

Philippians 1:12-26

Find your joy in Jesus through every circumstance

Last time we talked about how we pray for one another will determine how we treat one another.

Pray with joy for each other

- **Pray for their partnership in the Gospel**
- **Pray for their love to overflow**
- **Pray for their discernment**

Now that Paul has done the main introduction and expressed his joy for the church at Philippi he moves to explain what is happening in his current situation and his response to it.

Paul continues the main theme of the letter in this next section: Rejoicing in the gospel no matter what the circumstances.

This is not a blind or naïve rejoicing. Nor is it a pain-denying stoicism. It is confidence that God's purposes will triumph in the end. (v. 19)

Main Theme of this section: Even in the midst of deep reflection, Paul was optimistic. He would be saved, Christ would be glorified one way or another, and the gospel would go forth.

Philippians 1:12

God's work is not hindered by persecution; actually God is using it to advance the gospel. Paul could've taken a little sabbatical as he sat in prison, awaiting his trial. However, he used this opportunity to advance the Gospel.

Purpose – Paul was a leader who never drifted from his mission – “No individual has any right to come into the world and go out of it without leaving behind him distinct and legitimate reasons for having passed through it.” – George Washington Carver

Paul saw the events as forging new territory for the gospel. These events took Paul into contact with a select group of people, soldiers, and Roman officials, who otherwise would have had no relationship with him and they also prompted a renewed evangelistic effort in the city.

Philippians 1:13

For Christ – Paul actually writes that he is imprisoned FOR CHRIST – instead of asking why he is saying “God is using this and will use this!” – What a perspective.

Paul did not hide his message about Christ from them but rather used the opportunity to plant the gospel in the seat of Roman imperial power. – Paul's imprisonment was a strategic advance in the kingdom of God because it was clearing the way for the

gospel to penetrate the ranks of the Roman military and even the royal house! There was a constant rotation of the Roman guard and they couldn't beat him because he was a Roman citizen so he would share with them about Jesus!

He is serving a prison sentence in Rome and is most likely in the custody of the "praetorian¹⁴ guard." These are elite troops housed in the emperor's palace. They are a specialized, handpicked, military group. They were Caesar's own personal bodyguards—strong, courageous, brilliant, sophisticated, young men—kind of a mixture of West Point and the Secret Service. They served in the palace guard for twelve years, protecting Caesar and guarding the prisoners, who, like Paul, had appealed to him.

After twelve years they transitioned into other influential careers. Some went on to be the commanding generals of large forces. Others went into public office and became senators or ambassadors to other countries. Still others advanced into the top echelons of business and industry.

As a group, they were the movers and shakers of the future, the opinion leaders, and kingmakers of the next generation. They were a powerful and strategic group of young men. If you wanted to influence the Roman Empire, you couldn't pick a better group to start with.

Every day Paul grinned to himself because, for two years, one of them wore the other end of his chain, and for six hours had to stay within four feet of him. He wasn't chained to them; they were chained to him! Literally, Paul had a captive audience with whom he shared Christ, which led to a chain reaction of conversions throughout the whole Roman palace.

Colossians 4:5 - Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

Philippians 1:14

As a result of being in prison other believers are inspired to be bold to proclaim Christ to others! Courage can be contagious – Paul ignored the potential negative consequences to share the message anyway. His example challenged others to be just as bold in telling others the word of God.

I don't know about you but I love hearing about the persecuted church – not in a sick way but because I know I need to hear what is happening so it makes me bolder in my speech because of the freedom we have here.

Philippians 1:15-17

Envy and Rivalry – People were rising up with the goal to take the place of Paul. They had a rivalry to gain the same respect/recognition of him as a result of their envy. Now that he was in jail, they had a chance to make a name for themselves, not a good reason to preach.

These were not false teachers but selfish teachers. Building my own kingdom vs THE KINGDOM!

Supporters vs. antagonists – I am put here (Keimai)Kymy – used because it has the connotation of divine purposes meaning to be set in place – the defense of the gospel. Supporters understood that God had set Paul to be in prison to be used for advancing the gospel.

Philippians 1:18

Paul was tolerant toward preachers whose hearts were not entirely pure – but who preached Christ nonetheless. The problem was that their hearts weren't in the right place. He knew that Christ could be preached even out of the mixed motives found in imperfect human beings. What really mattered was that Christ be preached!
#honeybadgerdontcare

It wasn't the message or the method – it was the motive behind it. (What's your motive behind your actions?)

In the midst of trials and suffering, you find out what is really important to you. Adversity serves as a true gut check

v. 18b This is a transition to why he is rejoicing

Philippians 1:19

Paul saw the way to be saved from his current situation...through the prayer of other believers. Paul understood (like we talked about last week) that prayer works!
Supply – full supply, fully taken care of – every expense covered

For my deliverance – exact quote from Job 13:16 – When job was being told that all the bad stuff was happening because of the sin he had committed – Job responded that they were wrong and God would deliver him from all of the terrible things happening.

Philippians 1:20

Ashamed – Eden?

Romans 1:16; Matthew 10:32 - "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven."

Regardless of what happens Paul hopes to not be ashamed at the time when he will be presented in trial and truly preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Exalted - The word "exalted" (megaluno) (makes me think of olive garden – mezza luna) means "to make great, to enlarge, to make glorious." We get our English word "megaphone" from this word. A megaphone makes your voice big. Similarly, a magnifying glass makes print big. We are to make Jesus big with our lives and lips!

The verb "be exalted" is passive, which means that Christ receives magnification by our actions. There are two types of magnification: microscope and telescope. The microscope makes the little seem big. That is not the picture here. The telescope makes the actually big loom big.

This is what Paul is saying: Your task as a Christian is to bring the immensity of who Jesus truly is to the forefront. Do you want your body to be a megaphone for the Lord Jesus? Do you want to make Him big to the world? Not life-size, but King-size. If you exalt Jesus, people will be attracted to Him and embrace Him as their Savior. Folks will sit up and take notice of Him. By this you will enhance the world's estimation of Christ.

Regardless, of what happens (life or death); Paul wants Christ to be proclaimed through his life.

Philippians 1:21

To live is Christ – Paul doesn't merely see his life as being lived *for* Christ; Paul's very life is all about Jesus. It is much like saying, "To live is to breathe"; this doesn't mean that life is lived for the purpose of breathing, but that breathing is living.

When the believer dies he or she leaves behind the suffering and groaning of this life, the rejection and persecution of unbelievers, and immediately enters the presence of God, where sorrow, sadness, and sickness do not exist. That is why death is gain!

Philippians 1: 22-24

Do you see the struggle Paul is dealing with here? He is wrestling with the fact that this trial could result in the end of his life. If Paul continued to live after this situation, he would have the opportunity to preach the Gospel to others and see spiritual victory in the lives of the Philippians. But death meant being with the Savior!! "Paul's longing for death was, in reality, a longing for a more intimate, open and total relationship with Christ Himself."

Philippians 1:25-26

This is super cool - Paul was not satisfied that the Philippian Christians should simply be saved, but that they should advance to maturity in Christ. He felt a responsibility to continue to teach them #Dship!

Paul realized that his work was unfinished (you are still on this earth which means God has a purpose for your life! #GetOnIt) He wanted to stay to help build the joy in the believers. He understood that salvation is just the beginning of a Christian's life. There is much more to show them, but the important aspect was to have joy in this life because of what the gospel does for us...peace and grace with God.

Paul shares from personal experience that your perspective in times of pain makes all the difference.

You see, no matter what happened to Paul his eyes were always kept on Jesus. Paul was chained to Roman soldiers. I'm pretty sure this wasn't the way Paul wanted things to be. But, in the midst of it, he had joy! How is that possible? Well, when you have what you want most – even if you don't have other “lesser” wants – you have joy.

For Paul life was measured in terms of intimacy with Christ Jesus. So, wherever he was, whatever might have been happening, Paul found joy in Christ.

You can find the same joy in your relationship with Jesus. Set your hope on Him, and he will bring you joy even in the midst of hardship.

One of the surest measures of our spiritual maturity is what it takes to rob us of our Spirit-bestowed joy.

Paul's perspective while waiting for his trial could've easily been one of gloom. However, he realized that God is sovereign and works out everything good for those who have been called by him. (Romans 8:28) He remembered that the only thing truly worth living for was making sure that God was glorified because of the gospel. This good news that God loves us so much that he would send his only son to come and die for us and then come back to life so we can receive the grace from God instead of wrath as a result of our sin. As a result, we can have a personal and powerful relationship with the creator of the universe forever.

When we keep that in between our ears, our perspective won't be focused on the problem or the pain, instead it will never be shaken and cause us to always see the joy in every circumstance. Then our joy in Christ Jesus will overflow!

Hostility to Christians, when rightly viewed through the gospel, can embolden us to speak good news without fear, as it did for Paul and his colleagues. Just like Paul, we are freed from fearing the suffering that comes because of our allegiance to Christ.

1. Do you consider it gain to die? Why or why not? What kinds of situations cause you to feel ready to depart this life?
2. How specifically does one develop the maturity and faith to be able to face painful circumstances with a positive hopeful attitude?
3. How does the gospel help you respond to tough situations with joy?
4. Think of someone you know who is going through a hard time and maybe has lost his or her joy. How can you encourage that person this week?
5. The question is not, “Is what's happening to me fair?” but instead, “Is what's happening to me accomplishing something for God? Is what's happening to me being useful to God in some way? Is it furthering His purposes in the world?”

Similarly, God uses your painful circumstances to advance His gospel. You may not like your job, your school, your neighborhood, or your marriage, but God has you "chained up" to some people who need Christ. Have you ever stopped to ponder the fact that God placed you in your school so that you might share Christ?

Have you realized that God gave you a particular job in order for you to share Christ with your boss and coworkers?

Are you cognizant of the fact that God directed you to buy a house in a particular neighborhood with neighbors who need to hear about His Son?

There are no mistakes or coincidences. God has a plan and He is advancing His kingdom through YOU.

As you contend for the faith and proclaim Christ, you can experience joy. It's been said, "If we see Jesus in our circumstances, then we will see our circumstances in Jesus." Paul lived this! Remember, Paul is writing this letter from a Roman prison. Furthermore, five of Paul's thirteen letters were written from prison. Paul would not let himself give way to self-pity. He knows that in order to exude joy in the midst of adversity he must see adversity from an eternal perspective. The key to his joy was between his ears. Over thirty times in Philippians Paul refers to the mind or to remembering. When joy has leaked out of your life, the leak is between your ears. You must change your thinking so that you can experience joy once again. May you do so today. You can have your best witness in the worst of times.

<https://bible.org/seriespage/2-delight-midst-disaster-philippians-112-18a>

<https://bible.org/series/take-joy-ride-philippians>

2 Corinthians 5:8, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. What a comfort! Paul understood the truth that you are not prepared to live until you are prepared to die.

What are you doing to advance the faith of others? How are you presently bringing about others' joy in the faith?