



Sermon Series: Life Worth Living Part 2

Sermon Title: Rejoice Always

Speaker/ Date: Scott McCrea, September 19, 2021

Philippians 1:12-30

Paul spent two years as a prisoner in Rome. Throughout this whole time, he was chained to a Roman guard. Paul was unjustly accused and falsely imprisoned and was waiting to get an audience before the Emperor Nero. Yet despite the oppressive situation and uncertain future he found himself in, Paul chose to rejoice.

Big Idea: REJOICE IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Paul was able to rejoice because of where he chose to set his focus.

1. Paul focused on the Mission

Philippians 1:12-18

Paul was regarded as a high profile prisoner and he was chained to a Praetorian guard – the imperial guard. Some of them became believers and, in turn, spread the gospel throughout the imperial guard.

Paul's imprisonment also encouraged those who had been hesitant about speaking for Christ. In Paul's case, large numbers of believers became bold for Christ when they saw how God was spreading the gospel through Paul. This boldness and fearlessness of the Christians brought additional joy to the imprisoned apostle.

Apparently, there were those within the church who, for some unknown reason did not love the apostle Paul or appreciate his work. Paul chose to overlook the offense and instead focus on the fact that the gospel is being spread even by those who don't like him, and that brought him joy.

In Paul's life, opportunities arose because of his imprisonment, not in spite of it, and the same goes for our situations today. Make the choice, like Paul, to focus on the mission – the big picture.

2. Paul focused on eternity

Philippians 1:18-26

Remember, Paul's next appointment on Paul's calendar is to face the emperor Nero which might well lead to his execution. Yet, nothing can shake Paul. If you kill him, he'll be with Christ, and that's a win; if you free him, he'll continue to preach Christ that will be a win; if you imprison him, he'll preach to the prisoners and guards, and that will be a win. He says for him, to live is Christ. That is, Christ is everything to him. But to die is gain; if he dies, he'll gain more of Christ. Paul was so focused on eternity he couldn't decide which he desired more- to continue living or to die because he knew what awaited him in eternity, and that made him rejoice.

If you live just for the here and now and you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ, then for you, to die is loss, incredible loss. But for those who know the Lord Jesus, for them, to die is gain. Now, why is death gain for the child of God?

Because what awaits you is far better than anything this world has to offer. You can think of the most amazing things, you can take your imagination to the outermost limits and max it out, and when your brain goes tilt, you haven't even begun to realize what God has for you in heaven. **1 Corinthians 2:9**

If you're a child of God, then death takes you to be with the Lord. When you focus on the truth that that is your ultimate destiny no matter what happens in life, then, like Paul, you will be able to rejoice in all circumstances.

3. Paul focused on Encouraging others

Philippians 1:27-30

Paul chose not to dwell on his very real, very serious situation, but rather, he decided to invest in the lives of others and encourage them. Paul is taking the time to encourage the believers in Philippi. He knew the persecution they were facing and that more was coming their way. Paul told them to stick together. He knew the benefit of having others standing right with us as we fight the battles of life.

While in prison, Paul thought about others because he loved them. He prayed for them, encouraged them, gave them guidance.

What happened to Paul's body was out of his control, how his future played out was out of his control, his reputation on the streets was out of his control. What was in his control is what he chose to focus on and whether or not he chose to rejoice.

Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- What was the reason for the way that Paul was being treated by the guards? In what way was God using the power of the roman authorities for Paul's advantage?
- What does it mean that to die is gain? Provide an explanation of the heart of this comment.
- How can you be an encouragement to others during times of struggle? How can you help others to continue to rejoice?
- Describe a time when someone else was able to help you choose to rejoice during a desperate time.