

Eagle Ridge Lake Elsinore
A Study in Philippians — May 20, 2020
Philippians 1:15-30

Introduction/Review

- This is a letter of love and encouragement to the Church in Philippi.
- Written from prison, the Apostle Paul writes to the church to encourage them in their faith, and that regardless of their circumstances, they can rejoice.
- We talked about the ‘sanctification’ process, that we are to pursue in our relationship with Jesus. **[Philippians 1:6]**
- Through prayer and partnership in the gospel, nothing can keep us from doing what God calls us to do.

Verses 15-18

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

- Envy and Rivalry

- We see this in the church and ministries today.
- In planting our church, quite a few asked us, “How are you going to separate yourself from the rest of the churches in the city?”
- One pastor told me, “You don’t want to plant your church next to a guy like me.”
- There is so much “posturing” in the church, and it makes me sad.
- However, I can not fault many, because I know they preach the truth of God’s Word.
- Too many get caught up on church practices, legalism, etc.
- The point for us is to stop the criticism of other churches, because that’s only going to take your attention off of the pure and blameless things we ought to focus on... especially advancing the gospel!
 - Seek unity, purity, and a gospel-centered perspective, regardless of your circumstances.
 - In that you can find joy.

Verses 19-20

19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, **20** as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

- In spite of his imprisonment, impending trial, and the rivalry of some, Paul continued to promote joy and hope.
 - “Yes, I will rejoice” = regardless of what happens to us, or what others may do or say, we can rejoice because our hope is found in Jesus.
 - The certainty of Paul’s outcome is found in Jesus.
- Deliverance/salvation, eager expectation, hope, not ashamed, full courage whether in life or death.
 - These are all terms of hope and joy.

Verses 21-22

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. **22** If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.

- “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”
 - Can we honestly say this about our own life?
 - How would you fill in the blank:
 - For to me to live is _____. (Job, Family, Money, etc...)
 - It should be something we reflect on.
 - What does our life and our priorities say to others about our faith in Jesus?
- We don’t accept Jesus to be just a “thing we identify with”.
 - He’s not just in our life, as a part of our life. **He is life!** [John 14:6] It is His life that we seek to live, not our own.
 - **Galatians 2:20**, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”
 - If we pursue life with this viewpoint, what would change? Would your current state of affairs shift?
- In Christ, our eternal destination is secure. So no matter if and when we die, we win.
 - In September of 1776, a former school teacher, named Nathan Hale, was captured by the British for spying. Prior to his hanging, his final words were, “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.”
 - He was so passionate for his country and freedom, he was willing to do it all over again.
 - We can become so enamored with the things in this life [career, money, politics, freedoms, etc.], that we can so easily lose focus on what, and Who matters most to us.
 - **Romans 14:8**, “For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.”
- We understand that life is not guaranteed. Therefore, we continue to pursue right living [righteousness; progressive sanctification] while we are alive.

- **REMINDER: Philippians 2:12**, “...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,”
- We are to continue in unashamed, single-minded service to our King, Amen?!

Verses 23-26

23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. **24** But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. **25** Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, **26** so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

- Knowing what we know about our eternity, it’s a seemingly obvious choice to be with Jesus in glory.
 - **Revelation 7:15-17**, “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”
- But while we are here, our purpose is clear.
- Paul’s purpose was to continue on, for other’s “progress and joy”, and for “glory in Christ Jesus.”
- The Philippian Church would have ample reason to rejoice in seeing Paul again. *Why?* Because through their prayers and participation in the gospel, they were witnesses to the work of God.
- So no matter what “side” of the process we are on, we have reason to rejoice!

Verses 27-30

27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, **28** and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. **29** For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, **30** engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

- There is now a bit of a shift in tone in the final few verses of Chapter 1.
- “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel.”
 - Translated in the original Greek: “Only behave as citizens worthy of the gospel.” **[Good News]**
 - **Ephesians 4:1-3**, “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

- **2 Corinthians 3:2**, “You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all.”
 - So live, work, relate, and respond so that people can understand the gospel by how you live.
- “Standing firm”... “Striving side by side”... “Not frightened by your opponents”
 - This is the language of warfare!
 - REMEMBER: **Ephesians 6:12**, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”
 - This is also the language of athletics!
 - The church should act with a team mentality.
 - Imagine if everyone on the team ignored the rules, did what they thought was right, regardless of anyone else, and had differing goals!?
 - There would be absolutely no point!
 - Rather, we should seek gospel unity, purpose, and courage to do what were called to do.

Discussion Questions

1. What did God tell you?
2. What did God teach you?
3. What is God tasking you to do?
4. Why was Paul able to rejoice in his circumstances? How do we do the same?
5. You are a “sermon in shoes”. What does this mean?
6. What does it mean to “walk worthy of the calling” that have in Christ?
7. How does going through spiritual conflict help us grow in Christ?