

## Lesson 2 - "Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus..."

### Exposition

*"Paul, prisoner of Christ Jesus"*

This is the only letter to begin by referencing himself as a prisoner. The only other occasion is Ephesians 3:1 and 4:1 refer to being a prisoner. Yet, he more often refers to himself as a slave (doulos) of Christ. To apprehend that for which he was apprehended of God. (Philippians 3:12-14)

#### Apostle Paul

- physical appearance
- education, Gamaliel, Festus - mad
- past persecution & conversion
- missionary journeys- Barnabas, Silas
- sufferings, stripes, stoned - 2 Cor.
- Troubles, trials, imprisonment
- 1st Roman imprisonment - house
- 2nd Roman imprisonment - dungeon
- Mamertine Prison, a cistern
- Execution on Ostian Way

#### Paul's Troubles

- 2 Cor. 4:7-22 - hard pressed on every side
- 2 Cor. 6:4-11 - stripes, prisons, riots
- 2 Cor. 10:23-30 - 3rd stripes, 3x rods, stoned, 3x shipwrecked
- 2 Cor. 11:7-10 - thorn in flesh, messenger of Satan to beat him down

2 Cor. 4:7

*We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power would be of God and not of us...therefore... I glory in weakness...for when I am weak then I am strong.*

**Paul also considered himself to be a "slave" (doulos) of the Lord.**

#### ***Exodus 21:5-6***

***And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: 6 Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.***

1. Paul's Past
2. Paul's Present
3. Paul's Future

*Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to me, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus.*

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**Application**  
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- God has given, or allowed, each one of us weaknesses, trials, troubles, and tastings for His glory. So that the excellent power might be of God and not of us.
- We can decide to live pouting and wallowing in our misfortunes, OR we can decide to live joyfully in them.
- We are all prisoners of something -- a sickness, weakness, inability, handicap, limitation, education, bankruptcy, failure, poverty, job loss, divorce, etc.
- We lose our pity party when we decide that our present circumstances are ordered by the Lord. Thus, nothing is an accident, Satan didn't win, accidents don't happen, life isn't unfair, we didn't get the short end of the straw, we aren't cursed, and nobody is out to get us, and God's not punishing you, and He hasn't forgotten you.

Romans 8:28

Was certainly Paul's deep rooted philosophy for living though hardships.

*We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8:28)*

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philip. 4:19)*

*Therefore, I rejoice in tribulation, distresses, etc. for when I am weak then I am strong.*

**"I'm a prisoner of the Lord!! Hallelujah!!!**

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## Illustrations

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**David Ring** (born October 28, 1953) is a Christian evangelist and motivational speaker who has cerebral palsy. Since 1973, Ring has challenged thousands of people with his signature message -

"I have cerebral palsy... What's your problem?"

He currently resides in Nashville, Tennessee, with his wife and four children.  
He has written one book Just As I Am: The Life of David Ring in 1994.

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### **Don Knotts**

As a boy, Jesse was a chicken plucker. He stood on a line in a chicken factory and spent his days pulling the feathers off dead chickens so the rest of us wouldn't have to. It wasn't much of a job, but at the time, Jesse didn't think he was much of a person.

His father was a brute of a man. His dad was actually thought to be mentally ill and treated Jesse rough all of his life. Jesse's older brother wasn't much better. He was always picking on Jesse and beating him up. Yes, Jesse grew up in a very rough home in West Virginia. Life was anything but easy and he thought life didn't hold much hope for him. That's why he was standing in this chicken line, doing a job that darn few people wanted.

In addition to all the rough treatment at home, it seems that Jesse was always sick. Sometimes it was real physical illness, but way too often it was all in his head. He was a small child, skinny and meek. That sure didn't help the situation any.

When he started to school, he was the object of every bully on the playground. He was a hypochondriac of the first order.

For Jesse, tomorrow was not always something he looked forward to. But, he had dreams. He wanted to be a ventriloquist. He found books on ventriloquism. He practiced with sock puppets and saved his hard earned dollars until he could get a real ventriloquist dummy.

When he got old enough, he joined the military, and even though many of his hypochondriac symptoms persisted, the military did recognize his talents and put him in the entertainment corps. That was when his world changed. He gained confidence.

He found that he had a talent for making people laugh, and laugh so hard they often had tears in their eyes. Yes, little Jesse had found himself.

History books are full of people who overcame a handicap to go on and make a success of themselves, but Jesse is one of the few who didn't overcome it. Instead he used his paranoia to make a million dollars, and become one of the best-loved character actors of all time in doing it!

Jesse Donald 'Don' Knotts,  
(July 21, 1924 - February 24, 2006)

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## Discussion Starters

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What is the worst thing that every happened to you?

What has been the hardest test of your faith?

Have you ever wondered if God had abandoned you, ignored you, or didn't really care what about your situation?

What got you through those doubt-filled days?

What Scripture or truth helped you in those times?

How can you help someone going through "hell and high water"?

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## Dig Deeper:

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What does the Bible teach about trouble, trials and tribulations? Use a word search to discover answers to each.

Matthew 13:21

*Yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while: for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, by and by he is offended.*

### Do Word Studies of These Words

Trouble/ Tribulations <2347> thlipsis

2 Cor. 1:4, John 16:33

*Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

- Trouble/Tribulations <2347> thlipsis
- Trial <1382> dokime
- Sufferings <3804> pathema
- Affliction <3680> oneidismos
- Suffer Affliction <4778> sugkakoucheo
- Persecution <1377> dioko