

# Sit, Walk, Stand - Part 2

by Gareth Evans

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*In 'Sit, Walk, Stand - Part 2', Gareth Evans explores Paul's unwavering joy and ministry during his imprisonment, highlighting the significance of his letters and the theme of revival.*

**Duration:** 9:38

**Scripture:** Acts 20:28, Ephesians 1:3, Ephesians 3:20, Philippians 1:12, Philippians 4:4, Colossians 1:27, Colossians 3:2, Colossians 4:7

**Topics:** "Faith And Joy", "Spiritual Revival"

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## Description

This sermon explores the powerful example of Paul's unwavering faith and joy in the midst of imprisonment, highlighting how God often breaks walls down to break in and work in our lives. Despite being confined, Paul lived in continual revival, writing letters filled with joy, blessings, and the supremacy of Christ. The focus is on Paul's letter to the Ephesians, revealing his deep spiritual insights and unwavering faith even in challenging circumstances.

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## Transcript

And the prison guard was set over him and he was put into the deepest dungeon. Now that was not a pleasant experience. And I think if I were put in prison because of my testimony, my faith, or my preaching or whatever, I'd feel that I was hard done by.

I'd probably say to myself, well, all things work together for good to them who love God. I'll bear this balance so long as it brings honor to you, but get me out of here as quick as you can. That wasn't like Paul.

Paul and Silas sang and worshipped God. Now I'd have been praying for the walls to fall down so I can get out. What happens in revival is God breaks the walls down to break in.

There's a big difference between the two, you know. Oftentimes in our dryness in our Christian walk, we say, oh, if only I was involved in that. If only my church would put me in charge of young people.

Man, we'd see a revival. If only I was taken out of this body of restraint and being used of God. Oh, wretched man that I am.

Who can deliver me from this constraint, this prison I'm in? Heard those words before? Paul said those things. And you know, oftentimes God is not concerned about breaking us out. He's concerned about him

breaking in.

And what happened in Philippi was that God broke down the prison walls so he could break in. Because there he found two men who were worshipping were in revival. They knew his coming, his revival power, while Paul and Silas were in prison.

Later, of course, Paul, after his three missionary journeys, was taken to Rome and was put in prison again. And for some time that prison was not a pleasant experience, though we do understand that in the latter part of his time there in Rome, he was at a house arrest. He was much more pleasant.

But he constantly walked even then in revival. You know, it must have been very frustrating for a man like Paul. He was such a go-getter.

I mean, this man was willing to travel with the gospel. He was willing to preach wherever and whenever he could. He was a man who was out there doing it.

And now suddenly at the end of his life, when he longed to be doing everything for God, when he had so much desire to be serving God, he's housebound. He's in prison. And I think, knowing me, I'm a goer.

I hate, I'm not one of those who love sitting on the beach. Holidays, for example, doing nothing really irritates me. I've got to be doing something.

I really have. And Paul was even worse than I am. He was a driven man, I believe.

The love of Christ constrains me, and that means drives me. Here he is, he's under house arrest. And I'd have been very, very frustrated.

But Paul, I believe, was a man who lived continually in revival. Because from that house arrest, I find some amazing things happen. I find he writes four letters, for example.

And the characteristic of these letters is quite striking, and of course Ephesians is one of them. The letter to the Philippians, keyword joy. Hardly the language I'd expect to find from somebody under house arrest.

But it's certainly the language I expect to hear from somebody who's in revival. Rejoice! Again I say rejoice! I rejoice for these bonds I'm in. That's Paul's language from prison.

Not from the mountaintop, not from the time when he's got the thousands acclaiming him, not from the time when he's the reverend so-and-so in charge of the biggest church in Mossville, Sydney. But he's in prison. And his keyword to the Philippians, rejoice.

And then we find he is the privilege, the joy of leading another prisoner to the Lord. A man called Philemon comes in, a messimas comes in, who's run away from his home and from his master. He's a servant, a slave.

If he's caught and returned, he will be beaten probably, possibly even put to death. And Paul meets this young man while he's in prison, and leads him to faith in Christ. And then he writes a letter to the Colossians, and the key thought of his letter to the Colossians is the supremacy of Christ.

Talks about the glories, the riches that are in Christ. He uses that wonderful expression that we quoted yesterday, Christ in you, the hope of glory. I didn't find any dullness in Paul's letters from prison.

I find no complaints in Paul's letters from prison. I find a man who's reveling in his experience of God. And then he writes a letter to the Ephesians, talking about our privilege of being in Christ, the blessings that are ours.

Paul, how can you talk about blessings when you're in prison? He said, oh, if only you knew, this is where the blessings are experienced, he says. Joy in the presence of Christ, and the blessings that are mine. He was a man who wrote out of a heart of revival.

And the letter to the Ephesians is such a letter. It's often called the Queen of the Epistles. I want to start just for the first part today just by talking a little bit about why he wrote this letter.

I want to lay a foundation stone this morning, if I can, to build on for the rest of our time here about the letter to Ephesians. One of the things that will strike you immediately as you read it is that it's not like any of the other letters Paul writes. Paul was a man who obviously made many friends, and in all his letters he sends greetings to his friends.

He names them. In each of the letters you will find that he names people that he wants to write to and passes love and his greetings on to them. But not so in the book of Ephesians.

And that's very striking because when I read the Acts of the Apostles, and particularly the missionary journeys of Paul, the second and third missionary journey, he spent almost three years in Ephesus. He had a lot of friends there. In fact, I read he spent more time in Ephesus than any other city he visited.

And if he had so many friends there, it's striking that in writing to Ephesus or the letter to Ephesians, he didn't mention any of them. Hi Marcus, how are you? Give my love to your mother-in-law. Tell her I'm missing the plum pudding we used to have.

And these are the kind of things I write in letters. Here Paul has none of that personal contact in his letter at all when writing to the Ephesians. You find it in his other letters, but nothing here.

You remember when he's returning from his third missionary journey and he's coming back to Antioch, and from there he is taken finally back to Rome. It is the elders from Ephesus he calls to be with him in Acts chapter 20. These are men to whom he committed his life.

These are men to whom he gave the gospel and challenged them to be men who propagated the gospel through their regions, yet he writes nothing to them in his letter to the Ephesians. The reason is that the letter to the Ephesians is not written to Ephesus. In fact, in the early manuscript you'll find no mention of Ephesus at all in the first verse of the letter.

And so I want to make a suggestion to you, which is common understanding among most commentators, as to the source of this letter and why Paul is writing it. And it comes back to the fact that he's imprisoned. You see he's in prison and he's writing first a letter to Colossae, which is a city not far from Ephesus.

All these cities were in Asia Minor. In fact, of course, you'll find in the seven churches of Revelation they're all in the same region together. Laodicea, Ephesus, Sardis, Philadelphia, they're all in that region.

And Paul is in prison and he's writing a letter to Colossae. Now the reason he's writing this letter to Colossae is because of this young man in Nesimus who has come to faith in Christ. And Paul knows that it is right for this man to return to Philemon, his master.

And Paul wants to send Nesimus back to Philemon, who lives in Colossae, this wealthy man. And though he has faith or trust in Nesimus and it's a long journey to go back home, he feels it's important that Nesimus goes with a companion. And so he sends him back with one called Tychicus, who's one of his friends in Rome.

And Paul sends Tychicus to accompany Nesimus back to Philemon, Nesimus' master, in Colossae. And because Tychicus is going there and Paul has visited Colossae and established a church in Colossae, he wants to send a letter to the Colossians with Tychicus. In fact, if you read the letters of the Colossians, you'll find he mentions at the end, as to my affairs, chapter 4, verse 7, Tychicus, my beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond servant in the Lord, he'll bring you all information about me.

He'll let you know how things are going here. And so Tychicus is going back to Colossae to take Nesimus back to Philemon with a letter to Philemon, the other letter written from prison, and he's going to take this letter that Paul writes to the Colossians. There's a great deal of similarity between the letter to the Colossians and the letter to the Philemon.

In fact, there are 55 verses that are almost identical in the two books. And as Paul writes the letter to the Colossians, you will find some wonderful things he says there. You'll find that his emphasis there is the supremacy of Jesus.

Chapter 2, for example, he says words like this, I want you to know the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, the true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ himself. I want to write to you about Christ himself. For in him, verse 9, dwells all the fullness of the Godhead.

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