

Slavic Gospel Association update. Phillipians 1.

Gospel advances despite every obstacle

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Date: 05 May 2019

Preacher: John Murray

[0 : 00] We shall now read from God's Word in Paul's letter to the Philippians in chapter 1. Philippians chapter 1 and we shall read from verse 12 down to verse 26.

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 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 so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defence 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.

[1 : 15] 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.

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 by death.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to go in living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour 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 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.

[2 : 20] Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word. Neil is now going to come and lead us in prayer in Gaelic. Let us pray.

Let us pray.

Let us pray.

Let us pray.

Let us pray. Let us pray.

[4 : 40] Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray.

Alogo Hopkins is a knowledge of■■■■ies, and fils are■■ but also human.

And is not what to walk with this priest that exists, at the cotijole, at the Bhagavad Coich James so you stop and waves at down your head Townsend walking Our shadow to our.

My palace always came from me. once■■■■ content only be done don't worry about the dimensional this not has gone in here Happy birthday There is a home thi not uh it

They thought all those I would follow prior to before was a crisis To end the fact that they were getting to date try.

[7 : 39] They thought they would say thank you.

That Ooh? They would yell and say, So while home we ■■■■ ding Wille was a gift.

When the kid are Alarm are not going to be round 1, but it's still the same.

Which means we love to see the heavens and the brightness of us, how to clear.

Chamblinggaenaahla roku There's God here.

[9 : 18] Amen. We shall sing to God's praise from Psalm 67, singing this time in Gaelic.

Psalm 67. I'll read the psalm in English. Lord, bless and pity us, shine on us with thy face, that the earth thy way and nations all may know thy saving grace.

Let people praise thee, Lord, let people all thee praise. O let the nations be glad in songs their voices raise. Thou justly people judge on earth, all nations all.

Let people praise thee, Lord, let them praise thee, both great and small. The earth her fruit shall yield, our God shall blessing send. God shall us bless, men shall him fear, unto earth's utmost end.

A great psalm about God's work in this world. And we shall sing verses 6 and 7, two stanzas in Gaelic. And we shall remain seated to sing.

[10 : 23] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[12 : 21] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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

[15 : 15] Thank you. Thank you.

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

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

Thank you. And we had a tremendous joy of gathering there many of the evangelists and the pastors whom SGA support and enjoying a weekend together of praise and thanksgiving to God and a weekend of reports.

And it was thrilling to sit and listen to some of these men reporting on what God was doing in their different corners and different villages and so forth. We had one man, a teacher, who in fact was not allowed to run his scripture union or whatever in school, but through his witness, five of his staff colleagues were converted through his witness in the school.

[18 : 29] And it was amazing just how God has been using these men and women. So we met together to celebrate in Moldova. And we were celebrating really the variety of work that we do in that place.

And you can see something here. I'm afraid I'm going to have to stand in front and just get a thing. The three areas there, the training, the practical support, and also the practical support in terms of both the...

That's lovely. Thank you. That's perfect. Perfect. Training in terms of our schools, up on the left-hand side here. The pointer, unfortunately, doesn't work on the screen, but you can see on the left-hand side.

And then the practical support in terms of transport. We, by the end of this year, we will have given out over 60 motorbikes to different evangelists and pastors and so forth.

Now, when your minister comes back, your pastor comes back, ask him about the roads that he'll find in Romania and in Moldova, particularly Moldova. The roads are impassable at times, certainly in terms of taking four wheels along.

[19 : 41] And little motorbikes are ideal to allow our evangelists and so forth to get to places they've never been before. Where there's a big man in Moldova called Ivan Machinsky, and he's a huge man.

He's an ex-wrestler. And when he greets you, he doesn't shake hands. He gives you a hug. And, my, you feel the hug. And he has one of these little motorbikes. I feel sorry for the motorbike.

Such a huge man sitting on it. But, you know, he says, it's my legs. He said, I can get to places I've never been to before. I can visit villages that have never heard the gospel before. And I can visit my people more often than I was able to.

So, these are a tremendously practical way of supporting the work. And then, study literature. The books at the bottom there. When the students in the Moldova school are finished after their two years of training, and they graduate, they're given a gift of a little library.

And that's like gold dust. You should see their faces. Sometimes you should see their tears when they get this given to them. Because they're not able to afford it themselves. And, indeed, the books, perhaps they can't source themselves.

[20 : 43] And so, we're able to do that and to present these books to them. And it's the foundation, really, for a lifetime of ministry. And we know that God uses these things.

And then, our practice support in terms of houses of prayer. If you know anything about Eastern Orthodoxy, they put a tremendous emphasis on the church building.

An Orthodox church building, when you go into it, it will be covered with gold-layered icons and so much ornate furniture and all the rest of it.

It put a big, big emphasis on their building. And, incidentally, when I say that, you've got a beautiful building here. And may God bless you as you use it for his glory. But, it's nothing like the kind of buildings that the Orthodox folk put on.

And, for an evangelist or a church planter to go into a new village and to try to evangelise people, he has to have a building which is dedicated for Christian work alone.

[21 : 45] If you meet in a house, a home, these people will regard you as a cult. If you meet in a hall where you eat or you sleep or where other people do other things, they won't accept that.

They believe this is not worthy, really, of Christianity. Now, in order to take that barrier down, we need then to provide little houses of prayer.

Dome of Lichva, they call them. House of prayer. A church building. And, we do that, really. You can see just one little one there. It was open just last September when I was out. And, it was a joy to see not just the building filled, but the front garden filled and the back garden filled with people who had come along, really, for the opening and the dedication of this little church building.

And, it's such a help in the work of the gospel. Well, in other ways, too, we have the practical care of the needy. And, there are some interesting photographs there.

Up on the left-hand side, this is the House of Mercy in a village, this big village called Yablona. And, SGA were instrumental in helping to refurbish this place and to provide a place for elderly people who had no one else to look after them.

[22 : 57] And, they have tremendous care there in a Christian environment. Some of them are not believers. Many of them are believers, but some are not. And, again, God has been using that in the salvation of souls.

We support widows every year at Christmastime. Altogether, throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia, we're talking in terms of maybe 800 or 1,000 widows being held at Christmastime.

In Moldova, that would amount to probably 160 or 200 widows being held. And, they get a little gift at Christmastime of £50. Now, you say £50 isn't much, and neither it is.

Actually, £50 would just about half fill my car with diesel these days. But, for Moldova, it's a little fortune. A Moldovan widow, at the moment, gets for a monthly pension somewhere around €35 to €50 a month.

That's £1 to £1.50 per day to live on. That's their pension. That's all they have. And so, to get £50 at Christmastime helps them to buy their winter fuel, helps them to buy medicine if they need it, helps them, perhaps, to stock up their larder, and so forth.

[24 : 04] And, that has been used greatly, again, in the salvation of souls. Because, we send the money out to the local churches and the pastors, and they distribute and report back to us.

And, they distribute not just to believing widows, but also to widows in the area who are not believers. And, as they go, they share the gospel with these people. And, we've had many, many widows who have come to know the Lord Jesus Christ through this very practical ministry to them, in the name of Christ.

And, then, our summer camps outside Belch. There's a big campsite, lovely campsite, on a lake shore, Sadovo. And, again, SDA helped the churches there to purchase this and refurbish it.

I saw it in its virgin state. It was an old communist campsite, and it had fallen to rack and ruin. It really was in very poor shape. But, it was being offered at a reasonable price, and the churches felt that it should be bought.

And, we moved ahead together with them, and helped them to buy it, and to refurbish it. And, it's quite amazing to see that place now, where once the principles of communism were taught, the gospel was being taught.

[25 : 09] Last summer, between 2,500 and 3,000 children went through the camps there. The young people who are here tonight, you'll be very jealous when I tell you this, but holidays in Moldova last through June, July, and August.

They get three months off. So, the camp program starts in June, and runs right through, really, to the end of August, beginning of September. And, most of the children who go there would be from unbelieving homes.

Many of them are orphans, as well, and from vulnerable families. And, so it's a tremendous opportunity to share the gospel. And, then we have an interest in what we call the medical mission.

And, this operates in both the North Moldova, and in South Ukraine, where a team of Christian doctors and nurses, give up a Friday evening and a Saturday, once a month, or sometimes twice a month, to visit isolated villages, and to go along there, and to give people free diagnosis, free consultation, free diagnosis, and free treatment, and free medicine.

These doctors and nurses give their time freely. SGA supports this work by paying for their transport, by supplying the drugs that they need, and the other bits and pieces, and so forth.

[26 : 26] And, you know, God has used this tremendously in reaching many, many people. People who wouldn't come to listen to the gospel normally, they will come along, and before the consultations take place, there's a gospel meeting.

I've been to one of these. I preached to about 60 people, and they each then had a little ticket with a number on it, and they went into the different consulting rooms in the little church building that we were using, and there they had their consultations with the doctors.

And there was, on that team, there was a heart specialist, there was a specialist in rheumatology, there was a GP, and there were two or three trained nurses.

So this is not an amateur thing. These are professional medics who give their time, and through that, many, many people have been converted. Lives have been saved, literally, in terms of the diseases being caught, and problems being picked up.

But even more wonderful than that, we have heard of and know of many who have come to know the Savior through that medical mission ministry. And then, individual health needs.

[27 : 30] The bottom right there, there's a mother and father and a son in the middle, and the son is Vitaly. And Vitaly, when he was tiny, he was completely deaf. He couldn't hear at all, and his folks were greatly disturbed.

He couldn't talk because he couldn't hear, and of course, at school, he wasn't able to make any progress whatsoever. Well, one of our friends from SGA, and you'll know the name some of you, William Smiley, William was out, and they found out about this, and William thought to himself, well, I know a Christian audiologist and earpiece specialist back in Belfast in Northern Ireland, and he went back, spoke to this man.

The man said, yes, I can make a hearing aid for him, if we can get it sorted. So they sent out the wax to put into the ear to get a mould of the ear, for an ear mould.

The doctor in Moldova had never seen this before, never seen this done before, and he was amazed, you know. But the mould was made, sent back to Belfast, the earpiece, or the hearing aid was made, and sent out to Vitaly, and I think it was a very exciting day, one Saturday or Sunday afternoon, when I think Vitaly got his hearing aid in, and his mother spoke to him, called his name Vitaly, and he turned his head and looked at her.

And a wonderful time, really, of rejoicing. So those are the kind of things that SGA have been involved in. Church planting is a priority in Moldova, and in Romania.

[28 : 58] You come back and talk to your minister, and he'll tell you this, you know, when you're talking to Christians out there, and Christian leaders, they're always thinking of advance. How can we plant in another place? How can we make progress with the gospel?

In the year 2000, there was one gospel church for every 15 villages in Romania. In 2016, there was one gospel church for every four villages.

So you see the tremendous advance, and they'll not stop until there's one gospel church in every village in Moldova. So please pray for that work. Now, I'm going to take you a little bit further away, very quickly, to faraway places, Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

Some of you will have heard of the Bibles being produced. That project is coming very quickly to its completion, and we hope by the end of this year that the revision of the Kazakh Bible will be completed and be able to be sent out.

We have hit some problems in terms of actually getting a good text and getting the text translated properly. One of the reasons for that is the first Kazakh that we know to be converted was converted just 35 years ago.

[30 : 08] So if you think about that, where do you get scholars who are proficient both in Hebrew and Greek and in Kazakh to be able to translate accurately from the original languages into the Kazakh languages?

Quite difficult. And so it's been a slower process than we thought and hoped. But we are hopeful that by the end of this year or the beginning of the next, the Kazakh Bibles will in fact be distributed.

11 million Kazakhs with no proper dependable Bible because there was a Bible produced in 2010, but it was a poor translation, even though God did use it in the salvation of precious souls.

But we're hoping to put this Bible into the hands of a million Kazakhs by producing 100,000 Bibles. Now, if you're doing your maths, you say, well, how do you get 100,000 Bibles to reach a million Kazakhs?

Well, Kazakh families are extended families. And so under one roof, you'll have granny and granddad and nana and papa and mommy and daddy and maybe six or eight children or more.

[31 : 19] So to put a Bible into one home has the possibility, the potential of reaching 10 to 12 people in that home. So pray for that. There are 11 million Kazakh speakers in Kazakhstan.

Pray that God will reach them with this. And then more encouraging Bible news. Uzbekistan. Derek Maxwell, whom some of you will know, was in Uzbekistan just over a year ago and he was visiting some of the churches there, underground churches.

Uzbekistan is a very difficult land. Not completely closed, but almost closed. And so they've got to be very careful. And the big problem, even for the church leaders, the leaders of the house churches, is they don't have an Uzbek Bible.

They don't have a Bible. So they were pleading with Derek, you know, is there no way we can get Uzbek Bibles? Now, Derek couldn't tell them at that time. He wasn't in a position to tell them because it had to be kept very secret that 3,000 Uzbek Bibles, in fact, were in the process of printing.

But you can't simply ship 3,000 Bibles out to Uzbekistan because they'll be confiscated and destroyed. It's as simple as that. So they have to be filtered in little by little.

[32 : 31] And we know that at least half of that shipment is already in Uzbekistan. And God is already working. Because the lady here on the right of the right picture, the younger lady, is Luba.

And she has her arm around her aunt who was a schoolteacher, a retired schoolteacher. Luba is Uzbek. She is a worker with Bibles Mission, our partner mission, in Kazakhstan and in Central Asia.

And she had talked to her aunt and said, you know, there's a special book, the Bible, which talks about God. This is her aunt, of course, a Muslim. And the aunt, he was saying, well, when are you going to bring me a special book?

When are you going to bring me this special book? And of course, Luba had no special book to bring her. She's reading in Russian. Luba can read in Russian and English and German and a few other things as well. But there was no Uzbek Bible.

But eventually, just last year, end of last year, she took her aunt a Uzbek Bible and her aunt began to read. And within a few weeks of reading the Bible, her aunt was converted, brought to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

[33 : 34] Not only that, her daughter, Luba's cousin, also read and she was converted as well. So that Bible has already begun to do its marvellous work in the hands of these people.

And you know what's so wonderful? Just about two months ago, Luba's aunt died. But she died a believer. Isn't that amazing? And the Uzbek Bible, responsible really.

It's a dangerous book, the Bible, isn't it? You put it into the hands of people and they don't know what's going to happen. Praise the Lord, it does. It never goes into people's minds in vain. So, we're delighted about that.

Now, it's not all good news. This is a very sad picture in Belfast, near to Belfast, where I come from. There's an organisation called Every Home Crusade and they produce literally millions of tracts and pieces of Christian literature every year.

And much of it goes out to Central Asia. They had prepared 5,000 gospel calendars, calendars with Bible verses on them so people put them up in their homes and be able to read the Bible in their own language of Tajik.

[34 : 40] Again, a very difficult Central Asian language. speech. But sadly, the shipment, when it was going in, it was going in with other humanitarian aid. The customs let the aid in, the humanitarian aid in, but they took the calendars and they burnt them.

And they invited the evangelical leaders along to see them being burnt. In other words, a bit of a threat, if you like, implied in it. So sadly, that shipment didn't get in.

But we had a young man called Gerhard Friesen. I'm not sure he was possibly, he was in Scotland I think at one time, maybe last year, but maybe not in the islands.

But Gerhard is a young man who's got real burden for the gospel and he works with Bible Mission as well. And his attitude to this was, well, he said they may have destroyed 5,000 calendars, but if God wants to, he can get 50,000 calendars in.

And of course, we believe that, you know. God's not set back by the evil deeds of men. But it just reminds us that it's not all easy. The work is still difficult in many places.

[35 : 46] And a country like Turkmenistan, for example, in Central Asia is almost completely closed. There is no possibility of getting in there in terms of Christian witness and so forth.

And even some of the Bible Mission workers who move around in Central Asia have been expelled from Turkmenistan and not allowed to go in. So those are countries that you should pray for. Finally, I want to mention a new venture and there's a little leaflet out on the table about this called To the Ends of the Earth.

And if I were to ask you where the least evangelised parts of the world are today, I wonder where you would tell me. You'd probably point to some of the Muslim countries and so on.

And you'd be right to do that. But one of the least evangelised is actually what we call Far East Russia. And this is Far East Russia. It's right away out actually near to Japan.

I like to ask, sometimes tease the boys and girls and ask them how far is Russia and America apart? And they start to count up, you know, and so on. But actually, Russia and America are only about 20 kilometres apart from Alaska across to the Far East of Russia.

[36 : 58] And so, to reach this country, the red area there is almost as big as the United States of America. So you've got to keep that in mind as I tell you a little bit more about it.

Yakutia, one of the regions there is the coldest place on earth. The city of Yakutia can get to minus 60 in the winter. So if you think you're cold here sometimes up in Lewis and Harris, well, just think about that.

It's the place that if you don't put your car in at night, you've got to leave the engine running all the time because it would freeze up and never be able to start again. So they've got to either cover up their engines or else keep them running.

So Yakutia. And not only that, but there are thousands of villages in that vast region which have no gospel light. In fact, virtually no religious light.

Many of them are still animistic like black magic and brahmism and this kind of thing. And the other thing is there is no superstructure, no infrastructure in the country.

[38 : 00] Many communities and no roads. There's no telephone, no mobile phones, no internet, none of the usual means of communication. And so we have people, isolated people, living in isolated villages and beyond the reach normally of our evangelistic methods.

So how do we reach them? Well, the answer is by plane. And the SGA, America, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and UK have all joined together in this joint project to try to get the gospel to one of the least evangelised parts of the world today, Far East Russia.

and the idea is eventually to have 12 planes which will work out from 12 population centres in this vast region and try to reach out to the villages that have no gospel light at all.

In those 12 centres there will be a pastor or a Christian leader who will preach God's word, who will disciple believers and so forth and who will also be responsible for organising the schedule of outreach from his particular town or city.

Our partners there are a group called Kingdom Air Corps in Alaska. It's a little bit like Missionary Aviation Fellowship. Some of you will know of MAF. Well, it's the same kind of idea only this time operating from Alaska and the planes are actually dismantled in Alaska.

[39 : 31] Don't ask me why this has to be done but there's some political economic reason for this. They have to be dismantled in Alaska, shipped across into Far East Russia and rebuilt there and so on for use.

Three of them are already in use and they are Christian pilots carrying pastors to various villages. This is Ivan and Rico, the two younger men.

The older man in the middle is an experienced pilot who's been doing some training and their families and they've moved out there to do that. As I say, eventually we hope to have 12 planes in the air and the SGA on top of that is already sponsoring five evangelists in five of these population centres so we've undertaken the support, the financial support of five of these Christian workers to try to encourage the spread of the gospel in this very needy area.

This is Yakutia and you can see there if you count up the number of churches I think there's 22 in Yakutia, there are 18 in Kavarovsk, there are a few in the other places we're concentrating in those two big regions first of all but I think the number of believers in that massive region is a tiny, tiny percentage.

Probably some of the megachurches in the United States one megachurch probably has more believers than there is in that whole region there. So it is a very needy cause and we ask you to take it upon your heart and to pray.

[41 : 01] This is Avil, one of the men that we're sponsoring. He reaches out to four villages near the Chinese border and his congregation has tripled since he went. There were four when he went there and there are now 12 so he's a very happy man and he believes God is blessing but he and his wife who's trying to develop a Sunday school work, he and his wife and children they travel out to that part of the world in an old ladder car.

Derek Maxwell had a ride in it and he said he was glad to get home again safely but SGA has since sent him out the money to buy a much which is not a new car new to him but a much better and much more reliable car to help him in his ministry there.

So in these ways we are trying with God's help to push forward the work of the gospel. This is Pastor Benjamin who's going to be one of the coordinators and pastors working in one of the major cities or towns and he's a coordinator of the work and this is what he says, he says we must reach the unconverted with the gospel and we must do it soon while the door is still open.

Vladimir Putin has in fact passed laws about religion in Russia which if they were to be implemented in full it would be more difficult to be a Christian in Russia now than during communist times.

Now the problem for Putin is that he lives in Moscow which is two time zones from here. If you fly from here to Moscow you fly through two time zones.

[42 : 26] If you want to fly to Far East Russia you have to fly through eleven time zones. So Moscow is a long way from Far East Russia and the door is still open out of these parts for the gospel and for gospel work to go on and the Christian leaders there a few that are there saying to us pray that God will help us to take this opportunity to keep pressing on with the gospel while the door is open and before it shuts again.

I'll just leave you with a few prayer topics that God will help the translators to complete the Kazakh Bible by the end of this year distribution will begin that the Uzbek Bibles will all get safely into the country and be greatly used of God to bless believers and bring unbelievers to Christ that God will bless the Reach Russia Now project providing the means protecting the missionaries and building the Church of Jesus Christ in that vast area and pray that SGA will be able to sponsor further missionaries in that region in the days to come.

Well I hope that that has given you some encouragement a look back and a look forward and I hope it's given you some ammunition for prayer and we do ask you to take some of these things home with you and bring them before the Lord.

Just for a moment or two I want to turn your attention to that passage of scripture that was read to us this evening from Philippians and it is a quite remarkable passage of scripture quite remarkable letter really because Paul is in prison at this point in time as far as the human eye can see his ministry has been brought to an end probably the greatest evangelist apart from the Lord Jesus himself who ever walked this earth and his ministry had been brought to an end by his imprisonment and yet as it was read to us here he says in verse 12 I want you to know brothers that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel now what on earth can he mean here's this man's invaluable ministry and has been brought to an end by his imprisonment and yet he writes to the Philippians and he says to the Philippians well actually what has happened is that it has caused further advance of the gospel now was Paul getting old was he becoming a bit unhinged in his mind how on earth what was he thinking and how was he thinking well he tells us here he actually explains to us in the following verses just in fact how what the devil has been seeking to do and destroy how God has turned it about and made it a means of advancing the gospel and the first is this in verse 13 he says this so it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest this is within the Caesar's palace if you like in Rome that my imprisonment is for

Christ so here's a body of men if you like Caesar's crack troops who probably in other circumstances would never hear the gospel but here they are and they're having to guard this man who says later on for me to live as Christ and die as gain he's burning with zeal for his saviour and so Paul has the opportunity to witness to these men and they can't get away they have to guard him they're a captive audience and Paul is sharing the gospel with them so he gets an audience which he wouldn't normally have even through his imprisonment so that's the first thing he gets to witness to people he normally wouldn't witness to secondly it becomes a great example and an encouragement to the brothers verse 14 he says most of the brothers having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment are much more bold to speak the word without fear and so they see Paul imprisoned but still speaking boldly for

[46 : 17] Christ and he says this has emboldened the brothers you know no longer are they fearful and timid they see that God is upholding and protecting me and so they're not fearful about speaking out and sharing the gospel as well and is it true you know how we can be encouraged by others when we see their witness and their testimony bearing fruit and so Paul says here's another reason why the gospel is being advanced because the brothers now are also speaking out boldly and then the third thing he says is this and I said this is a difficult one he says he rejoices in the fact that the gospel is being preached although it's being preached by some out of envy and jealousy others are preaching it of course out of good will and so but he says some are preaching it he says from envy and rivalry but he says I rejoice because the gospel is being preached now it's hard for us to imagine this that people would preach the gospel in order to do Paul down as it were in order to hurt him in order to make things worse for him but Paul says look I don't care he says all I worry about is the fact that the gospel is being preached and he said

I rejoice in that and it's true isn't it that God can use the most strange things in order to advance the gospel I was just thinking I was reading last week again in the book of Ezra in my personal reading just how God took Cyrus Persian king and God was king and he said he's my instrument and it was through Cyrus that he brought his people back from Babylon from exile in Babylon and gave them the resources to actually rebuild the temple in Jerusalem oh you know we need to remember this God is still on the throne I wonder how you feel at times when you listen to the news when you see what's happening around you sometimes I wonder can the tide of evil ever be stopped can it ever be stopped well of course it can God hasn't abdicated God's still on the throne and what may seem to us to be dreadful trends in society and they are dreadful trends in society in the end of the day

God can take these and he can make them work for his good and glory and for the good of his people and his church I was greatly encouraged last week or the week before I read on the internet most of the stuff you read on BBC and page internet wouldn't do you're so much good but there was one item which really cheered me up 42,000 young people in Holland have written a petition to the government asking that prostitution be made illegal in their country 42,000 young people have signed a petition and sent it to the government and I thought to myself well God's still alive and he's still on the throne and he's still working in hearts and we can trust him for that so Paul rejoices that the gospel is the third reason and then the fourth reason is simply this that he knows that Christ in the end will be glorified he says here in verse 18 he says I will rejoice for I know that through your prayers and the help of the spirit of Jesus

Christ this will turn out for my deliverance as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed but with full courage now as always Christ will be honoured in my body whether by life or by death and dear friends that's what counts isn't it it's the glory of Christ it's the glory of Christ and our leisurely spent in serving him and glorifying him and Paul was determined as he says himself here for me to live is Christ to die is gain whether I live or die it will be for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ thought about that little you know Psalm 23 we read it so often and it becomes almost automatic but there's a little phrase in it you know in the 23rd Psalm and it says this he restores my soul he leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake and as God works in us and through us it's for his glory and for the glory of

Christ and for the sake of his name and his glory so listen dear friends the gospel will triumph the thing is this we're on the winning side I don't know whether some of you have maybe heard this illustration before it's a true story apparently of a little boy or a boy a young boy who was converted and the man who had the joy of leading to the Lord he gave him a new testament and told him that he should start to read the new testament because this would help him to grow and so he left it with the boy and a few weeks later he met him and he said well have you started to read your bible he says I have he says what are you reading he said revelation the man said the worst book perhaps they even started in you know and so he said well what have you learned in revelation and the wee boy said we win we win tremendous isn't it and that we win if you're not in Christ if you're still outside of Christ do remember this that there's a day coming when you'll have to stand before the

[51 : 45] Lord Jesus Christ not as your saviour but as your judge and you'll be on the losing side and those of us who are believers tonight even though we are hard pressed here in this in these days in which we live one thing is absolutely sure the victory is ours death has been defeated we've been we've been celebrating that recently I have 18 grandchildren I love them all I was telling your minister's wife that the other day that I love them all we have a little boy called Isaac and I think he's going to be a preacher his daddy's a preacher but I think he's going to be a preacher too and apparently at the Easter service he's four year old and there's two of the wee four year olds lying on the floor of the church and they were talking and they were saying to each other you know they spat on him and they pulled out his beard and they beat him and they cursed him and then wee Isaac apparently jumped up his father didn't see it somebody else told him and said but Christ beat death Jesus beat death he said so we've been listening to what he'd been hearing in church and what they've been doing and Jesus beat death we've been celebrating it the victory is ours we're on the winning side and you know that should encourage us to go out into this world with this great gospel that we have

I have another grandson who's a great soccer player he loves football loves the Lord first mind you but he also loves his football and his sport and I said to him one day his name John as well I said John tell him if I were to tell you today that you're going out to play this team and you're going to win 10-0 would you like to go out and play the battle oh would he said I'd love to go knowing that we're going to win well we have won in Christ we have the victory so that should give us the encouragement and the joy that we need to go out into this lost world and to share the gospel with those who still don't know the Lord Jesus Christ thank you for your interest and your prayers and thank you for your encouragement I just want to mention to you I've mentioned this little to you to the ends of the earth there's a new book which is about Moldova 25 not out it's the story of 25 years of work in Moldova humanly speaking it should never have got off the ground but I had the joy of putting this together and it was heart warming reading the early reports and so forth of the work there this one you've probably seen before out of the depths it was written testimonies of folk in central Asia this one's £4 this one's £3 but no money today if you want to take it take it with you and pass the money on to your church treasurer or someone and they'll get it to us eventually and just to mention to you if you don't already get breakthrough magazine the recent breakthrough magazine is on the table it's free of charge please do take it as well we're going to close by singing and I've forgotten our song it's 1116 1116 we're going to close with this and then we'll there's a higher throne and we've been thinking about that haven't we that higher throne in which our Lord sits sovereign that all this world is known where faithful ones from every tongue will one day come before the sun will stand made faultless through the land believing hearts find promised grace salvation