

All That Matters

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, for I know
that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ
what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed,
but will have sufficient courage so that now as always
Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

Philippians 1:18-20 (NIV)

Many beautiful and thought provoking love poems have been written by leading poets on the theme of love. Their words are among the most marvelous flights of a soul into the heavens of human emotion.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861) was a powerfully influential poet in her day in Britain. Her sorrowful poem written about her love for her recently drowned brother is entitled, *De Profundis*. It is a compelling statement of grief at her separation from "Bro" as she affectionately called her brother.

In one of Browning's poems written secretly before she married her much loved husband and fellow poet, Robert Browning she begins, "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways."

Then there are many stories and poems written of remarkably sacrificial love expressed in heroic deeds on

behalf of the loved one. The romantic side of us all comes to the surface as we read the lines about how a lover died to rescue the one they love.

Such is the story of love in Scripture. The Bible is full of images and descriptions of God's eternal love for His people and of the great acts He accomplished to win His people to Himself for eternity.

The apostle Paul came to the place where God's love was poured out in his heart and he learned of the remarkable sacrifice the Lord Jesus endured for him when He died and rose again at Jerusalem.

By God's grace Paul learned to love Jesus in return, and his vision was filled with the glories and beauty of the carpenter from Nazareth named Jesus, Who was God in human form.

Paul was enraptured with Jesus and the privilege he had to make the fame of Jesus known to the people of his

day. Paul was willing to suffer anything in order to have people learn the message of love in the Gospel.

This most powerful love for Jesus meant that Paul could withstand any personal suffering if it meant Jesus was shown to be glorious. All that matters to Paul is that the fame of Jesus spreads throughout the world. This is why Paul could rejoice in the context of his suffering. His suffering helped spread the good news of God's forgiveness, found in Jesus. Paul's suffering brought others into a relationship with his wonderful Saviour. He was able to endure the pain because through his sorrow others came to Jesus. Will you offer your suffering to the Lord and ask Him to use it to bring others to the Cross? After all, if people come to Jesus that is all that matters.

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