged howka p amazing

May the autumn euylon hastened.

Amen.

Thank you.

[41 : 24] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[43 : 30] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Absolutely.

Thank you. grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God the Father, the communion of the Holy Spirit abide with us both now and forever Amen