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"With Every Breath"
Philippians 1:12-18a
Sept 25, Adrian Moskal

When we talk about family, everyone has a different perspective. Some have fabulous memories of their families, some don't know their families, some are indifferent, some have a crazy uncle or 2, and others have no good memories and nothing but heartache when they think of family.

Personally, I have good and not so good memories of my extended family, as most of us do. Some get along, some don't. Each one of us has to understand the filter we are reading through each passage when we read.

In this passage, the apostle Paul mentions his brothers and sisters in a warm, loving manner. This would be family that would sacrifice for one another.

[2]

Phil 1:12a NLT

¹² And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters,*

Let me tell you Paul has no ill will to his church family. He loves them. This is how he has already described them in the book of Philippians.

[3]

Phil 1:1b-2 NLT

I am writing to all of God's holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the elders* and deacons.

² May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Phil 1:3-4 NLT

³ Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. ⁴ Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy

Phil 1:7a NLT

⁷ So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart

So, how does Paul feel about the church, the believers in Philippi? He cares about them. He loves them. He trusts them. He can share the straight goods with them and not beat around the bush. They have sacrificed for their faith.

What makes them family? Let's read what Paul says in Galatians:

[4]

Gal 3:26 NLT

²⁶ For you are all children* of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes.* ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Gentile,* slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children* of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

What is that promise? That He will be our God and We will be His People.

[5]

It is our relationship with Jesus that makes us co-heirs, that makes us family and gives us shared mission.

Let's read our entire passage and pay careful attention to those things I have underlined:

[6]

Phil 1:12-14 NLT

¹² And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters,* that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. ¹³ For everyone here, including the whole palace guard,* knows that I am in chains because of Christ. ¹⁴ And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers* here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message* without fear.

[7]

Phil 1:15-16 NLT

¹⁵ It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives. ¹⁶ They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News.

[8]

Phil 1:17-18a NLT

¹⁷ Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me. ¹⁸ But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice.

There is something paradoxical about the Apostle Paul sitting in a Roman jail, chained up and sharing about his joy to his family who he can share anything with. Paul could have shared the ups and the downs with them. Yet, here he is recounting his joy he feels as he is in a dank, dark prison cell, chained up. He goes on to recount how some are sharing the "good news" so that it makes it harder on him.

Have you ever gone through something that was horrible, tough, painful, or gut wrenching? In those times, did you ever wonder why me? Why me?? You see this person and that person and their lives are going along with no struggles but yours has nothing but pain or heartache.

Let's look at another example. This is the time when Stephen is stoned and the Hellenist Christians are scattered.

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Acts 8:1-4 NLT

Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen.

A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria. ² (Some devout men came and buried Stephen with great mourning.)

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³ But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison.

⁴ But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went.

Here we have the persecution of the church, especially the Hellenist Christians. It causes them to scatter. This dispersal or the greek word that Luke uses is (*diaspeirō*) - it comes from the greek word for seed. You see the Christians were scattered like seed. Do you see the irony in it, the religious elite is trying to stamp out this movement of Christ and they "scattered" the seed. This is super important, because each seed has a blueprint, a DNA. Each seed has a purpose. If you plant a cucumber seed, it can't change its mind and grow a tomato plant. That is not its purpose. It is not what is designed for.

[11]

Just like each seed ever created, Every person was created for a purpose.

In this great dispersal (*diaspeiro*) of the early church, its purpose is clear. Jesus gave them clear marching orders.

[12]

Matthew 28:18:20

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,* baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

This mission talks about sowing, watering, caring for, and reaping the harvest from the seeds. This mission is for all Christians.

[13]

You were created on purpose for a purpose.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that God has a plan for your life and chances are his plan differs from your plan.

Let me share what my week looked like as I was preparing to share this passage with you. This passage where Paul, even though, he was in chains in a Roman jail, and there were others who were making it hard for him by preaching the good news - Paul was rejoicing.

You see, as I was preparing to share this, I got sick on Monday. I have Meniere's Disease.

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Definition from the Mayo Clinic:

Meniere's disease is a disorder of the inner ear that causes episodes in which you feel as if you're spinning (vertigo), and you have fluctuating hearing loss with a progressive, ultimately permanent loss of hearing, ringing in the ear (tinnitus), and sometimes a feeling of fullness or pressure in your ear. In most cases, Meniere's disease affects only one ear.

Because of this when I am chatting with someone I often lean in so I can hear with my good ear. This week I got sick on Monday. I had an episode. And Tuesday as well. And Wednesday. And Thursday. And Friday. And Saturday. These episodes cause the my head to get airy and causes disorientation and then it starts to swirl. How it was explained to me, is because this vestibular network in my right ear operates at different speed of my left ear.

When I get an episode, focus and reading is impossible. I end up having to take some medication and go to sleep. Sometimes when I wake up, I am feeling better, sometimes not.

The long and short of it, was that I had to pick my spots this week where I could work on my sermon. It was easy for me to go to the place where I would feel sorry for myself. When I get an episode, it is very debilitating and a lonely place.

I can relate to how Paul could easily have felt. I have tough moments where it is paralyzing and I am not cheering or filled with joy. There are people here that are facing tougher trials than this.

But Paul has something for all of us here. Paul has his eyes on the prize. Paul knew he was **CREATED ON PURPOSE FOR A PURPOSE**. It changed his outlook.

If I buy into the world's philosophy that success looks like a life of luxury and comfort - because that is what the world is saying, then my life at times can look like an absolute

failure and could make me curl up in a ball and cry and stay there. But if I believe something thing else?

[15]

Matthew 28:18:20

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,* baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

How does this change my outlook. I was Created on Purpose for a Purpose. No matter the circumstances, I can find joy when this mission is played out. How does this change how I react to setbacks? I can tell you, I see how Christ is using others when I am weak (family, friends, coworkers). I see how he meets my needs. It brings me to pray more frequently. It also allows me to share the good news with those who struggle with health concerns with deeper empathy. The kicker is the last line: I am with you always even to the end of the age. Christ is with us through the struggles and he know what suffering feels like.

Let's read our passage again through this lens: If Paul's filter was a life of luxury and comfort, then it changes everything. It would be filled with whining and complaining. Instead his purpose makes you want to cheer after each line.

[16]

Phil 1:12-14 NLT

¹² And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters,* that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. ¹³ For everyone here, including the whole palace guard,* knows that I am in chains because of Christ. ¹⁴ And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers* here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message* without fear.

[17]

Phil 1:15-16 NLT

¹⁵ It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives. ¹⁶ They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News.

There are those who are against him but that does not sway his mission because it all about Jesus.

[18]

Phil 1:17-18a NLT

¹⁷ Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more

painful to me. ¹⁸ **But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice.**

Mission accomplished, therefore we cheer and rejoice. Amen.

Therefore we cheer and rejoice around the mission Jesus gave us not our level of comfort.

It is like the two t-ball coaches. One coaches to win and the other coaches to help the kids have fun and learn new skills and be the best they can be. Do they cheer at different times of the game? Absolutely. It all depends on what is your scorecard, what is your mission. Whose team, do you want your kid on?

Are you grumbling that your scorecard is showing that you are losing, or are you cheering because you see how Jesus has won?

Do we worship only on Sunday mornings or do we worship Christ with our triumphs, with our struggles, with our whole week, with each day, with each hour, or with each breath...



With Every Breath
Philippians 1:12-18a
September 25, 2016, Adrian Moskal

Objective of this Study: To understand how we can see each moment through a Great Commission filter.

[Remember, the main goal of each Growth Group is to allow God's Word to change your heart so that others would see Jesus in you and be likewise changed to be like him. He wants to change the world through us]

Worship (5 – 10 minutes)

1. Sing a song or two of praise and thanksgiving to God.
2. Spend five minutes in silence asking God to prepare your heart for how he wants to speak to you.
3. After the five minutes have someone interrupt the silence and read Psalm 96:1-6 meditatively to the group. Pause after each phrase letting God speak to you.

[It's really important when doing this study that we each think about ourselves specifically and ways we need to grow, not how Christians in general need to grow. Do the hard work of letting the Holy Spirit speak to your heart.]

Welcome

What is the most amazing thing you have seen God do?

Word (30-45 min)

- What stood out from the sermon?
- **Read Philippians 1:12-18a.**
 - Paul is writing to the church in Philippi. How does he feel about them (let members share examples from the beginning of chapter 1)?
 - Describe Paul's surroundings and his emotional state?
- **Read Acts 8:1-4**
 - What are the similarities between the 2 passages?
 - What was Saul hoping to accomplish by persecuting the church?
 - The scattering of the church, Luke uses the Greek word "*diaspeirō*" (*dispersal*). What does the *diaspeirō* mean and why is it ironic to what Saul was hoping to accomplish?

Work (30-45 min)

Sermon quote: "Just like each seed ever created, Every person was created for a purpose."

Sermon quote: "You were created on purpose for a purpose."

- Do you believe the above quotes? Why or why not?
- How does Paul's "Mission filter" affect how he experiences highs and lows?
- Discuss when trials or struggles happen to you or your family, what filter are you experiencing them through?
 - What things in your life or in the world affect how you experience struggles? Or how you experience triumphs?
- How would it affect your mental state if you had the same filter as Paul? How would it affect your actions (be specific here)? How would it affect those around you?
- How can the group pray for you today about anything you discussed or realized today?