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Roman "Chains" as Gospel Triumph (Phil. 1:12-18)

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Abstract

Philippi mirrored Rome with its temples, baths, official buildings, language, law, and culture. The Philippian colony remained invaluable with its fertile land, resources, and easy access due to the *Via Egnatia*. Paul traveled to Philippi with his companions and met with God-fearing women outside of the city (Acts 16:9-40). After commanding a spirit out of a possessed slave girl, the owners of the slave girl charged Paul with unlawful Roman practices. Publicly flogged and unfairly imprisoned, Paul's chains were soon loosed during an earthquake. The jailer and his whole household came to Christ, and the Philippian believers supported Paul during this social stigma of imprisonment. Years later, Paul writes to the Philippian believers thanking God for their faithfulness from the beginning (Phil. 1:5-6) and "reverses" the cultural valence of honor and shame by emphasizing how God has used his "chains" to advance the gospel (Phil. 1:12-18). After reviewing the historical, cultural, and literary context of the body-opening in the letter to the Philippians (1:12-16), the theological significance of Paul's use of the term "chains" is examined, particularly in relation to the nature of God's power and work concerning the gospel.

Keywords: Paul, Philippians 1:12-18, Chains, Shame, Gospel, Pauline Letters, Suffering in Paul

1 Historical Background

Before Roman occupation, the city of Philippi had experienced a rich, independent Greek heritage. In 360 B.C., colonists led by the exiled Athenian politician and rhetor, Kallistratos, founded the city, naming it *Krenides* because of its springs at the base of the hill (Lazarides, 704). In 356 B.C., King Philip II of Macedon conquered the city, reinforced the walls, harvested the wealth from the gold mines nearby, and named the city "Philippi" after himself (Strabo, *Geography*, 7.34; Diodorus Siculus 16.3.7 and 16.8.6). The defeat of Athens and Thebes by Macedonia at Chaeronea (338 B.C.) lessened the power of the city-state as most cities' political independence was circumscribed by the power of neighboring kings. From 277-168 B.C., Macedon preserved most faithfully the characteristics of a somewhat constitutional kingship (Davis and Kraay, 225). In 168 B.C., the last Macedonian king, Perseus, was defeated by Rome.

The Roman senate continued its dominant policies by dividing Macedonia into four districts for the purpose of maintaining power (and further weakening their conquered territory) so as not to spend the amounts of money for direct administration while raising taxes to support Roman enforcement (Hammond, 563). Rome "straight-jacketed" Macedonia by: dividing her into divisions, not allowing trade between these new territories, not permitting marriages between these new territories, promoting only pro-Roman leaders, limiting their mining, and requiring one-half of the regular tax to the king paid to Rome (563). Philippi belonged to the first of these districts in which Amphipolis was the foremost city (Acts 16:10; see Livy, *History of Rome, 14*.29). The *Via Egnatia* ran through the middle of Philippi which facilitated and secured the city's prosperity.

In 42 B.C., Caesar's assassins, Brutus and Cassius, were defeated by Antony and Octavian at Philippi, making Philippi known to the whole world. Roman colonists settled at Philippi, and when Octavian later defeated Antony and Cleopatra (31 B.C.), Antony's soldiers received allotments in Philippi, and Augustus later renamed the Roman colony, *Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis* (Pliny, *Natural History*, 4.42; Strabo, *Geography*, 7.41; and Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 51.4.6).

Philippi benefited from Roman design and purpose. Like other important cities in the Roman empire, its temples, fountains, baths, and official buildings were not merely for social means, but were reproduced as precisely as possible according to "the institutions, monuments, and cults of the mother city . . .[having] the essential elements of the capital" (Grimal, 5). Archaeological finds at Philippi include: shops, a forum, Corinthian colonnades, a marketplace, *palaestra*, exercise area, a small amphitheater, and a large underground lavatory, spacious baths, and a marble arch symbolizing the political

preeminence of the Roman colony (Lemerle, 1945). By colonizing Philippi, Rome ensured that Philippi followed the aims of the government, to enforce its laws and way of life.

Under Augustus and the Julio-Claudians, it was common for veterans to be settled in special colonies intended to act as bastions of the Roman state. In addition to the local Thracian and Greek populations, there were two settlements of veterans among the Philippians citizens as compensation (Tellbe, 219). Veterans could easily be prevailed upon to take over certain responsibilities as a "sort of instant provincial aristocracy" and the military ethos and status distinctions remained paramount (Goodman, 120). In 31 B.C. Octavian established Philippi as a military outpost and filled the city with Roman citizens, giving it the *ius Italicum* (Tellbe, 212). Philippian citizens were exempted from taxes and had the right to acquire, own, and transfer property. Furthermore, Philippi's local government, patterned after Rome, was led by two chief magistrates who had authority to try civil and criminal matters (Hemer, 115). In essence, Philippi enjoyed the rights of an Italian municipality and was governed by the laws and institutions of the Roman people.

Roman state religions dominated the city's way of life, which included the imperial cult. The official language of Philippi was Latin, evidenced by the inscriptions found that were mostly in Latin from the first and second century (Collart, 315f). With the Philippian population made up of Roman, Thracian, and Macedonian people, a plurality of beliefs existed similar to that of Rome. And with an inseparable religious and political social dynamic, it is not surprising that in the account of Paul's first visit to Philippi (Acts 16), the merchants in Philippi charged Paul with practicing unlawful Roman customs because he had hindered their profits gained from fortune telling (16:20). And the independent Greek merchants capitalizing on the Roman enforcement of peace and culture—resulting in the beating of Paul and his co-worker Silas—aligns with the historical description of Philippi as the Roman authorities intended to exact societal shame by having Paul and Silas "chained" in the inner cell (Acts 16:23).

2 Philippian Visit

Paul visited Philippi on at least three occasions (Acts 16:12, 20:1-6, and 2 Cor. 2:13). The initial account of Paul's visit in Acts 16 provides the most relevant background information to better understand the meaning of Paul's emphasis on "chains" in the opening of the body of his letter to the Philippians (1:12-18). After leaving Troas, Paul sailed for Samothrace, Neapolis, and then traveled to Philippi for the first time (Acts 16:9-40). On the Sabbath, Paul and his companions went outside the city to find a "place of prayer" by the river (the terms "house of prayer" or "synagogue" may synonymously refer to buildings—e.g., see Josephus, *Life*, 277—but Luke describes a situation in which a synagogue may not have been established in Philippi—Barrett, 781). Of the women gathered for prayer, Luke records the response of Lydia to Paul's message, a God-fearer and dealer in purple cloth (Acts 16:13-14). She and all of her household were baptized, and she persuaded Paul and his companions to stay with her.

Later Paul became troubled by a possessed slave girl who made money for her owners by telling fortunes. He commanded the spirit out of her in the name of Jesus Christ. Those who gained financial profit from the slave girl seized Paul and Silas and dragged them before the magistrates under the charges that these Jews are (1) throwing "our" city into an uproar by (2) advocating customs unlawful for Romans to practice. The shame intensifies as the crowd joins in the attack against them (Acts 16:22) as a means of denying any honor due them (Malina and Neyrey, 45). The officials ordered that Paul and Silas be stripped and flogged, and they were then imprisoned in an inner cell, guarded carefully, feet fastened in stocks (see also Paul's description to the Thessalonian church informing them of this mistreatment—1 Thess. 2:2).

Tellbe argues that the account in Acts 16:11-40 demonstrates that the civic authorities at Philippi were careful to follow Roman law and order (218-20). Luke's description of the local authorities as "magistrates" are depicted in terms typical for the administration of a Roman colony (i.e., the forum, where the "leading people" presided in the center of the city; 16:19). Two magistrates would have ruled Philippi, upholding Roman law and order, administrating the city, promoting civic cults, and exercising control over various social and economic responsibilities.

Chains secured Paul and Silas from escape. The weight of iron frequently caused untold sufferings: corroded skin, pain, crippling, and sleeplessness (Rapske, 426). Paul and Silas's incarceration in Philippi is the worst of the Lukan record—the entire prison population had probably been thrust into the inner cell with Paul and Silas for the night, resulting in their experience of virtually all of the worst things that were associated with overcrowding (426). The daily prison ration of food was often severely restricted in its variety, quality and quantity, which means that Paul and Silas would have experienced dietary neglect. It was expected that prisoners would attend to their own nourishment provided by loyal family, friends or contracted providers (427).

Paul's imprisonment in Philippi during his first visit indicates that the magistrates did not perceive him as having an honorable place in society**.** Among Romans, everything depended on status, and in the courts, distinctions were made between citizens and aliens, free and slaves (MacMullen, "Judicial Savagery," 204). More specifically, the status levels in the Roman Empire were based on different rights and duties in the eyes of Roman law: such as slave or freedmen, freedmen by birth (*ingenui*) or by grant (*libertini*); free people as independent Roman citizens (*sui iuris, suae potestatis*) or neither of these; Coloniary Latins or Junian Latins (under the Principate)—and peregrines which would be citizens of a particular community or of none (Crook, 36-39). Judges based their decisions on two broad categories—*humiliores* and *honestiores*—with the higher status often not receiving any imprisonment (MacMullen, "Personal Power," 192). Nowhere in the legal sources is there an exhaustive official definition of who belonged in each of the two status groups (*honestiores* and *humiliores*)—but generally speaking, *honestiores* retained the privileges which had once belonged to all Roman citizens, and *humiliores* were degraded to a status slightly if at all superior to that which *peregrini* had held (Crook, 36). "Each kind of person would be carrying round with him a different bundle of rights and duties in the eyes of Roman Law" (36). Even citizenship was not a matter of which territory you were from, rather your personal and social heritage.

Paul R. Swarney offers evidence for this kind of social bias when he examined the objectives of the defense of three cases argued by M. Tullius Cicero before Roman juries—from 80 to 50 B.C ("Social Status," 137f): the defense (advocate-orator) in the prosecution stage of the judicial process established the respectable position and the social structure of the defendant's friends while at the same time demeaned the opponent(s) and their friends. This was accomplished by associating adjectives of acceptable behavior to the defendant and associating the defendant with intimate acquaintances which illustrated their respectable social position (138). Therefore, witnesses testified to the reputation of the accused criminal and not to the facts of the crime committed. Swarney's observations concerned the townspeople who testified in all three trials that were not witnesses to the crime event itself, but what they did testify to was the most important evidence—"arguing for the acquittal of the defendant, *his standing in his community*" (154).

Amidst this unfair system, Paul did not immediately disclose his Roman citizenship. While incarcerated, Paul and Silas at midnight, during prayer and singing, experienced an earthquake—all of the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose (Acts 16:25-26). The jailer believed in the Lord Jesus and was baptized (and all his family), and he was filled with joy. The jailer then washed the wounds of Paul and Silas and fed them in his house (Acts 16:31-34). While Paul's "chains" were meant to be a degrading punishment against him, the apparent shameful situation resulted in salvation. It seems that Paul recognized that it is not his social status or personal connections that resulted in him being released from his imprisonment, but the power of God.

The magistrates were subject to the jurisdiction of the provincial proconsul, and after finding out that Paul was a Roman citizen, they knew they had directly violated Roman law and were filled with alarm (16:38-40). After the magistrates ordered their release, Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out" (Acts 16:37; NASB). Luke seems to emphasize this "honor and shame language" as Paul vigorously takes "back some dignity after having been deeply shamed . . .[having been] brought before the magistrates . . . clothes torn from their backs . . . flogged severely . . . marched off to the prison where they were summarily locked into stocks in the most secure cell in the prison" (Rapske, 303). Based on the stigma of associated with public beatings and imprisonment, it would seem reasonable to consider whether Paul and Silas's message would have been hindered. Rapske suggests that Paul's question ("are they now sending us away secretly?") concerning his expulsion reinforces the formal degradation—insult upon insult (304). Thus Paul insists that the magistrates and Roman citizens of the colony show dignity and status to himself and Silas publicly. It is likely that when the magistrates "asked" the men to leave the city it suggests that their procedural error caused them to reverse the shame (Bruce, 320). After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, went to Lydia's house without being hurried, and met with the brothers and encouraged them (Acts 16:40).

In other words, in a "shame/honor" driven culture, Paul uses his citizenship as practical currency (Cassidy 1987, 102-04). At first, Paul did not make known his citizenship. The punishment he endured would be too severe for a citizen, and in such an orderly city such as Philippi, a judgment could be appealed. But Paul did not appeal because he had not been publicly condemned (see Acts 22:25), and there had been no investigation, which means his imprisonment and treatment did not follow the legal, orderly progression for a Roman citizen (Rapske, 301). "Paul accuses that the Philippian magistrates, wrongly assuming the apostles' non-citizen status, have illegally foreshortened due process by moving directly from the accusation phase to the punishment phase" (301). Without being condemned, there would be no need to appeal. When he does make his citizenship known after God's powerful deliverance, the magistrates show him some semblance of honor by escorting him out.

Thus, Paul's relationship with the Philippian believers from the beginning involved "chains"—a status that carried shame. Paul was imprisoned in a crowded, filthy, dark place for a temporary period, either to be held until trial (e.g., Livy 3.13.4 and 35.34.7), severely punished, or killed. The jailers were responsible for the prison and to the magistrates (Wansink, 89), which is why Paul would have been fettered by one or both legs, or by the wrists. The bonds prevented prisoners from escape due to the heavy iron weighing 10-15 pounds or more (89), and Paul would likely be chained to someone, or to a single length of chain running through all of the fetters (Acts 12:6, and see Livy 32.26.18—chains would cause bruises and injury over time). The noisy, heavy chains became symbolic of shame, and in ancient Greek and Latin literature, "chains" became a synecdoche, interchangeable with the meaning "prison" (Wansink, 46). Thus, the humiliation from bonds for any person would have been considerable, except that Paul understood the nature of the cross and the glory which comes through suffering. This becomes clear when in a few years Paul writes his letter to the Philippian believers, drawing attention to his "chains" (Phil. 1:12-18)—not as a source of disgrace and cultural stigma but as a means by God to show his purpose and power.

3 Literary Structure

Paul's letter to the Philippians exhibits a cohesive literary style and internal integrity (see Jewett 1970, 40-53; Garland 1985, 141f; and Alexander, 87-101). For purposes of this analysis, chapter 1 is outlined as follows:

1:1-2	Salutation
1:3-11	Thanksgiving Section
1:12-26	Body Opening
1:27-30	Transition

Philippians 1:12-26 forms a distinct unit preceding the hortatory section of 1:27-4:9 (Porter, 36-59), and 1:12-26 serves as the body-opening or part of the body-opening (White, 3-4). Paul's descriptions in 1:12-26 can be sub-divided into (a) the results of Paul's "chains" (advancing the gospel; 12-18a) and (b) results of Paul's deliverance (advancing the gospel among the Philippian believers; 18b-26).

While the letter to the Philippians does not fit neatly into a specific Greco-Roman letter type, most letter types were associated with epideictic rhetoric (Stowers, 24-27). For epideictic oratory, virtue and vice, noble and base are the objects of praise and blame. Virtuous forms are justice, courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality,

gentleness, prudence, and wisdom—for "the opposite of virtue and noble is shame" (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1355-56). What is significant here is that in the opening of the body of the letter (1:12-18), Paul reverses the effect of blame by using what is customarily considered shameful (imprisonment) as productive and honorable.

4 Theological Significance

Now that the historical, cultural, and literary contexts of the letter have been discussed, the theological significance of Philippians 1:12-18 is examined. Before focusing on the nature of God's work through Paul's "chains," a brief overview of the preceding passage—the salutation and thanksgiving is given (1:1-2 and 1:3-11). First, Paul makes clear his status as a prisoner. Based on the evidence, he most likely writes from Rome: he mentions members of Caesar's household (4:22), the praetorian guard (1:13), his plans to visit the Philippian believers, and that Timothy was with him (Hawthorne, xli-xliv; Cassidy 2001, 5). Paul addresses his letter to the saints living in Philippi together with the "overseers" and deacons (1:1-2)—which implies a well ordered believing community since the term "overseers" was used to refer to those appointed to regulate a new colony (Lightfoot, 95).

Paul offers thanksgiving to God (1:3-11) as he remembers the Philippians with joy in his petitions (1:3) because of their partnership (κοινωνία) with the gospel from the first day until the present (1:5). Paul refers to their faithful physical and spiritual support that remained from his initial imprisonment in Philippi through his past and current trials (1:7). This language reflects the family bond between Paul and the Philippians exhibiting the qualities of a "friendship letter" (Fee, 27f), which brings into the foreground the context of reciprocity and corresponding social expectations (see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* Books 8 and 9). This present mutual participation in the gospel finds momentum as Paul marks his letter with an eschatological focus when he describes God's work in the Philippians as a progression to completion on the day of Christ Jesus (1:6). And Paul prays with Christ's compassion that they might have insight into what is best and that they might be blameless (1:9-11).

Paul develops his theme of imprisonment from his thanksgiving section—where he first mentions his "chains" (1:7), implying that they expected the worse (Garland 1980, 331). But Paul opens the body of the letter communicating in a manner that might contrast their expectations: "*I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has come about to advance* (προκοπὴν) *the gospel more* (μᾶλλον)."[1] Rather than accenting the hindrance of the gospel, Paul assures them that his imprisonment advances it. The word "advance" (προκοπὴ) forms an *inclusio* of this section: my imprisonment is for "the advancement of the gospel"—1:12—and my returning to you again will be "for your advancement and joy in the faith"—1:25 (Garland 1980, 331). And significantly, Paul uses the adverb "more" (μᾶλλον) five times in the first part of his letter in a positive sense in relation to the nature of God, the gospel, or his instruction (1:9, 12, 23, 2:12). In other words, Paul sees the exponential work of God in the church: in increasing love ["I pray that your love abound 'more and more' (μᾶλλον κάι μᾶλλον)," 1:9]; in being in the presence of Christ [to depart and be with Christ is the better option (μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον; 1:23)], and in the greater result (πολλῷ μᾶλλον) that comes from reverent obedience (2:12). All this to say, that Paul opens the body of the letter with an announcement that his current situation (in "chains") has brought about an advancement of the gospel and increased faith (1:12 and 25).

Paul mentions "chains" (δεσμούς) three times within the opening section of the body, 1:12-18. First, he explains the reason for what has happened to him: "*so that* (ὥστε) *the gospel has become evident to the whole praetorium guard and all of the rest that I am in chains* (δεσμούς) *for Christ*" (1:13). The subordinate conjunction (ὥστε) indicates that what follows is the result of his imprisonment. In addition, Paul places the direct object, "chains" (δεσμούς), at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis, and the repetition of the word "chains" in this section lets Paul's readers know that it is a central topic. In his reference to the *Praetorium*, Paul could be indirectly referring to provincial administrators, or to a general's tent, or a governor's residence, or any specious villa or palace (Lightfoot, 101). But Paul most likely refers to military barracks attached to the imperial palace (101). Thus Paul's "chains" have resulted in a type of proclamation to outsiders, particularly to the elite guard and those associated with the palace at the heart of the empire.

Second, Paul gives another result of his being imprisoned: ". . . *and many of the brothers in the Lord, as a result of my chains* (δεσμούς) *have gained confidence to speak the word with exceeding boldness and without fear*" (1:14). Paul reiterates the effectiveness of his chains by his word choice—"more," "all," "many," and "exceedingly." Certain grammatical elements also support this emphasis—the partitive adjective (1:14), "speaking the word fearlessly with great boldness"); dative of cause—"because of my bonds" (1:14); and πλείονας—implicit comparative advantage—"with the result that" (Wallace, 111, 168, and 299). In essence, Paul's chains serve as a "pulpit" for him among the Roman soldiers and as a positive, motivating influence for other ministers and believers preaching the gospel [confirmed by his choice of synonyms which support this theme: λαλέω (1:14), κηρύσσω (1:15) and καταγγέλλω (1:17-18)]. At this point, it is important to recognize that Paul writes to believers in Philippi, a Roman colony, and that loyalties to Rome, even if these loyalties have lessened so due to their faith, are likely present among some believers, and these same believers, apparently, would be excited about the proclamation occurring among the Roman provinces. And in highlighting the evangelistic outcome, Paul does not draw attention to himself but attributes the work to Jesus Christ: his imprisonment is "in Christ" (1:13) and confidence that the brothers have "in the Lord" (the phrase "brothers in the Lord" and the placement of the verb—1:14—emphasizes the ground and source of their newly acquired confidence—Garland 1980, 332).

Paul's early relationship with the Philippians involved imprisonment in the Philippian jail (Acts 16:11-12). The manner in which the local Roman magistrates carried out their punishment suggests that the community leaders perceived him as a low status individual (*humiliores*). Paul experienced a crowded, filthy, and dark environment, fastened in chains weighing 10-15 pounds. This humiliation would

[1]Translations of Philippians are my own unless otherwise noted.

typically have caused some disassociation among relatives and friends. But the Philippian believers maintained their support for Paul despite the shame associated with imprisonment (Acts 16:40; Phil. 1:4). Years later, Paul now writes to the Philippian church while he is under house arrest, using the synecdoche "chains" which would draw upon their memory of their original support of him despite the civic shame associated with flogging and being fettered in an inner cell (Acts 16:22). Yet from the beginning, Paul's "chains" served as a vehicle for the advancement of the gospel (an earthquake shook every prisoner's chains loose, Acts 16:25-26, and the jailer and all of his family were baptized, Acts 16:31-34).

Third, Paul mentions that some are proclaiming Christ for selfish reasons and to cause trouble on account of his "chains" (1:15-17):

Some are preaching out of envy and selfish ambition,,	a
but some are preaching Christ out of goodwill—	b
they do so out of love,	b
knowing that I am here for the defense of the gospel.	
But those proclaiming Christ out of selfish ambition, insincerely,	a
think they can stir up trouble for me in my chains (δεσμοίς).	

In 1:17-18, the preachers' attitudes are described as selfish and insincere. Paul does not necessarily infer that their content was false, but that their motivations were self-centered and envious—which would be quickly recognized as a contrast to "noble" virtue. It seems that these persons reacted against Paul and aimed to hurt him by their preaching. Paul uses relational words—"good will," "love"; "envy," "strife," and "selfish ambition"—in a parallel manner (see Hebrew parallel pattern of *abba* above) that points to Paul as the object of the "love" and "good will" (Hawthorne, 37). It might be that those operating from selfish motives disdained Paul's pitiable weakness in prison, an unbecoming status, and they hoped to gall him with their boasts of their continued success and their disparagement of his condition as a "humiliated prisoner" (Jewett, 390). If the critics of Paul's imprisonment in 1:15 are linked to the attitude of "looking out after their own interests" (see 2:21), then these persons probably felt humiliated by the imprisonment (390). On the other hand, the congregation in Philippi may have had some internal tension with those wanting to teach a gospel which required obedience to the Law, and Paul's arguments established a "cross-oriented concept of humility and an apocalyptically-grounded sense of history to counter their propaganda and at the same time to correct the Philippians' viewpoint" (390).

At the end of this section (1:12-18), Paul "rejoices" in what God is accomplishing concerning his "chains." This "rejoicing" serves as a transition into the next sub-section concerning his expected release from imprisonment which would result in increase of joy and faith for the Philippian believers (1:18b-26). Thematically, Paul moves from the topic of the outward proclamation of the gospel to the inward, personal experience of Christ being made great within him (1:20). It is this movement from humble suffering ("chains") to an increase in gospel proclamation, boldness, joy and faith which foreshadows the tone and content for the remaining sections of the letter.

Paul understands the theological reality of God's work among the Philippian believers as they support him in defending the gospel while in "chains" (1:6-7). He confidently expects God's supernatural power to work among the believers: for their love to abound more and more (1:9), for his deliverance through their prayerful support by the Spirit (1:19), and in their humble disposition in thinking of others' interests—the humble mind of Christ—a humility that engenders God's powerful work (2:5-11). Paul rejoices in his suffering for Christ (2:17) and calls upon the Philippians to participate with him (1:29-30), resulting in an experiential knowledge of the resurrection power of God (3:8-14). Thus, Paul opens his letter with rejoicing, without shame, in God's advancement of the gospel as a result of his "chains."

5 Conclusion

Philippi mirrored Rome, so it was not surprising that its leaders flogged, chained, and imprisoned Paul and Silas after perceiving them as *humiliores* (Acts 16:9-40). God worked supernaturally in response to Paul and Silas's faithful and painful suffering, revealing his power to those in the jail and brining about the conversion of the jailer and his whole household. Despite the shame associated with chains, the Philippian believers remained faithful to Paul (Phil. 1:11), and years later, Paul writes to the congregation while imprisoned in Rome to remind them again of how God works through what would seem to be a situation of societal shame to advance the gospel. Paul expresses joy rather than sorrow for his situation, avoiding any type of blame or social stigma, revealing God's power and praising him for it. In essence, Paul's opening section of the body of the letter (1:12-18) demonstrates the humble mindset of Christ through his suffering ("chains"), contrasting the motives of selfish and envious preachers, and accenting the familial bond with the Philippian believers as they participate together in service to the gospel bringing about faith and joy as well as honor to God.

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