

Philippians 1:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds (οἱ μὲν ἐξ ἐριθείας τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν, οὐχ ἄγνῳς, οἰόμενοι θλίψιν 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** (οἰόμενοι θλίψιν 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

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

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

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

οἱ	μὲν	ἐξ	ἐριθείας	τὸν	Χριστὸν	καταγγέλλουσιν,
<small>G3588</small>	The one <small>G3303</small>	of <small>G1537</small>	contention <small>G2052</small>	<small>G3588</small>	Christ <small>G5547</small>	preach <small>G2605</small>
οὐχ	ἀγνῶς,	οἰόμενοι	θλῖψιν	ἐπιφέρειν	τοῖς	δεσμοῖς μου·
not <small>G3756</small>	sincerely <small>G55</small>	supposing <small>G3633</small>	affliction <small>G2347</small>	to add <small>G2018</small>	<small>G3588</small>	bonds <small>G1199</small>
						to my <small>G3450</small>

Additional Cross-References

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.