



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PHILIPPIANS: RESURRECTED LIFE

Choose Joy (Philippians 1:12-18)

1. Take time to read our scripture for the week. **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.**

What are your initial thoughts that stand out to you from this passage? In what ways do you sense impact you in your life right now?

2. Verses 12 through 13 reveal a timeless truth. **Philippians 1:12-13 - 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.** As Paul writes these words, he is chained to 1 of 9000 guards who guard the emperor and attend to the Roman emperor's business. The elite soldiers of the palace guard were chained to the emperor's prisoners in four-hour shifts. Can you imagine being chained to the apostle Paul? He is sharing Christ with each guard intentionally. At the end of the letter to the Philippians, we understand that some have accepted Christ. **Philippians 4:22 - All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.** Paul's reference to "Caesar's household" no doubt includes the guards who serve Caesar.

Tell the story of a time when you, or someone you know, had the opportunity to share Christ or be an example for him in a moment of challenging adversity.

3. Another timeless truth revealed in this passage is the power of our example. Take a moment to closely examine verse 14. **Philippians 1:14 - 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.** People who were around Paul and other Christians in Rome are taking note of the Christian's approach to adversity. The Apostle's example was especially impactful. Because they see him joyfully embracing his situation and making the most of every opportunity, they have become fearless and boldly proclaim Christ, just like Paul. How important do you believe your spiritual example is?

Whether you realize it or not, people are watching you. Your children, if you have children; your spouse, if you're married; your coworkers, if you're employed; or your classmates, if you are a student. People are inspired or deflated by your example. Agree or disagree? Why?

Discuss one thing you want to address regarding the example you are setting.

4. Paul is not only facing the adversity of imprisonment, he is being mocked and insulted by some who are invoking the name of Christ to stir up trouble for Paul. **Philippians 1:15 - 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.** These verses have caused some confusion. The Greek word used for "preaching" here does not represent how we might imagine preaching. It simply means to proclaim or to say loudly. A good way to understand this passage is that when Paul says preach, he means mention or talk about. The best way to understand what Paul is sharing is that some, perhaps among the palace guards, are complaining about Paul's preaching and are mocking him, pretending to preach Christ. So, some talk about Christ or share about Christ out of goodwill, sincerely, and for the right reasons. Others mention Christ, mocking Paul and trying to get him in more trouble. What are your thoughts about this? How might we see this in today's society?

I believe Paul's response illustrates how we should always respond to adversity.

Philippians 1:18 - 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 chooses joy! Even in this situation, he finds God's good plan and is joyful. What might be the positive effect of choosing joy when you face adversity? How difficult is it for you to find joy in adversity?