

A Philipians Sermon Series

JOY

IN THE MIDST OF ANYTHING

OPENING COMMENT

Suffering and difficulty are not embraced in our culture. In fact, the entire purpose to life is to avoid suffering and maximize enjoyment. This disposition towards suffering has bled into the culture of Christianity and distorted our approach to a life of following Christ. Instead of understanding suffering as a means by which God spreads the gospel and makes us more like him, we seek to avoid difficulty and challenge, which would be completely foreign to Paul.

READ THE TEXT: Philippians 1:12-18

I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. ¹⁴And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

¹⁵Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. ¹⁶The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. ¹⁸What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. What has happened to Paul? (vs. 14)
2. What is the result of his imprisonment? (vs. 12)
3. Why is Paul in prison? (vs. 16)



4. What are the two areas the gospel has been advanced in? (vs. 13 and 14)
5. What does Paul see as the source of the brother's confidence? (vs. 14)
6. What are the motivations for the preaching of the word? (vs. 15)
7. What are these reasons rooted in? (vs. 16 and 17)
8. What does Paul rejoice in? (vs. 18)

APPLYING THE TEXT

1. Paul's conviction is that every circumstance he finds himself in is the perfect opportunity to share the gospel. How might we begin to train ourselves to think like this in our circumstances?
2. Why does others suffering for the gospel have an encouraging effect on our own faith and witness?
3. When it comes to sharing plainly about our faith, what role does fear play? How might we begin to grow in courage and conviction?
4. Paul is not concerned about his reputation (the rival preachers would be taking any support he had – which he relied on to keep him fed in prison), but solely concerned about the advancement of the gospel. Where do we let our reputation inhibit the gospel message? How might we begin to reorient our thinking and actions?

BIBLICAL THREAD

1. Isaiah 53 – Jesus as a suffering servant.
2. Matthew 10:16-33 – Jesus sending out the disciples knowing suffering will come.
3. Matthew 28:16-20 – the great commission.
4. Romans 5:1-5 – Suffering produces good fruit.
5. 2 Timothy 4:6-8 – Paul has run the race and is looking forward to the reward in heaven.
6. James 1:2-4 – Suffering helps in sanctification.
7. Hebrews 11:32-38 – suffering servants who the world was not worthy of.

CONCLUSION

Paul's underlying assumption is that God is at work in everything. No matter if he is seeing mass revival in a city, or sitting in prison chained to a guard, God is at work. So, instead of being defeated by suffering or challenge Paul seeks to spread the gospel and use his circumstances to bring light into people's life. His conviction is centered on the preaching of the gospel. If its preaching results in his suffering, so be it. Paul's example should serve as both an encouragement and an exhortation as we evaluate how we prioritize our lives and address the suffering in it.



SHARE & PRAY

LIFE GROUP VISION:

The goal to meeting together around the word of God is three fold. First, we want to more clearly understand what God is saying to us through his Word and apply it to our own hearts and minds. Secondly, we want to build a loving community with each other to disciple one another toward maturity in Christ. Thirdly, we desire each of us, as ambassadors of Christ, to look outwards to our community and ask how we can bring the truth of the gospel to bear on those whom God has placed in our lives.

