

I. Introduction

- A. Welcome to Pathway.
- B. Welcome to part 4 in our series. We are thinking through God's message to us as recorded in the Bible. Specifically in the Bible in this little book called Philippians.
- C. The title of my series is: **Quit Telling Yourself I Can't**
- D. Let's look together at our paragraph in the Bible, and then I'll break it down.

II. Title

- A. Today I want to think with you about one of the most powerful lines of internal dialogue that can echo in our hearts: So my title today is: **Quit Telling Yourself I Can't Handle This, part 2**
- B. I picked this title on purpose. It's because of what's going on when Paul writes this book in the Bible.
 - 1. First, he's in prison. Technically, house arrest. He was arrested in Philippi and dragged off to Rome for trial. So he's under arrest.
 - 2. Second, he's got a Roman guard chained to him 24/7. These are the famous Praetorium, the palace guards for Julius Caesar and all the Caesars. More on them in a minute. Big, tough, elite soldiers, the best of the best.
 - a) Here he is, being faithful to God, and everything falls apart. If ever there were a time for a guy to say, I can't handle this anymore, it's right here, right now. But there's more...
 - 3. Because the third thing that's going on is that Paul is taking friendly fire. Actually, it's unfriendly fire from unfriendly Christians.
 - 4. And that's actually why I picked this title. He's in prison, and these are people, he says, who are "supposing to add affliction to my chains..." They're Christians and they're trying to make it worse for him!
- C. How much can one man take?
- D. By this time, most people would just give up. I quit. I can't take any more of this. I'm out. I quit. I'm done.
- E. But not Paul... he's got something going on inside that's special. It's so special he says, "in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice" (v. 18).
- F. So we are asking, what did he have in his psychology that let him say that? What did he have in his soul that we can put in our soul so we can quit telling ourselves I can't handle this?
- G. Last Sunday, we began deconstructing this paragraph in the Bible to find that out.
- H. We got halfway through... so today is part two.

III. Scripture

- A. *"But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice."* (Philippians 1:12-18)
- B. From this, we started with...

IV. 6 Wrecking Balls For the I Can't Handle This Stronghold

- A. **Wrecking Ball 1: God transforms your problems into a catalyst for grace. (Philippians 1:12)**
- B. **Wrecking Ball 2: God joins your Identity to his Mystery. (Philippians 1:13)**
- C. **Wrecking Ball 3: God Turns Your Trial into a Trumpet Call that Mobilizes an Army. (Philippians 1:14)**

V. Today:

- A. What drives this paragraph is the pain of friendly fire.
- B. Yes, the writer, St. Paul, is being attacked by Roman authorities. That's painful enough.
- C. But he's also being attacked by Christians. That makes this extra painful.
- D. How were they attacking him?
- E. We're not exactly sure, but I suspect in two ways:
 - 1. Some were saying that good Christians don't get arrested. Look at Paul, God must be judging him. God must be punishing him. Good Christians always prosper.
 - a) All I can say is if good Christians always prosper, then there was something wrong with Jesus.
 - 2. I suspect that others were saying, Paul preaches Christ, but he takes Christ too far. They attack Paul's grace-alone message. They preach Christ, yes. But they preach Christ-plus.
 - a) Christ plus obedience. Christ plus the laws of Moses. Christ plus the rituals of the Church. Christ plus stopping your sins.
 - b) To be saved, it's not Christ alone, it's Christ plus...
 - c) Paul is shortcutting the gospel. He's preaching cheap grace. We love Paul, but God threw him in jail to teach him a lesson. Let's pray for our messed up brother.
 - 3. Personally, I find it hard to listen to this criticism. It's my own insecurities at play.
- F. You might be the same way.
 - 1. Your mind starts racing. A tape recorder begins playing their accusations, their subtle digs, on a loop.
 - 2. You start questioning everything. "Did I misunderstand? Am I being too sensitive? Maybe they're right. Maybe I really am the problem."
 - a) The attack from the outside moves inside, and you become your own accuser.
 - b) This is the enemy's psychological end game.

- G. But look at Paul. He's not confused. He's not defensive. He's free. How? It's not because he has thicker skin. It's because he is experiencing the fourth divine wrecking ball.
1. *"Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains..."* (Philippians 1:15, 16)
- H. **Wrecking Ball 4: God has made your soul un-injurable at the core... so now the question is, "Will you believe?"**
1. God doesn't promise to stop the arrows from being fired. He does something far more powerful. He builds a divine fortress around your soul so that when the arrows hit, they cannot pierce your core identity.
 - a) Do you see that word "supposing"?
 - b) That's a word of victory. Your enemies are supposing, but they're supposing wrong.
 2. This is the same formula we discovered last week: **Identity plus Mystery.**
 - a) Your identity is "You in Christ."
 - (1) The voice of the enemy says you are flawed. Your voice declares, I am forgiven.
 - (2) The voice of the enemy says you are failing. Your voice declares my victory's already won.
 - (3) The voice of the enemy says you're at risk. Your voice declares If God is for me, who can be against me?
 - (4) The voice of the enemy says you've made too many mistakes. Your voice declares I've got too much righteousness for any of that to matter.
 - (5) Your identity in Christ is an objective, eternal fact that their subjective, temporary slanders will never change.
 - b) The mystery is "Christ in you" (Colossians 1:27).
 - (1) "Christ lives in me," said St. Paul (Galatians 2:20).
 - (2) "Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?" he asked (2 Corinthians 13:5).
 - (a) When you got salvation, you also got Jesus. Let's call this Christ's "indwelling." He indwells you that he might live through you.
 - (b) This does not mean you will walk in sandals, grow long hair, or give up bacon. It does not mean you will speak King James English or maintain a gloomy look of doom upon your face.
 - (c) The presence of Christ in you does not suck the personality out of you. He does not turn you into a clone.
 - (3) Instead, Christ's presence has everything to do with power, love, and mental health. Jesus came inside you to strengthen you to become the best you possible, with all the color added.
 - (4) Jesus "pressures" you but in a good way. He does this from the inside. He does this with love, not guilt. He motivates. He empowers. He heals. He restores your sense of value and worth.
 - (5) He shows you you are loved.
 - (6) And nobody can explain how he does it. We can't even explain how he's in you. This is the mystery. This is the beauty of Christianity. It's supernatural.
 - (7) If you have Jesus, there's more to you than meets the eye. You've got a supernatural sparkle.
 3. You're not alone. You're not on your own.
 4. You're not your DNA.
 5. You're not your history.
 6. You're not your rap sheet.
 7. You're not your disabilities.
 8. You're not your family of origin.
 9. You're not your horoscope.
 10. There's a supernatural, mystical, magical, powerful relationship at the core of your being so that who you are and what you can do transcends all earthly explanation, so much so the only thing left for you to do on any moment of any day is to believe.
 - a) Your core is un-injurable... because your core is you in Christ and Christ in you.
 - b) And that is beyond the reach of any abuser, detractor, bully, judge, jury, enemy, critic, demon, the devil, opponents, and all the powers of hell.
 - c) Un-injurable.
 11. Believe that what God says about you is true.
 12. Believe that Christ will see you through.
 13. Believe in the love that never lets you go.
 14. Believe that with all these promises and all these powers, the only thing your enemies can do against you is to "suppose" they can add affliction to your chains.
 15. Poor, dumb, "supposers, pretenders, keeping your fingers crossed cheaters."
 16. God loves you. I love you, but you lose.
 17. You are un-injurable at your core. You are free.
 18. Now what? What do you do with that freedom?
 - a) *"What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense [lying] or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice."* (Philippians 1:18)
 19. This is where Paul makes a choice so radical, so counter-intuitive, that it becomes the fifth divine wrecking ball.
- I. **Wrecking Ball 5: God reprograms your mind, re-scripts your will, and rehabs your emotions with the absolute certainty of his eternal, cosmic, transcendent, all-encompassing victory.**
1. When you are under attack, your world shrinks.
 2. The offense, the betrayal, the injustice—it feels massive. It fills your entire field of vision. Your natural human instinct is to get down in the mud and fight, to obsess over the details of the battle.

3. But Paul does something else entirely. He looks at the whole messy, painful situation—the envy, the rivalry, the attacks designed to crush him—and he writes four words that are absolutely, gloriously, hilariously insulting.
 - a) "What then? Only that..." (Philippians 1:18)
4. Do you hear the tone?
 - a) This is not the voice of a man agonizing over a fight. It's the voice of a man swatting away a gnat.
 - b) To him, this massive, painful attack has been reduced to a trivial annoyance, a pebble in his shoe.
5. How? How can he be so dismissive of something so painful?
 - a) It's because his whole psychology is wrapped around one simple, unshakable premise: **God Wins.**
6. In this case, "Christ is preached." And for Paul, a victory for Christ, however ugly, is the only victory that matters.
 - a) Winning ugly is still winning.
7. In Colossians 3:2 he writes "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." (Colossians 3:2). He's saying, the only way to look at your life correctly is to fly to heaven and see it from there.
8. When you set your mind on "things above," on the reality of God's unstoppable kingdom and His inevitable victory, your perspective radically changes.
 - a) The attack that looks like a monster from ground level, looks like a little insect from the heights of eternity.
 - b) The drama that feels all-consuming on earth is just a footnote in heaven's histories.
 - c) The losses that are so devastating in time are a blip in eternity.
 - d) The fights so overwhelming on earth are dim memories in heaven.
9. This is how you make "God Wins" your psychological core.
 - a) God wins, and the devil is cast into the lake of fire forever and ever.
 - b) God wins, so the scales of cosmic justice are balanced once and for all.
 - c) God wins, so the people who hurt you, and the enemies who attacked you, in the end get away with nothing... everything is made right in the end.
 - d) God wins, so your sins are buried, and dismissed, and carried away with all your guilt and shame and failure and loss.
 - e) God wins, so Jesus will be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords.
 - f) God wins, so the Savior will take his rightful throne.
 - g) God wins, so that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of all.
 - h) God wins, so when Christ is put on display in glory, then you too will be put on display with him, in glory.
 - i) God wins, so there is a place of no more sorrows and no more tears.
 - j) God wins, so you will be eternally, fully, and gloriously you, with every shackle broken, and every potentiality fully actualized.
- (1) Faith is the victory.
10. So who are these enemies? Who are these splats on the windshield of life?
11. Who cares?
 - a) What then, only that in every way, God wins, and in this I rejoice... and yes, I will rejoice... no doubt about it.
12. This is how you believe better. You begin to live mentally and spiritually in the place where the war is already won. And when you do that, the daily battles lose their power to terrorize you. You are free to do the one thing the enemy cannot comprehend. You are free to rejoice.
13. But there's one final piece. Where does the settled, long-term confidence to live this way come from? What sustains this eternal perspective when you're running on empty? That leads us to the final wrecking ball."
- J. *"For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,"* (Philippians 1:19)
 1. How do you maintain an eternal perspective when your emotional tank is empty? How do you fight when you have no strength left?
 2. This is where Paul reveals the final, ultimate wrecking ball. It's not about what's inside of you; it's about what is flowing to you.
- K. **Wrecking Ball 6: God guarantees your deliverance through his supernatural supply of grace and love in ways you can't imagine, but can always count on.**
 1. He doesn't say, "I hope this works out."
 2. He says, "I know that this will turn out for my deliverance."
 - a) How does he know? He's got a supply line. It's the prayer plus the Spirit.
 3. I think that most Christians don't really have a correct view of prayer. Yes, prayer is talking to God, listening with God, asking for your needs from God, and hanging out with God. But it's deeper than that.
 4. Here's a story from the life of a man named Jacob, a thousand years before Jehoshaphat and two thousand years before Christ:
 - a) *"Then Jacob dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: 'I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac...'"* (Genesis 28:12, 13)
 5. There's a ladder. It's on earth. It reaches to heaven. But it's not made of wood. It's made of light and energy and heavenly plasma... Then there are angels going up and down and up and down the ladder. Glimmering, shimmering, glorious beings... massive with wings outstretched... God stands above it all.
 - a) Jacob was given a glimpse into another realm, the dimension of the invisible realm of the heavenlies.
 6. Two thousand years later, Jesus would paint the same picture. Speaking to a disciple, Jesus says:
 - a) *"And He said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man [Jesus].'"* (John 1:51)

7. Both Jacob and Jesus describe the same thing.
8. I see this as the best picture of prayer we have in the Bible.
 - a) Prayer is more than talking to God—as astounding as that is.
 - b) Prayer more than asking him to meet your needs—as astounding as that is too.
 - c) Prayer in the name of Jesus opens a supernatural portal to heaven for provision, protection, power, and grace.
9. So many people say prayer doesn't work. I've heard it a million times. I've thought it myself sometimes.
 - a) Yes, when it comes to us getting the answer to our prayers the way we prayed them, we're right. Many many times our prayers are not answered the way we prayed them.
10. But that doesn't mean prayer doesn't work. Please don't say that.
 - a) I'm sure Paul prayed, and his friends prayed, for him to get out of prison.
 - b) That didn't happen.
 - c) But that didn't make him say prayer doesn't work. He still said, "I know..."
 - d) Why?
11. Because he knew the instant you start praying, a mighty angel in heaven's throne room points to the floor of heaven, and opens a portal. (I'm speaking in metaphors... don't get weird on me.)
12. One detachment of angels fashions a ladder made of spirit and light, and they stretch it down to earth.
 - a) Another squadron of angels races down the ladder as fast as the speed of thought. They lock together to build a wall of protection around you.
 - b) In heaven more angels gather the provision and resources you need.
 - c) In a mystery we cannot fathom, your spirit sails up that latter to the very throne room of heaven, as you have now come boldly to the throne of grace, shielded from God's blistering holiness by the blood of the Lamb.
 - d) In that exact moment, the Holy Spirit energizes your prayer, and Jesus Christ echoes your prayer, and God the Father dispenses to your prayer such a lavish provision that you always have all sufficiency in all things.
 - e) Every prayer offered in the name of Jesus — and that includes lame prayers, stuttering prayers, guilty prayers, ugly prayers — every prayer opens a supernatural divine portal to heaven.
 - (1) "Angels descending bring from above echoes of mercy, whispers of love."
13. You don't see this. You don't feel this. It is impervious to your five senses, but it is real.
 - a) Please don't say that prayer doesn't work.
 - b) No, prayer doesn't give you supernatural powers.
 - c) No, prayer doesn't give you magical powers.
 - d) And, no, prayer doesn't turn you into Gandalf or make you wizard.
14. Do you know what's coming down that ladder when you pray? A song writer named Fanny Crosby said it best.
15. What's coming down that ladder?
 - a) You get Blessed assurance to quiet your doubts.
 - b) You get Echoes of mercy, to heal your hurts.
 - c) You get Whispers of love to comfort your pain.
 - d) You get Rivers of grace to supply all your need.
 - e) You get green pastures to restore your soul.
 - f) You get still waters to quench your thirst.
 - g) You get a table in the wilderness to fill you full.
 - h) You get goodness and mercy every day of your life.
 - i) You get so much abundance you can't contain it, and you will say, my cup runneth over...
 - (1) **And whether it's prison guards or personal attacks, I know that my Redeemer lives, and therefore this will turn out for my deliverance, one way or another, here, there, or in the air.**
16. And that you can take to the bank.

VI. Conclusion

- A. Don't indulge the voice that says, "My tank is empty." You get to talk back and declare, "My tank is connected to an infinite supply line, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ does not run dry."
- B. Don't indulge the voice that says, "I am alone in this fight." You get to talk back and declare, "I am the focus of my Father's attention, the object of my Savior's affection, and the landing zone for the prayers of the saints."
- C. Don't indulge the voice that says, "This pain will have the final word." You get to talk back and declare, "My pain is real, but my Redeemer is more real. My suffering is a chapter, but my Savior is the author and the finisher of the whole story."
- D. Because when you know—when you truly know—that you are being supplied, you can finally look at the chains, you can look at the accusers, you can look at the future, and you can say with a peace that silences all fear:
 1. I can handle this. I can endure this. I can face this.

VII. Prayer

- A. Father,
- B. Let these words be true wrecking balls, empowered by you to demolish the strongholds of 'I Can't' that have held your people captive. For the soul wrestling with past trauma, bring healing. For the one exhausted by the fight, open their eyes to your supply line. For the one stung by betrayal, make their core un-injurable in you.
- C. May every listener leave not just inspired, but fundamentally changed, with a new inner dialogue of victory, a deeper trust in your love, and a defiant confidence that, in Christ, they can indeed handle this.
- D. In the mighty and victorious name of Jesus, Amen.