

New Philippians series continues with this
useful message from Philippians 1 --
a lesson on adversity leading to victory!
WANT UPDATE ONLY? DON'T UNSUBSCRIBE
BUT SEE INSTRUCTION UNDER THE ARM LOGO

This email not
displaying correctly?
[View in your browser.](#)



Thanks for being a friend of ARM!
If you want only the "ARM UPDATE"
please do NOT unsubscribe,
but send an email to rodfar@arm.org
with 'UPDATE ONLY' in the subject line! THANKS!

ARM Prison Outreach International

"Ministers' Minute" Volume 12 Number 9

Making Straight A's in Jail!-- Turning Adversity into Advantage!

Philippians 1.12-14

This "MM" is the 9th of 2013 -- and the 141st email sermon overall. "Ministers' Minute" is a free service of encouragement to preachers, chaplains, donors, and Christian workers around the world. This sermon is the second message in a five-sermon series on the book of Philippians. All "Ministers' Minutes" are archived at

<http://www.abarc.org/Resources/Ministers%20Minutes/Ministers%20Minutes.htm>

Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, or use components of it! May God bless your labors!

Rod Farthing, Development Director

ARM FAST FACT

Baptistry Report

ARM sent 11 baptistries to prisons in July-Aug 2013

Portable Collapsible Baptistries

Glades County Detention Cente Moore	Haven FL	7/01/13
Federal Correctional Inst Eng	Littleton CO	7/02/13
Marana Comm Corr Treatment Fa	Marana AZ	7/19/13
Bledsoe County Corr. Complex	Pikeville TN	7/23/13
Rankin County Jail	Brandon MS	7/31/13
Lawrence County Sheriff's Off	Monticello MS	8/01/13
Metropolitan Correctional Cen	San Diego CA	8/12/13
Quehanna Boot Camp	Karthaus PA	8/13/13
Letcher County Jail	Whitesburg KY	8/15/13
Northeastern Correctional Cen	West Concord MA	8/21/13
Waco Center for Youth	Waco TX	8/23/13

ARM sent 1 baptistry to mission fields in July-Aug 2013

Lifespring Christian Church **FOR AFRICA** Cincinnati OH

39 Jail baptistries, 17 mission baptistries, and 2 military baptistries were sent in 2012

Since 1973, ARM has donated over **1,549** baptistries to prisons!

Making Straight A's in Jail!-- Turning Adversity into Advantage!

Philippians 1.12-14

INTRO: When he was seven years old, Glenn Cunningham's physicians told him that he would never walk again after suffering from severe leg burns from a gasoline explosion at his schoolhouse. His older brother Floyd died from his burns. Cunningham not only walked but was one of the premiere milers in the 1930's. The Morton County athlete also starred in the 1932 Olympics.

The little country schoolhouse was heated by an old-fashioned, pot-bellied coal stove. A little boy had the job of coming to school early each day to start the fire and warm the room before his teacher and his classmates arrived.

One morning they arrived to find the schoolhouse engulfed in flames. They dragged

the unconscious little boy out of the flaming building more dead than alive. He had major burns over the lower half of his body and was taken to a nearby county hospital.

From his bed the dreadfully burned, semi-conscious little boy faintly heard the doctor talking to his mother. The doctor told his mother that her son would surely die – which was for the best, really – for the terrible fire had devastated the lower half of his body.

But the brave boy didn't want to die. He made up his mind that he would survive. Somehow, to the amazement of the physician, he did survive. When the mortal danger was past, he again heard the doctor and his mother speaking quietly. The mother was told that since the fire had destroyed so much flesh in the lower part of his body, it would almost be better if he had died, since he was doomed to be a lifetime cripple with no use at all of his lower limbs.

Once more the brave boy made up his mind. He would not be a cripple. He would walk. But unfortunately from the waist down, he had no motor ability. His thin legs just dangled there, all but lifeless. Ultimately he was released from the hospital. Every day his mother would massage his little legs, but there was no feeling, no control, nothing. Yet his determination that he would walk was as strong as ever.

When he wasn't in bed, he was confined to a wheelchair. One sunny day his mother wheeled him out into the yard to get some fresh air. This day, instead of sitting there, he threw himself from the chair. He pulled himself across the grass, dragging his legs behind him. He worked his way to the white picket fence bordering their lot. With great effort, he raised himself up on the fence. Then, stake by stake, he began dragging himself along the fence, resolved that he would walk. He started to do this every day until he wore a smooth path all around the yard beside the fence. There was nothing he wanted more than to develop life in those legs.

Ultimately through his daily massages, his iron persistence and his resolute determination, he did develop the ability to stand up, then to walk haltingly, then to walk by himself – and then – to run. He began to walk to school, then to run to school, to run for the sheer joy of running. Later in college he made the track team.

Still later in Madison Square Garden this young man who was not expected to survive, who would surely never walk, who could never hope to run – this determined young man, Dr. Glenn Cunningham, ran the world's fastest mile...

For three years, from 1932 – 1934, he won the Big Six indoor titles and was again at the Olympics in 1936. He was known as the "Kansas Ironman." Then in 1938 Cunningham became the world's fastest miler as he set a new record at Dartmouth College. That same year he also received a doctorate degree from New York University.

Paul, the Apostle, developed perseverance through the encouragement of HIS HEAVENLY FATHER! And YOU can, too!

We serve a God who specializes in turning ADVERSITY INTO ADVANTAGE!

[READ TEXT - Philippians 1.12-14]

Who are these Bible heroes who illustrate “turning adversity into advantage?”

- Ninety-nine years of childlessness became a mighty, innumerable nation!
- Long years of innocence in an Egyptian dungeon led to dramatic deliverance and victory!
- Forty years of desert life led to exoneration, ministry, and a mighty nation!

We must remember the words of Glenn Cunningham’s father – and our Heavenly Father: “Run on, never quit!”

What did Paul’s divinely inspired perseverance through adversity gain for him and the Lord’s Church?

1. ADVERSITY BROUGHT ABOUT THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE GOSPEL! 12

Phil 1:12 Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. (NIV)

Paul says: “Because of my adversity, the Gospel has advanced!”

This should be no surprise, the Gospel was born in adversity, injustice, persecution, and death!

1 Cor 15:1-6 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. (NIV)

But the CROSS was NOT the END of our Jesus, and neither was PERSECUTION going to stop HIS Gospel!

Acts 8.1 And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

- 2 Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.
- 3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.
- 4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. (NIV)

How can YOUR adversity bring about the advancement of the Gospel? It can empower your testimony as you persevere in obedience when your circumstances are LESS than conducive to faithfulness.

Consider the fictional Mr. White, successful businessman, who is very active in his church. He leads out in every way he can and is known as being reliable and committed to the congregation's progress and growth. Skeptics, however, discount his involvement, speculating that only because of his good health, blessed family, and prosperity does he make the Lord's work a priority. Should his financial blessings and health be lost, he would no doubt fall from his spiritual perch. In essence, we have the story of Job and the argument of Satan: "Take away his blessings and he will no longer serve His Creator!"

Like Job, Mr. White suddenly loses his business, his family, and his health. But contrary to the skeptics' predictions, he remains faithful and reliable in his relationship to the Lord and his congregation. Those who know him well exclaim: "Wow, he REALLY believes!" The Gospel has been validated and advanced in its influence by the adversity of a persevering believer!

How do you do when things fall apart? Do you confirm the skeptics' doubt? Or do you elicit the amazed response: "Wow, he REALLY believes!"

2. ADVERSITY BROUGHT ABOUT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GOSPEL!

13

Phil 1:13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. (NIV)

The Gospel is "good news" and it is designed to be declared, proclaimed, and shouted! Paul's imprisonment, adversity led to the Gospel's announcement to "the whole palace guard and to everyone else..."

Can Satan silence the Good News by the troubles he brews for the saints? No! As long as the saints, like Paul, remain faithful and verbalize their loyalty and commitment to the Risen Lord, troubles magnify the power of our God rather than silence it! "They all know I'm in chains FOR CHRIST!"

In 303 AD, Roman Emperor Diocletian decreed that all Christians and all Bibles be destroyed. A brutal persecution ensued. But 25 years later, Diocletian was dead and the new Emperor, Constantine, commissioned the government-financed printing of the Scriptures – and declared the formerly illegal religion of Christianity the official faith of

the empire.

In 1776, Voltaire announced that no Bibles would survive the next century. In 1876, Voltaire was dead and the Geneva Bible society was using his own home and press to print and store Bibles!

Praise the Lord that adversity furthers the advancement and announcement of the Gospel!

3. ADVERSITY BROUGHT ABOUT THE AGGRESSIVENESS OF THE GOSPEL! 14

Phil 1:14 Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly. (NIV)

Paul courageously endured – preaching all the while! – his chains and, as a direct result, “most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.”

The Gospel’s advancement, announcement, and aggressiveness WAS NOT DIMINISHED, BUT ENHANCED by the adversity Paul faced!

Is that true in your life? Do you trust God and persevere through adversity in order to enhance the power of your witness and secure your standing at Christ’s return?

1 Peter 1:6-7 agrees: “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith -- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire -- may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (NIV)

Alfred Wallace was observing the struggle of the moths to break out of their cocoons. It seemed to be a long and unsuccessful escape for one moth whose wings beat and beat on the cocoon wall in its attempt to exit to freedom. Uncharacteristically, Wallace intervened and slit that cocoon with his knife. The developing wings had not worked hard enough or long enough. The moth’s wings were not as strong as they needed to be. By intercepting the trial and shortening the “adversity” Wallace had actually stunted the wings’ growth and shortened the life of the moth. It soon died. It had not reached its potential because it “had it too easy.” Without the tribulation and long struggle in the cocoon, the moth was doomed to ineffectiveness and a short life.

The application is clear. We can persevere through the troubles to build strength and receive the grace and strength of the Lord. Or we can cave to the pressures and tribulations and fall short of all that God has for us.

If the Lord brings you TO IT, the Lord can bring you THROUGH IT.

Will your adversity be a stepping stone to God's power and your victory as you follow the exhortation of your Father: "...run on, never quit!"



WWW.ABARC.ORG

ARM's Websites

www.arm.org www.abarc.org

Rod Farthing, ARM National
Development Director

rodfar@arm.org

3127 Hwy K, Salem, MO 65560
573-729-6355

Check out the unbelievable wealth of essays,
books, and resources! It is ALL FREE!

RESOURCES IN FIVE LANGUAGES

at www.abarc.org

[follow on Twitter](#) | [friend on Facebook](#) | [forward to a friend](#)

Copyright © 2013 American Rehabilitation Ministry, All rights reserved.

"You are receiving this email because you subscribed at some time in the past."

Our mailing address is:

American Rehabilitation Ministry
3127 Hwy K
Salem, MO 65560

[Add us to your address book](#)



[unsubscribe from this list](#) | [update subscription preferences](#)