

What does it matter?

*"I want you to know, brothers,
that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel,
so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard
and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ."*

Philippians 1:12-13 ESV

Some years ago in the Toronto newspapers there were reports of Christian preachers in trouble with the law. One has been sentenced for murdering his pregnant wife and another has unproven charges of sexual misconduct.

Such realities bring disgrace to the Christian movement and is cause for serious reflection on the part of the entire Christian community.

In Paul's day he too was arrested and put in jail. Surely such a fact would put fear in the entire church because Paul was in prison for preaching the Gospel. We have been commanded by the Saviour to preach the Gospel in the entire world but the price for doing so can mean jail or even death in many instances.

What a scandal for the infant church to have their

senior preacher and missionary in jail! What did it matter?

Well, to Paul it mattered greatly! He was excited about being in jail and our verses tell us the reason for his excitement. Paul was not happy merely because he was in jail. Rather he was glad to be there because it gave him contact for the Gospel with people he would never otherwise meet.

Are you in a context that causes you difficulty? It may be a necessary placement in a retirement home, you may be required by financial restraints to live in a lower class neighbourhood, or you may be in hospital.

When a Christian is in hospital they are not glad to be there simply because it is a hospital. Rather they now have the opportunity to witness to patients and staff concerning the Saviour Who

loves those who suffer.

Those in a retirement home meet new friends with whom they may share the Gospel. Believers in a lower class neighbourhood have an opportunity to encourage people with the Good News.

In all situations, good or not so good, children of God are challenged to be ambassadors for the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Wherever the Lord has placed you does not matter very much. What does matter greatly is that in all situations, happy or sad, we let our light shine as the Lord commands. Matthew 5:16 ESV "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."