

Philippians

A GUIDE TO JOY

Philippians 1:12-18 – Nothing Can Stop The Gospel!

May 10, 2020

1. Paul's imprisonment couldn't stop the progress of the gospel outside the church.

I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel,... Philippians 1:12 (ESV)

...for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! 2 Timothy 2:9 (ESV)

...so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. Philippians 1:13 (ESV)

All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. Philippians 4:22 (ESV)

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,...
Philippians 2:14–15 (ESV)

I found myself increasingly drawn to the idea that God had put me in prison for a purpose and that I should do something for those I had left behind.”
- Chuck Colson, Born Again

2. Paul's imprisonment gave more gospel-courage to those inside the church.

And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Philippians 1:14 (ESV)

3. Envious evangelists preaching the gospel with impure motives couldn't stop the progress of the gospel.

Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. 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,... Philipians 1:15–18 (ESV)

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. Galatians 1:8–9 (ESV)

4. How can we apply this to our life?

- A. Hard times are not a derailment of God's plans, they are part of God's plan. They give us new ways to share the gospel.
- B. God anchors us where he wants us to share the gospel.
- C. Joy comes from the progress of the gospel, not the comfort of our circumstances. The progress of the gospel is the most important thing in this world.

D. When we speak the gospel, nothing can stop the progress of the gospel.

*How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"... So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
Romans 10:14–15, 17 (ESV)*

Life Group Questions

1. Read Philippians 1:12-18, especially verse 18. What causes people to lose their joy? Why should we find our joy in the progress of the gospel? This week, what can we do to focus on sharing the gospel and bringing more joy to our life?
2. In Philippians 1:12, we see Paul's suffering in prison for Christ was not a deviation in God's plan but was used as part of God's plan to spread the gospel. What unplanned deviations have you had in your life that God used to help you share the gospel in an unexpected way?
3. Read Acts 8:1-4. The persecution of the church in Jerusalem looked like an unexpected deviation in God's plan. How did God use that persecution to spread the gospel around the world? How does knowing God's sovereignty over life and our hard circumstances encourage you?
4. Read Philippians 1:15-18. Why do you think the sins of envy and jealousy are prevalent among church leaders? Why are sins of envy and jealousy prevalent between churches? What can be done about it? (See Philippians 2:6-11) Why is it so easy to love our glory more than God's glory?
5. Read Galatians 1:6-10. Why did Paul ignore the motives of the envious evangelists in Philippians but attack the false evangelists in Galatians 1:6-10? In Philippians 1:15-18, the envious evangelists' motives for preaching the gospel were not pure. Should a preacher's motives always be ignored? How and when should someone's motives be addressed?