

THE BOOK OF

philippians





WEEK OF MAY 28TH, 2023
I BELONG TO JESUS (PHIL 1:19-30)
Speaker: Pastor Elmer Cañas Jr.



ICEBREAKER

Are you a half full or half empty kind of person? Why do you suppose that is?

Introduction

- Do you let God pour into all areas of your life, or do you pick where you allow him into your life? Explain.
- Do you spend a lot of time wondering what your purpose is? Why do you think that is? If you don't know what your purpose is, what would help discover it?
- God can spend us as He wills, because He will also be the one to replenish and restore us. When you're worn out, what restores you?

To Live is Christ and to Die is Gain (v. 19-21)

- Even though Paul traveled so much and appeared in such diverse areas on his journeys, he always was able to connect with others in the name of Jesus Christ. There is so much value in being part of a church community, also known as a small group. Who is in your circle? Who is faithfully praying for you or willing to pray for you?
- Imagine the conditions Paul was living in while in prison. He was able to find opportunity in both the good and the bad. How? How would you do in this condition?
- Paul realized that God sent Jesus to redeem and restore our relationship with God the Father through his death and resurrection, and he also realized that God initiated this process because he can't wait to spend eternity with us. How does that realization make you feel? Is this easy or difficult to accept?
- Paul believed and recognized he belonged to Jesus. What does that mean? Does YOUR life belong to Jesus? Why or why not?



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- What parts of your life are you living for yourself and what parts are you living for God? How do you turn it all into living for God?
- When you pray, do you truly believe that God hears you? Do you seek the Lord's voice or just looking for the answer you want? How do you know?
- Pastor Elmer shared the quote from Pastor Erin Smalley, "A life lived for Christ is a life always lived on Kingdom assignment." Are you living on assignment with God all the time or only when you come to church on Sunday?

Companion to You (v. 22-26)

- Paul confidently states that any time he had left on earth (even the time spent in that filthy prison) would result in good work, fruitful labor - for God. He did not see the remainder of his life as wasted time - even if he was to spend it in prison. If you had to choose between a comfortable life of luxury or a hard life serving God, which would you choose? Why?
- Paul was committed to the work of Christ. Share a time where you were so committed to something you were doing for God, you chose to commit to finishing it over your own comfort.
- There are and will be many people in our lives that will refuse to set foot in a church building, and the only gospel they will experience is YOUR life. What will they see of the Gospel in YOU?

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- We walk into work, and we walk into school - and we allow these environments to dictate the way we live our lives. We lose our identities, We lose our peace, We lose our joy, We lose our identity as a child of God. Why do we let our titles determine our identity, instead of remaining children of God at all times?
- While we are stuck in our past, the enemy is trying to distract us from our future and what God has for us. What are you fixated on in your past that is allowing the enemy to, use to, keep your eyes off of your future and what God has for you?
- What is a time when you thought of how others would view you before reacting to your feelings?
- When you feel down, what do you do to change your attitude so it's good for everyone? How do you keep from letting negativity cloud the way?

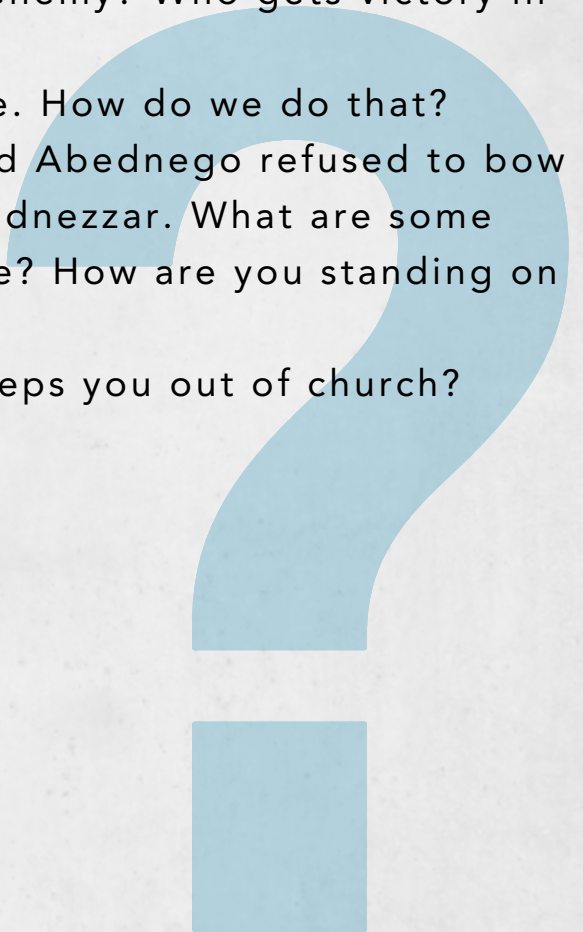
Live as Citizens of Heaven (v. 27-30)

- The root of the English word of "worthy" is "worth" - the value of how much something really matters. Are you living your life in a way that reflects how much the Gospel truly matters to you? If so, that's great! If not, what can you change today to make everyone around you know how much the Gospel matters to you?
- It's one thing to say, "I belong to Jesus." But, when our faith is put to the test, will you dare speak the name of Jesus? Will you be bold enough to trust in God, to live your life set apart, to stand firm against the imposing culture, and not give in or compromise? How will you ask God to help you with this?



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- How can you respond to difficult situations in a Christ-like manner? How can you not be intimidated by your enemy? Who gets victory in those circumstances?
- God has called us all to make a difference. How do we do that?
- In Daniel 3:16-18, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to the statue built by King Nebuchadnezzar. What are some things you feel are idols in today's culture? How are you standing on your convictions?
- If you don't think you have idols, what keeps you out of church? What makes you "lose your religion"?

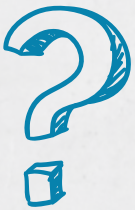


ACT ON IT



ENCOURAGE

No matter what stage of life we're in, we're all on a search for our purpose. Paul was driven by his purpose to fulfill God's plan in his life and in the lives of those around him. Paul had figured out that God chooses us to fulfill His plan, and as He spends us, He will be the one to replenish and restore us. We are on assignment for God. We belong to Jesus. That doesn't change. Paul's circumstances didn't sway him away from his purpose and neither should we. We are to live our lives so the others may know Christ, regardless of where we're at in life. Above all, we are children of God. The closest some people will get to a church is just being in your presence. Will they see Christ in you?



ASK

How do you think God wants to use you now? Are you willing to let Him have your life to pour out? Do you struggle with community? What about the power of prayer? What would it look like for you to "live in Christ?" What do you want others to learn about Christ from the way you live your life? What things or attitudes do you need to adjust so others can see Christ in your life?



CHALLENGE

"Preach the Gospel at all times; when necessary, use words." - St. Francis. Find a way to share the Gospel with someone, whether it's through actions or in words. Pray and ask the Lord how He wants to use you this week. Find your people that are willing to pray for you and let them.

PRAYER

God, thank You for reminding us that we belong to You. Thank You for making us Your children, for loving us, and for empowering us with Your Spirit. Thank You for giving us purpose. We're blessed to be a part of the plans that You have in store, and we thank You for the rest, peace, and resources You're going to bring to us to make it happen. Help us stay committed to the mission and to stand strong in the face of adversity. Use us as You need us. As we go about our day, may we be reminded of Pastor Erin Smalley's words: "A life lived for Christ is a life always lived on Kingdom assignment. Our lives are not just for us, but also for the others around us. Help us live lives that make much of the Gospel. Be our strength, bring us joy, and give us confidence to live lives that scream, "I am a child of God," in both good and bad times. Give us the boldness to live life fully devoted to You. We ask all of this in Your glorious name, Amen.

WEEK OF MAY 21ST, 2023

BE FAITHFUL TO JESUS, EVEN IN PAIN (PHIL 1:12-18)

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

**ICEBREAKER**

What trivia category could you be counted on to contribute?

Introduction

- How do you deal with emotional & physical pain? (Lash out, clam up, gossip about it, etc.)
- When was the last time you praised God? For anything?
- How do YOU find joy, despite the day-to-day frustrations of your life?

God Can Give Purpose to Your Pain (v. 12-14)

- God has a much greater understanding of what's good for us than we do. How can we incorporate this knowledge into our walks?
- Share a time where you know it was God who changed your plans. Many of us trust in God and know that He has plans for our lives, but struggle with the reality that it may include pain or be different than what we want. How do we rejoice in this? Or do you?
- James 1:2-4 tells us that the outcome of trials is steadfastness or assuredness that God is faithful. Even though we don't know the outcome of our pain, we do know that God is with us through our trials. He has said He will never leave us nor forsake us. Do you believe this? Do you accept it? Why or why not?
- How do you allow God to use the pain in your life, the specific pain or trials you've experienced, to minister to and be the touchpoint for someone's healing? If you haven't had the opportunity, how can you?



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Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

Jesus Christ is More Important than Anything (v. 15-18)

- Of course Paul was frustrated that people were preaching the gospel inappropriately, but he was also imprisoned and unable to confront them so he chose to rejoice at least people were hearing about Jesus. How can we apply this in our lives?
- LifePoint Church has 4 core beliefs:
 - We Believe The Bible is true
 - Jesus is God, and the only way of salvation
 - You must be born again
 - You can live a Spirit-filled/Spirit-led life
- Anything outside of these issues takes our focus off Jesus. Do you allow third-tier issues to surface and take the focus away from the Gospel? How can you avoid this in the future?
- If you've accepted Christ then you aren't going to lose your bond with Jesus. Does this encourage you to preach the gospel more boldly? If not, what hinders you from telling people about Jesus?

Let Our Lives Proclaim Jesus! (v. 18)

- The center point of this text was that in every way, we want our lives to proclaim Jesus Christ. Are you able to say this with sincerity? If not, why?
- Philippians 1:27 says "Whatever happens, conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ" What does this verse look like in your life now?
- What things in your life do you feel convicted aren't worthy. How can you change this?

ACT ON IT



ENCOURAGE

Paul was able to find joy and rejoice in the midst of everything he was going through. No one likes pain and suffering, especially when they're in the middle of it. But what if, the next time a problem arises, we turn our focus away from the pain and toward the One who is faithful and trustworthy? When we're connected to Jesus, we get to choose joy. And when we have joy on the inside of us, we can rejoice in every circumstance. We can trust, believe, and accept that the Lord is with us through every trial. Choosing joy is also choosing to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of Christ. Nothing should ever make us take our focus off of Jesus. Pain and suffering are normal parts of life, but God promises to be good to us. Let's choose to be good for Him!



ASK

Pastor Mike told us to specifically ask the Lord - Why this happening? What would it look like for you to see the joy in your current circumstances? How can your pain be a blessing to others? Are you willing to let your pain bless others? How is your love of Christ reflected in your day-to-day life?



CHALLENGE

Touch people with joy this week! Give an extra smile, a hug, or hi-five to people that you greet. Build people up! Speak some encouraging words over them. Pray for people in the moment. Give generously. Give your time, tithe, or tip your server really well. Find a way to serve others, no strings attached, and bless them.

PRAYER

Lord, we rejoice in Your name! Thank You for all of your blessings. Thank You for never leaving or forsaking us. Thank You for being with us through it all. Because of You, we can lift our hands and rejoice through anything. Help us to remember that when times get hard, You have a purpose. Our pain can be a blessing to someone else. Open our eyes to whatever You're trying to show us and speak to us through our pain. Help us make conscious choices toward Your heart and plans. No matter what happens to us, may it not separate us from You and Your promises. Remind us that in every circumstance, we are called to live lives that proclaim Christ. Let nothing in our lives overshadow Your goodness and faithfulness. We want to rejoice and praise You in all that we are and in all that we do. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

WEEK OF MAY 14TH, 2023

PRAYER BUILDS A LIFE OF JOY (PHIL 1:1-11)

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

**ICEBREAKER**

Which do you prefer: Rollercoaster or a bouncy house? Why?

Introduction

- Joy is something we can all recognize, but it's somewhat hard to define. What do you think about when you hear the word "joy"?
- What's the difference between secular (worldly) joy and biblical joy?
- Joy is part of the Christian experience, and having joy is something we all desire! So how do we do that? How do you choose joy? What are some practical steps we can follow to choose joy?

Joy is Part of God's Blessings (v. 1-2)

- We've all written letters to people we know and care for. Imagine being Paul, living in a prison and writing such a letter. Would your first sentence be to wish them God's grace and peace? Would you be asking for help? Or, what would it be? Why is it so hard for us to care for others more than we care for ourselves?
- The world may be crumbling down, but nothing can ever separate us from the peace that comes from knowing God is always with us. How would you feel if you got an email from The Lord promising the gifts of His Power and His Peace? How would that affect your belief in these promises?
- Define mercy and grace. How does God's grace and mercy look like in your life? Give an example.
- Based on what you have experienced in your life, do you believe you're still deserving of God's grace and mercy? Do you think these obstacles are keeping you from being joyful in life?



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- Romans 8.38-39 reads, "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Do you feel like there is something separating you from God's love? What lies are making you believe this?

Prayer for Others Brings Joy (v.3-8)

- What is something that brings you joy?
- Part of building a life of joy is choosing to focus on others above your own self. Even if you're focusing on great things in your life, it's still fleeting and still better to focus on others ahead of yourself. How could you focus on others more than your own needs in your prayer time?
- Joyful people are selfless people! Joyful people are others-focused people! Joyful people believe the best in others! Joyful people choose to see good and to speak blessings on others! Do you think of yourself as a joyful person? Why or why not? What can you do to be more joyful?
- We should be praying for others, even if it's difficult, because it'll bring joy. Does this sound strange to you? When was a time that it was difficult to pray for someone, but once you did it brought an unexpected joy? How did you feel/react?
- It's worth noting that Paul keeps a good attitude about this church! His perspective is right! He doesn't highlight the negative, but keeps his focus on the good they have done! How can you remind yourself to focus on the positive in the people of your life?



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- What if we conducted our relationships in the same manner that Paul did? To spread the gospel and lift others up. What if we treated these relationships like a ministry?

Let God Hear Specific Prayers for Others (v. 9-11)

Pastor Mike pointed out that Paul was very specific his prayers, and he always prayed the following things each time:

1. Your love may abound more and more – Love God, Love People in abundance
2. Your knowledge (may abound) – Know God’s Word and Will in abundance
3. Your discernment (may abound) – Discern God’s Will vs. evil in abundance
4. You may approve what is excellent – Wisdom, Clarity, Godliness
5. You may be pure – Blessed are the pure in heart – Live close to Jesus
6. You may be blameless for the day of Christ – We will be Judged! Be ready.
7. You may be filled with the fruit of Righteousness in Jesus Christ – Full

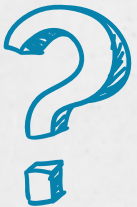
- What additional, specific prayers would you add to this list for your time in prayer.
- Can you pray for others (even those you don’t particularly like) like Paul? What would make that easier? What will you do to make that happen?
- How do your preferences get in the way of praying specific prayers for people?
- Pastor Mike challenged us to pray for 5-10 people each day for the next week. What if you knew you were one of the 5 people that were being prayed for? What specific prayer would you want them to pray for you?

ACT ON IT



ENCOURAGE

Paul didn't let his circumstances affect his joy. In the face of opposition, he chose joy and wrote a letter to a church as encouragement. His passion for Jesus fueled his commitment to joy, and we need to follow his lead. We get the blessing of God's grace, the power of God in us that helps us live for God. God's grace brings us peace, that God-centered stillness that keeps us grounded no matter what. God's grace coupled with peace allows us to have joy at all times. And if we're going to be joyful people, we have to shift our focus from our woes and choose to focus on others. Self-pity will never give us joy. Focus on the positive in the people of your lives. Pray consistently, boldly, and specifically for others, and God will grow your joy.



ASK

What is dictating your joy? What are some more practical steps you can take to choose joy? How do you feel about praying for others? What do you need to set aside to make it easier to pray for others?



CHALLENGE

For the next 7 days, make a list of 5-10 people each day to pray for. These could be people you love, people you don't care for too much, people who bless you, or people who stress you out. Pick 5-10 new people for each day of the week (a new 5-10 for Monday, a new 5-10 for Tuesday, etc.) Pray very bold and specific prayers for them, not against them. Let God lead and build your heart for these people and pray scripture and promises over their lives.

PRAYER

Lord, we thank You for the gift of joy! Thank You for Your gift of grace that helps us live for You. And we thank You for the gift of peace that allows us to stand firm in You when everything around us is unknown. We know that the Apostle Paul had it so much worse than we ever could, but he kept his joy. He didn't focus on what was happening outside of him because he was grounded by The Spirit within him. Lord, we ask for the same. Help us to not dwell in our circumstances. Help us give praise for the positive things happening around us. Help us become joyful people who are selfless and always willing to speak blessings on others. Show us who in our lives we need to be praying for and direct us in how we can boldly and specifically lift them up in prayer. We want to be people who overflow with joy in any circumstance because of our assurance in You. We ask these things in Your precious name. Amen.