Question: What did the Apostle Paul mean when he said, “It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill” (Philippians 1:15)? What does it mean to preach the Gospel out of envy?

Answer: To understand what Paul meant, it’s good to read the whole passage:

> *Philippians 1:12–18*
>
> *12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.*
>
> *13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.*
>
> *14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.*
>
> *15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry,*

> *but others out of goodwill.*
>
> *16 The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.*
>
> *17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains.*
>
> *18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice.*

Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison. During his imprisonment, two groups of preachers emerged who began proclaiming the very same gospel he had preached.

- The first group preached out of genuine love for Christ, with the same pure intentions Paul had to save souls and serve the Lord without expecting any gain in return.
- The second group, however, preached with ulterior motives. They wanted to undermine Paul, compete with his authority, and draw attention to themselves. Their envy grew because Paul's ministry had become so widely known and respected. They took advantage of his imprisonment to preach in a way that suggested Paul was no more special than they were. Some even spoke ill of him

in hopes of worsening his situation with the authorities.

Surprisingly, Paul didn’t respond with bitterness. Instead, he rejoiced. Why? Because regardless of their motives, the Gospel of Christ was still being preached, and people were being saved.

What can we learn from Paul and these rival preachers?

This shows us that the Gospel can still bear fruit even when preached by people with wrong motives. Today, too, there are false teachers who draw people to Christ, but that doesn’t mean they themselves will be accepted by Him on the Day of Judgment.

Jesus made this clear in:

> *Matthew 7:21–23*
>
> *21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*
>
> *22 Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not*

> *prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’*
>
> *23 Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”*

So we must be careful about our motives in preaching. Are we truly serving the Lord? Or are we competing with a certain pastor, apostle, prophet, or minister?

Likewise, as preachers of the true Gospel, we shouldn’t retaliate when false teachers oppose us. If the message they proclaim is truly the Gospel of Christ, let us rejoice in the fruits, just as Paul did. The rest judgment of motives belongs to God alone on that day.

May the Lord bless you.

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