

# Philippians 1:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

## Analysis

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**The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds** (οἱ μὲν ἐξ ἐριθείας τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν, οὐχ ἀγνῶς, οἱόμενοι θλῖψιν ἐγείρειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου, hoi men ex eritheias ton Christon katangellousin, ouch hagnōs, oiomenoi thlipsin egeirein tois desmois mou)—Eritheias ("selfish ambition, rivalry") describes self-serving ministry. Ouch hagnōs ("not purely, with mixed motives") indicates tainted sincerity. These preachers **suppose to add affliction to my bonds** (οἱόμενοι θλῖψιν ἐγείρειν, oiomenoi thlipsin egeirein)—intending to worsen Paul's imprisonment.

Their strategy might involve drawing negative attention to Christianity, complicating Paul's legal defense, or causing emotional distress through rivalry. Oiomenoi ("supposing, thinking") may hint they were wrong about the effect—Paul rejoices anyway (v. 18). The text reveals how sinful motives can accompany orthodox proclamation, a sobering reminder that right doctrine doesn't guarantee right heart.

## Historical Context

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Roman legal proceedings depended partly on public perception and character witnesses. If rival Christian factions caused public scandal or doctrinal confusion, it could harm Paul's defense before Caesar. Yet Paul's confidence in sovereign providence (v. 12) meant even malicious preaching served God's purposes. His response models gospel-centeredness over self-protection.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. Have you ever ministered with mixed motives, and how did God use it despite your impurity?
2. How do you guard against 'selfish ambition' (eritheia) in Christian service or leadership?
3. What does it reveal about Paul's character that he rejoices even when others try to afflict him?

## Interlinear Text

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οἱ μὲν ἔξ ἐριθείας τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν,  
G3588 The one of contention G3588 Christ preach  
G3303 G1537 G2052 G5547 G2605

οὐχ ἀγνῶς, οἱόμενοι θλῖψιν ἐπιφέρειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου·  
not sincerely supposing affliction to add G3588 bonds to my  
G3756 G55 G3633 G2347 G2018 G3588 G1199 G3450

## Additional Cross-References

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**2 Corinthians 2:17** (Sin): For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.