

Home Group Helps

Philippians 1:12-18a

Joy for the Journey: Joy in Jail

¹² I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. ¹⁴ And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. 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 rivalry, 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.

I. Joy in Jail (v.12-13) – ¹² I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

II. Joy in Jeopardy (v.14) – ¹⁴ And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

III. Joy in Jealousy (v.15-18a) – 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 rivalry, 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.

1. Launching Question(s):

- Who comes to mind as an example of a Christian experiencing joy in the midst of difficulty?

2. Observation Question(s):

- Why do you suppose that some preachers in Rome were resentful toward Paul?
- What does Paul say about the preaching of the Gospel even from those who have bad motives (v.18)?
- How might we develop a similar attitude toward those Christians with whom we have a conflict?

3. Interpretation Question(s):

- Scripture has taught us, among other things, that a bird does not fly to the ground without the Father's care, that Joseph's unjust imprisonment was used to save the people of God (Gen. 45, 50), and that Paul's imprisonment has, "served to advance the Gospel" (v.12).
- Why then do we fret?
- Why do we not experience the joy that Paul experienced?
- What hinders us from trusting in God no matter the circumstances?
- How can we practice the kind of joy practiced by Paul?

4. Reflection Question(s):

- How do self-pity, cynicism, fear, anxiety, negativity, etc. work against the experience of joy in the life of the believer?

5. Application Question(s):

- Think about the difficulties you are facing right now in life. How might they be used by Christ to further his kingdom work?

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