



JOHNSON AVENUE
Church of Christ
WHERE *God's Family* BUILDS ETERNAL HOMES

A Spiritual Encouragement Message

April 23, 2020

Unchained

*Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; **but the word of God is not imprisoned.***" Paul the Apostle (2 Timothy 2:8-9)

Paul the Apostle was given a commission by God to spread the gospel to the remotest parts of the world and even though he faced many obstacles along the way, he persevered in his mission. One of the challenging obstacles he faced was eventually being placed under house arrest in Rome for two years for crimes he was accused of committing in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27-28, 28:30).

What is remarkable about Paul is that even though had gone through so much already, was under house arrest, and unable to freely preach the gospel like he was accustomed to, being imprisoned in his home did not stop him from fulfilling his mission. I would even argue that it helped it!

It was while he was in chains and under guard (Acts 28:16, Ephesians 6:20) that most believe Paul wrote his encouraging and eye-opening letters to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon. He didn't stop at edifying the church, he also used this opportunity to share the good news with everyone who came to see him (Acts 28:30-31), those in the governor's palace (Philippians 1:13), and even those of Caesar's household (Philippians 4:22). Paul didn't



shrink back during his time of house arrest but rather boldly utilized the situation he found himself in to further the gospel of God.

I can only imagine what Paul would have done to share the gospel message if he had the expediencies we have at our fingertips today. Facebook, Zoom, Instagram, Twitter, email, text messages, USPS, computers, and smartphones are all great tools most of us have that can be utilized to further the gospel message of Jesus Christ. They can be used to allow us to fulfill the ministry we have been commissioned with (Matthew 28:18-20, Ephesians 4:11-13).

So what are you doing in your "chains" as you are sheltering in place at your house? We have seen the word being proclaimed, acts of service being done for members of the church and community, and social distancing visits, letters, calls, and cards being made to connect with one another. I want to encourage the church, the disciples of Christ, to continue to follow in Paul's footsteps and use this time we have been given to further the borders of the kingdom of God, edify the church, and participate in the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

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