

THE BOOK OF

philippians



WEEK OF AUGUST 6TH, 2023

WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY YOUR FLESH! (PHIL 3:1-11)

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette



ICEBREAKER

Which is your favorite Star Wars character and why?

Introduction

- Imagine if Jesus came into your home Sunday morning and said, "Hey, you wanna hang out?" Would you say, "Um, I have to go to church?" Or, would you rejoice in the time you get to spend with Him? What if He showed up Monday morning and you were late for work?
- Were there any work ethic statements your parents told you when you were growing up? For example, "work hard and you'll succeed," "the world is your oyster," etc.
- What was your "Papa John's" job? How did it help you become the person you are today?
- What's the most humbling thing you've had to go through in order to pay your bills?
- Why do you think we revert to trying to EARN a life with God, instead of simply living our life FOR God?

Watch Who You Follow (v. 1-3)

- Paul was writing from a dungeon prison in Rome, finding this downtime as a reason to write and pour into the Churches he planted. Do you know anyone who would do the same when faced with extreme adversity? What do you need to do to be more like Paul?



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- The world is full of people teaching that you must keep certain traditions if you're going to follow Jesus. Theologically, scholars call this the "Galatian Heresy," and it was the MAJOR reason Paul wrote the letter of Galatians. Where do you see this still being a problem for Christians today?
- Was there a time in your life when you had "dogs" in your life? How did you discover they were dogs and what did you do to get away from them?
- What kinds of Christ centered guardrails do you put in place in order to avoid the influence of these dogs, evildoers, and the religious in your life? (Food for thought... Who do you follow in social media? Who do you allow to mentor you?)
- Do you find more security in your religious behaviors than with your relationship with Jesus? All of us have some version of this. What can you change in your own attitude to simply BE Christian and not worry so much about doing Christian things?
- What does "circumcision of the heart" mean?
- A child can study everything it means to be a Soldier. He can go to the surplus store and buy a uniform. He can know every general's name and battle history. He can have a family who all served honorably in positions of great power. Still, if he doesn't raise his own right hand and actually join the Army, he will never be a Soldier. He is just playing the part. Are you a Soldier in the Army of God? Or, are you just playing the part?



WEEK OF AUGUST 6TH, 2023
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Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

Our Confidence is in Jesus, NOT the "Flesh" (v. 4-8)

- Paul was a TOP SHELF Jew. He was a ZEALOUS member of the Pharisees, and was BLAMELESS in his ability to always "DO the RIGHT THING!" And he was able to climb the social ladder, to elevate in the religious society. Still, he was sent to prison. It would be understandable to be mad at God, but that's a trick of the enemy. Was there a time when you were angry at God for your circumstances? How did you resolve that? HAVE you resolved it?
- Sometimes we put TOO MUCH stock in what our resume says, our academic pedigree, or we try really hard to pat ourselves on the back for doing and acting right. Still, NOTHING this world has to offer has ANYTHING in comparison to KNOWING JESUS. What areas of your life do you put too much stock in what you have done? How can you refocus yourself to what God has done for you?
- How do you describe KNOWING God versus FOLLOWING God?
- Are you the living example of life WITH God, or are you ignoring God to focus on the negativity of the world around you. What would your children say is true in this regard?
- How do we stay the course and follow God's word without listening to the echos of the world (flesh) or leaning on our own understanding?



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Walk with Jesus, Experience a Different Life! (v. 8-11)

- Paul says that everything we do to try to earn god's love and acceptance, everything we do to prove our worth to God, everything we do to try to get to God – is rubbish. In the original Greek, it's a pile of dung! Imagine everything you have ever had or privileges you enjoyed in your life. Now, imagine if God took all of that away. Would you be bitter, or would you see that as a blessing like Paul did? Why?
- Our only value is that Christ died for us. All of our accomplishments and accolades have zero value in God's eyes. Would we live our lives differently, striving to please God with our actions, knowing He sees it as a steaming pile of rubbish?
- What does it mean to "share His sufferings?" How does knowing this change the way you think about your Christian walk? Is it easier or harder knowing that following God will subject you to persecution? Why?
- We are to become like Jesus. What does that look like in your life? What is something you can adjust in yourself in order to become more like Jesus?

ACT ON IT



ENCOURAGE

Society conditions us to make connections between putting in work and reaping benefits and rewards. But God doesn't follow the norm. As Christ followers, we are called to live our lives FROM our relationship with Jesus, not try and earn it. We don't have to rely on ourselves to make us right with God because Jesus already made it possible for us to be right with God. Jesus made it possible for us to have the most precious relationship with the best benefits ever, and all we have to do is say "Yes." We get to live in relationship with the Lord. We get to experience a new and different life stemming from our love of Jesus. Don't let anyone or anything tell you otherwise.



ASK

What do you need to do differently from today on that will help you change from "doing" Christianity to BEING a Christian? Do you read your Bible, go to church, participate in a small group, etc. because you HAVE to or because you WANT to? What is your motivation?



CHALLENGE

Commit to growing your relationship with Jesus during our 21 Days of Prayer this month. Commit to spending time with the Lord in prayer so you can grow your confidence in Jesus. Start eliminating some habits and come up with some new, small habits you can start putting in place to grow your faith (listening to worship music in the car, replacing a tv show with The Chosen series, finding a Christian book to read during breaks in the day).

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for being the best relationship we could ever have. Thank You for the direct connection You created for us to be in right standing with the One True God. Thank You that we don't have to earn our way to be close to You because You know we never could. Lord, let this be a reminder of how much You love us and care for us. Help us become white-hot passionate in our faith. Help us set aside old habits and experiences so we can focus on growing the relationship that You want with us. Give us discernment to know who and what to follow when it comes to our faith. Help us steer clear of the things that lie in wait to trip us up on our journey with Christ. Build our confidence in You, we want people to know we are honored to live life with Jesus as our Lord. And as we continue to grow our lives with You, in Your name, help us see our new lives as a privilege, not a burden. With You, we can live in truth, in confidence, and we can rise above anything our crazy world throws at us. Thank You. Amen.

GOD'S PEOPLE NEED GOD'S PEOPLE (PHIL 2:19-30)



ICEBREAKER

If you could only wear one type of shoes for the rest of your life, what type of shoes would it be?

Introduction

- What is something unexpected that God has used in your life to teach others about Him?
- Reflect on this statement: Real joy comes from our lives being given completely to Jesus! Share how this has been true in your life.

God Will Send Good People into Your Life (v. 19-24)

- What influences (in-person, digital, or celebrities) do you have in your life? Do they grow you in Jesus or pull you away?
- From verses 19-20, we learn that godly people love the Lord and they genuinely care about others. Do you choose the people in your life this way? If not, what determines if and who you let into your life?
- Share the biggest, godly influence(s) in your life and what makes them that way.

God Uses the People He Sends You (v. 25-28)

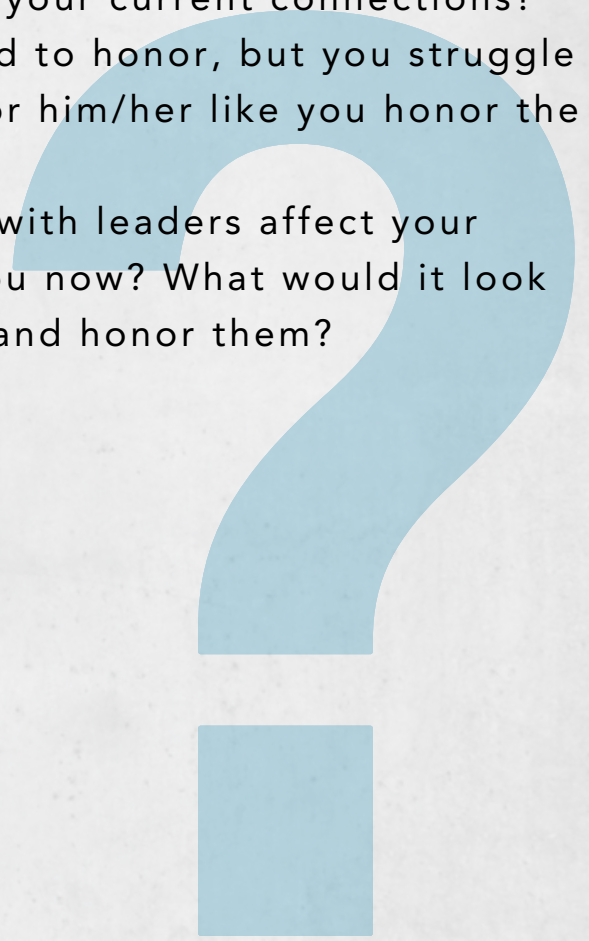
- Has God ever put someone in your life that you didn't want but ultimately needed? What made you realize this? Was it in the moment or in hindsight?
- Share a time in your life that God used someone in your life for your good.
- Do you feel like the Lord wants to send you to someone? What have you walked through that you can use to help someone else?



WEEK OF JULY 30TH, 2023
GOD'S PEOPLE NEED GOD'S PEOPLE (PHIL 2:19-30)
Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

Honor the People God Puts in Your Life (v. 29-30)

- How do your past relationships influence your current connections?
- Who is someone in your life that you need to honor, but you struggle to do so? What would it look like to honor him/her like you honor the Lord?
- How do preferences or past experiences with leaders affect your ability to honor the ones God has sent you now? What would it look like to receive them in the Lord with joy and honor them?



ACT ON IT



ENCOURAGE

It was never God's desire for us to do life on our own. He's always wanted us to be surrounded by good, godly people who could encourage us, uplift us, and grow us. God wants people in our lives that build us up and always point us back to Jesus. The people that God sends you only want to see you do well, and you can trust them because they're a part of what God wants to do for you. Believe that God will send you the best godly influences. He sends people to love you, challenge you, care for you, and to be cared for by you. Let's welcome the people He sends us with open arms. Don't settle for less than God's best.



ASK

Do you know how to spot godly people? What would it look like for you to fully welcome those godly people into your life? How can you be a godly influence to someone else? What about your life makes others conclude your concern for Jesus and others is genuine?



CHALLENGE

Evaluate the people/influences in your life. Ask God to show you how to honor the ones that help you grow your faith and how to deal with the ones that don't. Show honor and gratitude to the godly people in your life. Say thanks, take them out to lunch, bring them a coffee, or surprise them with something nice. Take your next step in getting connected to others, which could be committing/recommitting to your small group, starting your own group, joining a Dream Team, or inquiring about a program and ministry area you've been interested in joining.

PRAYER

Father, thank You for showing us that we're not meant to live our lives on our own. Thank You for being the example of what it means to have meaningful relationships and connections with people. Thank You for the greatest relationship of all, Jesus Christ. Because of Christ, we get to do life with You and with people who love and care for us. Lord, we know that life is better when we surround ourselves with things and people who build us up, encourage us, and only seek good for us. Give us discernment when it comes to the influences in our lives and show us what we need to affirm and what we need to reevaluate. Thank You for the godly people You've brought into our lives. Help us receive them with joy and show honor to them. Give us eyes to see others as You see them. And through the power of Your Holy Spirit, help us become godly people. Help us live out this charge You've given us. Send us to who and where You need us to go. Use us as You need us. We want to be a blessing and make Your Name known to everyone. Amen.



WEEK OF JUNE 11TH, 2023
LIVE FOR CHRIST IN AWE OF GOD (PHIL 2:12-18)

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette



ICEBREAKER

Is a hot dog a sandwich? Why or why not?

Introduction

- What are some things that you call "awesome"?
- What is your default attitude about life: "I get to" or "I have to"? Why?
- When is the last time you reflected on when you came to Christ?

Salvation is to be Lived... Out Loud! (v. 12-13)

- Are you afraid of God? In what way(s)?
- What makes it hard for you to have a relationship with God? What are your thoughts about salvation? Was there anything from the sermon that challenged that?
- Are you growing in your salvation with awe, reverence, and a deep respect and devotion to God? How are you different now from how you were earlier in your Christian walk?
- What is your motivation to follow Jesus? Are you in awe? Are you proud to live for Jesus?
- Have you ever heard the saying, "When the cat's away the mice will play?" Do you find yourself having a hard time practicing and minding your actions when you're not in the presence of God? How do you keep from slacking off in your walk with God when no one is looking?
- The very God we want to please is working within us, filling you and empowering you to live in a way that pleases Him. Where do you see God working inside of you to work for His good pleasure? Are you truly asking God to work His will in you?



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LIVE FOR CHRIST IN AWE OF GOD (PHIL 2:12-18)
Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

- What are you doing to work hard and show the results of your salvation? What do people say about how you walk out your faith?

We are Invited to Live Boldly for Jesus! (v. 14-16)

- Philippians 2:14-15 reads, "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." How are you doing in modeling this at home? At work? With friends?
- Sometimes, we're tempted to grumble and complain about world events, politics, or what our neighbor is doing that we don't approve of. What things do you need to work on in YOUR life in order to be a more positive person and complain less?
- Our world is broken and really messed up! When the world gets darker and darker, Christians are to shine brighter and brighter for Jesus! How does one decide to live like children of God in a godless world and shine as bright as the sun? What things distract you from that, and what can you do to stay focused on God?
- Pastor Mike quoted Matthew 5:14-16 and said, "We are the light of the world! We are the salt of the Earth! A dark world needs a bright church! We choose joy when our world is messed up, so that they may see the gospel we believe!" What's the role of the Church, to shine brighter? Where does the world need YOU to shine brighter?
- Christians are called to be a refuge of hope. How are you walking this out? What do your habits look like in supporting the Mission of God? Who in your life models this for you?



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- Pastor Mike shared a story about a roller coaster in Kings Island called the Flight of Fear. It's a wild ride in the dark, but because you're strapped into the car, you're safe and you can survive the ride in the dark. Just like when we hold fast to the Word of God when the world is dark and fast. If your life was a ride at an amusement park? What would it be? Are you strapped in? What's hanging out?

A Life Devoted is Totally Worth It! (v. 17-18)

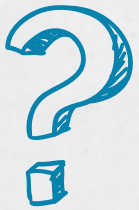
- Everyone is pouring their lives out for something. If your life was represented by a pie chart, where are you spending the most time?
- What do you think it takes for someone to truly commit to a relationship with God? What role can you play in that?
- What does "living fully devoted" mean to you? If you miss the mark, do you think that sets you back? Why or why not?
- When he wrote this part of the Bible, Paul was in prison, and he knew that he would later be executed for his faith. Yet, Paul was so willing to keep his devotion to Jesus, and his devotion to serving others because he knew that his life belonged to Jesus. What would our lives be like if we all lived like Paul, fully devoted to Jesus? What makes it so easy to hold back our devotion to God?
- Do you feel like it's an obligation or a privilege to be a part of the Church? What about having a relationship with God? Why?
- When was the last time you re-upped your commitment to Jesus? If you haven't in a while, what are ways you can re-up your commitment?

ACT ON IT



ENCOURAGE

Pastor Mike encouraged us with the quote, "A dark world needs a bright church." The world has so much going on, and it's easy to give in and start grumbling and complaining. But Christians are called to do something else. When everything goes dark, through the power of His Holy Spirit, we can bring people what they need: A refuge of hope in Christ. We get to shine bright and live like children of God, which we can only do when we're living in awe and reverence for the Lord. Our closeness with Jesus helps us see the hope in whatever happens around us. Through our love for Jesus and awe of God, we can stand firm against negativity and stand up for and with The One who makes all things possible. Jesus makes it possible to have light in the dark.



ASK

What do you need to do to prioritize your relationship with the Lord? Have you been living for God out of a relationship and love for Jesus or out of religion and fear of God? How do you show the results of your salvation? What's standing in your way of living fully devoted to Jesus? If you haven't yet, what do you think will help you make the decision to go "All in" with Jesus?



CHALLENGE

Reflect on scriptures that remind you of your love of God. Gather with your family and/or small group and take communion in remembrance of the goodness of God. Share the Gospel with someone this week. And if you're still seeking Jesus, surround yourself with people on fire for God. Keep asking questions. Keep reading and showing up. Don't give up!

PRAYER

God, you are an awesome God. Thank you for making us Your children. Father, we pray in awe and reverence of You. Lord, You know the world we live in and how easy it is to take our eyes off of You. Forgive us. Help us to live our lives in awe of You, in reverence of Your Name. Whatever's standing in the path to You, remove it. Help us live every part of our lives reflecting our love for You. Help us be firm in proclaiming that Jesus is our motivation for everything we do. If we're standing on the fence, move us closer to making the decision to live lives fully devoted to Christ. Give us boldness to stand up for Christ when everything else is falling. Make us shine brighter than ever before. Remind us that a life for Christ is the best life, not just for us but for those around us as well. Thank You for loving us. Thank You for the amazing Gospel that we get to share with others. Thank You for choosing us first. Amen.



WEEK OF JUNE 4TH, 2023

JESUS AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL (PHIL 2:1-11)

Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette



ICEBREAKER

Now that it's getting warm outside: Ice cream or frozen yogurt? Why?

Introduction

- Do you have a certain interest that could be considered an obsession? Could it potentially be damaging your relationship with others and with God? Why or why not?
- Share a time where you felt like everything in your life was spiraling out of control. Looking back, how do you think God wanted you to handle that?

Faith and Commitment to Jesus Unites Us (v. 1-2)

- What are some of the things that you're committed to (Organizations, causes, sports teams, etc.)? What makes you so committed to them?
- What parallels do you see between Philippians 1:27 and 2:1-2? Why do you think Paul is emphasizing unity so much? How does it apply to our lives today?
- What's your first instinct in hard times? How do you allow the Holy Spirit to help you?
- Have you ever been a part of a divided church, family, or workplace? How did you handle it? How could have Jesus helped?

We Serve Others Because Jesus Served Others (v. 3-8)

- Is there a specific area or circumstance in which you find yourself more tempted to be selfish? Explain.



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Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

- Where's your heart when it comes to serving others? Do you "have to" or do you "get to"? Why?
- Pastor Mike shared the following quote from Pastor Jordan Smalley: "Humility is not just thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself, less!" What do you think about this? Does this confirm or challenge your idea of humility
- We serve others because Jesus is our model servant. He is God, but He emptied himself of that to serve. How can we apply this model to our lives? Does it apply to all areas of our lives or just some?

Jesus is Lord, Over All! (v. 9-11)

- How would you explain "living every day with knees bowed to Jesus" to someone?
- What gets in the way of keeping your focus centered on Jesus?
- What do you do to remind yourself that Jesus is The Name above all names?
- What areas of your life reflect that Jesus is at the center of it all? Are there any areas where you struggle to let Jesus be the center? Why or why not?

ACT ON IT



ENCOURAGE

Because we're human, we have the tendency to look for things to center our lives around. We all have things that become the center of our lives: Our jobs, hobbies, interests, and even addictions. But as Christians, we don't have to search for the "next best thing" because we already have it. Jesus is at the center of it all. We don't have to be people who are divided due to differences because we are united in Christ. When we center on Christ, we shift our focus from ourselves and onto others. When Jesus is at the center of it all, serving is a blessing, not a burden. When we live with Jesus as the center of everything, we live everyday with our knees bowed to Christ. We can stand firm because Jesus becomes The Name above any other name.



ASK

Around what is your world currently revolving? Is Jesus at the center of everything in your life? Are you encouraged that you belong to Jesus? Are you comforted from the love you have in Jesus? Are you thankful for your fellowship with the Holy Spirit? Is your heart tender to God and compassionate for others? What are you doing with that?



CHALLENGE

Pray to be shown where Jesus is NOT the center of your life and start readjusting. What's one act of humility that you can do this week for someone? Do you need to start serving others? Discover your talents in our Next Steps class and join a Dream Team.

PRAYER

Thank You, Jesus, for being THE Name above all names. Thank You for modeling what it looks like to serve others in humility. Thank You for emptying Yourself to make more of us. Lord, help us to live lives that reflect relationship and closeness with You. Guard us against the things that are meant to upset and divide us and help us seek unity in Your Name. Please bring healing to the divisions in our lives. May we become people who rejoice in our love for Christ instead of being swayed by things that don't matter. Help us be Christ influencers that build the brand of The Gospel. Show us where we need to grow in humility, where we need to make less of us for the good of others. Give us hearts of serving and lives of servitude. Transform our lives and show us where we can make a difference for the Kingdom. Move us to grow closer to You and to others. In Your Name, we pray. Amen.



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?



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

- 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?



WEEK OF MAY 28TH, 2023
I BELONG TO JESUS (PHIL 1:19-30)
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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?

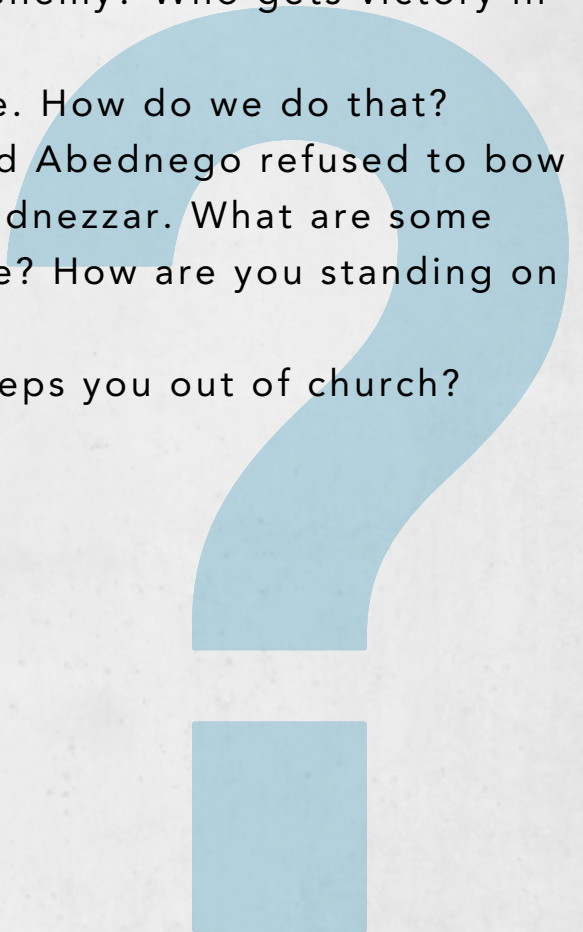
Live as Citizens of Heaven (v. 27-30)

- 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?



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

- 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"?

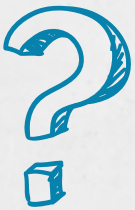


ACT ON IT



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?



WEEK OF MAY 21ST, 2023

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

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?



WEEK OF MAY 14TH, 2023
PRAYER BUILDS A LIFE OF JOY (PHIL 1:1-11)
Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

- 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?



WEEK OF MAY 14TH, 2023
PRAYER BUILDS A LIFE OF JOY (PHIL 1:1-11)
Speaker: Pastor Mike Burnette

- 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.