

Good News Church GA
Midweek Connect
1-3-26

Sermon Series:
“Joy in the Journey”
Paul’s letter to the Philippians

SCRIPTURE TEXT: Philippians 1:12-26

Paul’s Chains Advance the Gospel

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, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and God’s provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. ²⁰ I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

Sermon + Book Notes (Ch. 3)

v. 12-14

- BOOK – Paul wanted to go to Rome as a preacher. Instead, he went as a prisoner. gospel. Paul did not find his joy in ideal circumstances; he found his joy in winning others to Christ. And if his circumstances promoted the furtherance of the gospel, that was all that mattered. Instead of finding himself confined as a prisoner, Paul discovered that his circumstances really opened up new areas of ministry.
- SERMON - The Power of Joy - *For Paul, joy is not just a positive attitude, it is a declaration of faith.*
 - Example: A great example of what it looks like to view even your most difficult circumstances as an opportunity for the gospel is Jimmy Greer. When Jimmy was going in for his regular chemo treatments, he always looked at them as a perfect opportunity to share the love and hope of Christ. Jimmy shared that there were multiple other people also receiving treatment, the treatment took a couple of hours, and most people in the room were feeling some level of fear, anxiety, and/or weariness as a result of the cancer, factors which made it a perfect opportunity to bring the hope, joy, and encouragement of Christ.
- BOOK – In Paul's case, there were three tools that helped him take the gospel even into the elite Praetorian Guard, Caesar's special troops: his **chains** (Phil. 1:12-14), his **critics** (Phil. 1:15-19), and his **crisis** (Phil. 1:20-26).
 - Paul didn't complain about his chains. He consecrated them to God and asked God to use them for the advance of the gospel.
 - When you have the single mind, you look on your circumstances as God-given opportunities for the furtherance of the gospel, and you rejoice at what God is going to do instead of complaining about what God did not do.
 - Our purpose as believers is to be a telescope that brings Jesus Christ close to people. To the average person, Christ is a misty figure in history who lived centuries ago. But as unsaved people watch

believers go through crisis, they can see Jesus magnified and brought so much closer.

- Paul's chains not only gave contact with the lost, but they also gave courage to the saved. Discouragement has a way of spreading, but so does encouragement.

v. 15-18

- SERMON - People can complain and be critical of differences in theology and ulterior motives, and why those things are important, the most important is that Christ is being preached and proclaimed. We can't concern ourselves with denominational or theological differences of others. If they claim the name of Christ and preach a biblical gospel, they are brothers and sisters and advocates. We're not in competition with other churches. We're partners!

v. 19-26

- SERMON / BOOK – “*To live is Christ and to die is gain* (Phil. 1:21).” No matter what our circumstances and sufferings, we have a great hope that because of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, everything will turn out well for us in the end. And THAT belief and knowledge enables us to live life, in all of our circumstances, with a joy that is powerful enough to give us a lens that sees every situation as an opportunity for the gospel.

ADDITIONAL REFLECTION

- SERMON - Distinguishing marks of Christianity:
 - 1. Joy in suffering
 - 2. Love for enemies
 - 3. Good from evil
 - 4. Peace in anxiety
- SERMON - Boot camp vs. Battlefield
 - Spiritual growth happens more on the battlefield than in boot camp. The purpose of boot camp is to prepare us for the battlefield, so that when you're on the battlefield, your instincts will be aligned with the Spirit, more than the flesh.
 - Suffering activates truth.

Discussion Questions

1. **TEXT** – What verse jumps out at you from the text? Why?
2. **TAKE AWAYS** – Do you have any new learnings, good reminders, and/or key take aways from the book and/or sermon message?
3. **CHAINS** – How did God use Paul’s chains to advance the gospel? What kinds of “chains” in your life has God used?
4. **CRITICS / CRITICISM** – Why was Paul able to rejoice in the face of criticism? How can viewing criticism through a single-minded lens of Jesus change the way you respond to criticism? Are there any current situations this could be helpful?
5. **JOY IN CRISIS** – How can Christ be magnified through chains, critics, and/or crisis in your life?
6. **BELIEF vs. CONVICTION** – What’s the difference? What’s the impact in the midst of crisis, trials and/or suffering?
7. **BOOT CAMP vs. BATTLEFIELD** – What are the differences and similarities in how faith is developed and grows when it comes to daily practices (i.e., boot camp) vs. sudden unexpected trials (i.e., battlefield)?
8. **BATTLE PREP** – What daily boot camp spiritual practices can help prepare you for the battlefield times of chains and crisis?
9. **GROWTH IN FAITH** – What are the elements and experiences that have had the greatest impact on your personal faith journey?
10. **JOY STORY** – Can you recall a time in your life when you experienced:
a) joy in difficult times, or b) God using your difficult circumstances to advance the gospel?