

THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

TURNING DEFEAT INTO VICTORY AND DREAMS INTO REALITY

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WHENEVER YOU BELIEVE GOD,

YOU ALWAYS CHEER UP.

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THE PIONEER ADVANCE OF THE GOSPEL

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians from prison in Rome. He mentions joy or rejoicing 16 times in four short chapters. Paul was a happy man even in the worst circumstances. He had a spirit of faith. He thanked the believers at Philippi for their partnership in the Gospel. He was not only thanking them, but he was also blessing them with a word from God that guaranteed every one of their needs met because of their giving (Philippians 4:19).

Another subject that Paul addresses in this letter is the furtherance of the Gospel.

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

- Philippians 1:12

The phrase furtherance of the Gospel used in this scripture could be translated "the pioneer advance of the Gospel; to go into new territory." Paul was rejoicing about the advance of the Gospel. The Philippian believers were partners with Paul in the pioneer advance of the Gospel. Even though they remained in Philippi, their pioneer spirit of faith was expressed through their giving. The Gospel of Christ is not meant for a museum - it is for us today. It is full of power and expansion. Settlers put too many

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limits on the Gospel, because the Gospel is unlimited. We may not see all the results of the spirit of faith during our lifetime. It keeps going, growing, and advancing.

Jesus is the original Pioneer. He is the Author and the Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:1, 2). He left Heaven and pioneered the union of God and man. His sacrifice on the cross and His resurrection from the dead joined us to Him through faith.

And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith. - Philippians 1:25

Believers should continue to advance in the joy of faith. We should go into new areas of joy and believing. The spirit of faith is an ever-increasing faith and an ever-increasing joy.

HISTORY'S HIDDEN TURNING POINT

The spirit of faith is evident in the Apostle Paul's life and ministry. Paul's three missionary journeys were exploits in Christ that changed the world. An article from the April 22, 1991 issue of US. News and World Report, by Gerald Parshall caught my attention.

In the middle years of the first century, preachers of many religions and philosophical stripes traveled the sea lanes and cobblestone roads of the eastern Roman Empire. Among them was an indefatigable evangelist in a rough coat and crude sandals who supported himself in his missionary work by making tents. Contemporary historians did not deem him worthy of a single mention, having no inkling of how great a tent maker Paul of Tarsus was. They could not know that he was erecting the theological tent of Christianity, making it broad enough to accommodate all manner of humankind, to girdle the globe and to

survive two millennia as

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a major force in history. While Paul traveled by foot, by donkey, by horseback and by boat across Asia Minor and Macedonia establishing new congregations, he reinforced his gospel to previous converts with a series of letters that have awed even secular historians. Will Durant called them "among the most forceful and eloquent...in all literature."

This article was a part of a larger article entitled History's Hidden Turning Points by Daniel J. Boorstin, who wrote, "The true watersheds in human affairs are seldom spotted quickly amid the tumult of headlines broadcast on the hour."

The Apostle Paul played a tremendous role in a major turning point in history. The spirit of faith enabled him to obey the "heavenly vision" and change the world. Paul called it "the same spirit of faith." Today, those who follow Jesus catch the same spirit of faith. We also believe, speak, and establish hidden turning points in people around the world.

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