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## **PHILIPPIANS**

### **The Letter of Joy**

#### **THE JOY OF BEING IN THE CHURCH (1:3-11)**

- (vs9) “knowledge” doctrinal and practical truth, “insight” spiritual insight, sense, and feeling.
- To grow in love properly we need both the guidance of God’s Word and spiritual discernment.
- If we love something or someone we will study it, meditate on it, and cherish it. If someone loves Jesus, they will love His Word and the Holy Spirit’s voice as well. What we love we pursue.
- (vs10) “discern” in the Greek is a term for testing metal. To know if something is real or valuable.
- (vs11) The final Christian goal is to live a life so full of love and Christlike character that others are attracted to God and He gets the praise. In other words, people will know that it is God in us!

#### **IN CHAINS FOR CHRIST (1:12-26)**

- (vs12-13) Paul assures the concerned church of Philippi that he is in chains because Christ is allowing him to be. I’m sure many of them struggled, like we do today when we see godly Christians suffer.
- God is using that which bound Paul to set other’s free. This is one of the most beautiful and encouraging truths. God doesn’t waste anything. No outward force will ever stop God from building His Kingdom through His children.
- Paul was seemingly stopped from openly preaching the gospel, but God gave him the secret keys to advancing against and conquering the Roman empire for Jesus. He gave Paul the “palace guard.”
- The “praetorion guard” were instituted by Caesar Augustus and were a body of 10,000 troops. They were dispersed throughout Rome and were the Emperor’s bodyguards and known as “king makers.”

- They were the most influential and physical power in Rome. Whomever they nominated Emperor was always voted in by the populace, and so they controlled Rome through the Emperor by their Prefect.
- Paul as a captive had assigned Praetorian guards who became captive audiences as he shared Christ!  
How? The Greek word used here *halusis* means a short chain used between prisoner and soldier.
- “The whole praetorian guard” came to know that Paul was IN CHAINS FOR CHRIST!
- So, the seeds of the gospel freely spread to 10,000 different locations through the most influential men, in the most influential city in the world, through an old Jewish tentmaker and prisoner named Paul!
- In other letters, Paul lets the churches in Ephesus, Colossi, and Rome that he was “in chains for Christ!”

*WHEN YOU ARE IN CHAINS FOR CHRIST*

*IN THE MIDDLE OF A PRISON YOU CAN SING...*

*NOT FOR A MINUTE WAS I FORSAKEN... THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE!*

*PAUL IS SHOWING US SOMETIMES OUR SONG NEEDS TO BE*

*“MY CHAINS AREN’T GONE, BUT I’VE BEEN SET FREE!”*

- (vs14) Paul’s unconquerable spirit was an inspiration for the Roman Christians to follow in his example of boldness. So, what seemed a moment of defeat, was a movement of believers advancing!
- The early believers must have thought “if Paul is able to be imprisoned, face the death penalty with joy, and win his captors to Christ in boldness, who can I win to Christ in my easier circumstances?”
- The Greek word for used for “advance” is *prokope* which is used for the progress of an army or an expedition. So, when we look like we’ve been bound or stopped in our tracks we are still advancing.

*“Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” Ephesians 6:13 NIV*

- Paul was defeating the enemy from within. He was the ultimate Trojan Horse in the center of Rome.
- You may not be happy in your circumstance, but what if it is God’s positioning you for a kingdom purpose?
- (vs15-18) Paul had no hint of jealousy or resentment towards others who shared Christ in competition with him for personal gain. He proclaims what we all know, there are only two motives in sharing Christ. One, a selfless person shares Christ out of a love for Jesus. The other, is a selfish person who simply wants the attention, prestige, or power that others have in influential leadership. Paul simply and freely rejoiced that Christ was being preached, knowing the Word would not return void.
- Every one of us will be judged by Christ and that which was done with improper motive will receive no reward. Justice will be done. But, it will be meted out by Christ on the mercy seat!
- (vs19-20) The word for “deliverance” in Greek is *soteria*. It means salvation. In this context it means either salvation by being released from heaven, or it means salvation by being released to heaven.
- Paul wasn’t sure how God would set him free. But, he knew his situation wouldn’t last forever.
- No matter what you are facing it won’t last forever. You’re on your way to heaven shouting victory.

**POWER VERSE: (VS21) “FOR TO ME, TO LIVE IS CHRIST AND TO DIE IS GAIN.”**

- When we are totally committed, devoted, and in love with Christ, the cry of our heart should be His ultimate will of being with Him forever! When you think about Christ in His glory and heaven, why would we want to be here on earth?
- We will be living in perfection, in paradise, in perfect bodies, with Jesus as the light, in the Holy Spirit’s full glory, getting to thank and know our Holy Father and all the heroes of the faith forever!

- But, we who are totally committed to Christ need to know the cry of His heart is for His lost children that don't know Him who will spend eternity in hell forever! Paul understood this tension. Do we?
- (vs23) Paul was caught in the middle of these truths and being "torn between the two."
- What a beautiful tension we are called to experience, to love Christ so much we look forward to death.
- This life, this world, these bodies we live in are so temporary and fleeting. Paul uses the phrase "I desire to depart." The Greek word for "depart" is a word for breaking down a tent and moving on. So poignant, for the greatest missionary who paid his way as a tent maker to use this analogy.
- Death in Christ is not an end, it's a better beginning!
- (vs24) Paul selflessly decides to assume that God is going to release him back to his missionary ministry.
- (vs25) The phrase in the original language translated "I will remain, and I will continue," carries a connotation of a person who waits beside someone else, ready to be a help.

### **LIVING A LIFE WORTHY OF THE GIFT OF CHRIST (1:27-30)**

- (vs27-28) No matter what happens to him, Paul simply wants to hear that his church family in Philippi is in unity in the Spirit, united in their living out their faith, and bold like him in adversity. These characteristics let those who are against Christ know they are already defeated.
- (vs29-30) With the victory that comes from being united with Christ and His church, is the guarantee that there will be sufferings.