

A Life Worth Living
Session 2 April 28 2024 A New Purpose
Philippians 1:12-21

Resource: 'A Life worth Living Video 2:4/28 A New Purpose
(All videos can be found at www.woodside-church.org under the Sermons tab)

Icebreaker: Dream a little! If you had every skill, training and ability and could have any job, what would you choose to do other than whatever you currently do?

Introduction

Read Philippians 1:12-21

Key Point: we can and must live out the gospel in every situation

Key Verse: "what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel" (v.12)

Share with your group an example in your own life of where bad or difficult things turned out for the good.

1. Gospel Possibilities (v.12-14)

The Point: wherever we are we must identify and take the opportunities to share the gospel

Paul turns imprisonment (Acts chapters 21-28) into an opportunity to share the gospel. This frees others to speak about Jesus too (v14 "most of the brothers and sisters") Fear – perhaps of unpopularity or social isolation – is a very common emotion that stops us sharing the gospel, so Paul encourages us to be courageous (v.14)

Paul's calling and ours- *Advance the Gospel*

Ken Costa writes: "We enter into our purpose in partnership with God, making use of the opportunities that God presents to us and the passions He has given us"

What opportunities have you had to share the Gospel? What hinders you from sharing your faith?

Who/ what has God given you a passion for?

Application: Sometimes we all feel chained to our jobs, trapped in the home, or fearful of others. Ask a friend to meet you for coffee or a drink, and specifically ask them to help you see the opportunities you have.

2. Gospel Priorities (v.15-18)

The Point: the way we go about sharing the gospel matters

Some took advantage of Paul's imprisonment to advance their own reputation (v.17) By contrast, Paul's example gives us three tips on sharing the gospel:

About our *motive*:

- aim for purity, but don't wait for them to be perfect before starting!
- be careful criticising other Christians whose motives we question

About our *message*:

- don't change it to make it easier to believe or less offensive (Galatians 1:8)
- focus on Christ ("*preach Christ*" in v.15, 17, 18)

About the *means*:

Paul is not saying that the end justifies the means!
use ways consistent with the message, (e.g. not the Spanish Inquisition)

Where do you see the gospel possibilities in your own life? How can you make the most of them?

Share an example of someone you have each been trying to talk to about your faith for a long time and the different ways you have tried to reach them.

Before you became a Christian, what things made you interested to know more?

3. Gospel Purpose for Living (v.19-26)

The Point: we are here to know Christ and to make him known

Paul wasn't scared, since he considered death a *gain* (v.21) since he'd meet Jesus But he lived on for *Christ* (v.21) to work so that others might know (v.22, 24-26)

Paul needed prayer and the power of the Holy spirit to live out his purpose of making the Gosepl known

4. Gospel the Pattern for Life (v.27-30)

The Point: living a gospel life means actions, not just words

Conduct (v.27) means 'live as citizens' – our true citizenship is heaven not earth But the 'heaven' lifestyle is sometimes in sharp contrast to the world's

Our life communicates our beliefs, both in our individual and corporate lives
Graham Tomlin talks and writes about living "provocatively" in ways that make people ask *why?*

Such a lifestyle is impossible without prayer and the help of the Holy Spirit (v.19)
Unity in the family of God is essential to our Gospel message

How would you define your life's purpose?

What do you think/ feel when you hear Paul's statement "to me, to live is Christ"?

Application: Think about a time when you or someone else provoked the question "why" for all the *wrong* reasons

On the way to or from work tomorrow, or some other opportunity, to think of a lifestyle change we could make which would be unspoken but provoke others to ask "why?"

Ideas for Ministry

- Put on some music and invite people to imagine themselves in the different roles they have (e.g. home, family, workplace, relationships), living with a gospel purpose and lifestyle, following gospel principles and taking gospel opportunities. Ask the Holy Spirit to come and give us a picture of what our lives might look like if this were the case.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show us provocative lifestyle changes which we could make. Hand out post-its and pens and invite people to jot down anything God is showing them about what their lives might look like in some of these roles viewed with a gospel purpose for them.
- Thank God for the places he has put us and acknowledge He knows the challenges and fears there. Ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to overcome these.