

Philippians 1

12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, ^b that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. **13** As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard ^c and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. **14** And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. **16** The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. **17** The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. **18** But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, **19** for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. ^d **20** I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. **21** For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. **22** If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! **23** I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; **24** but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. **25** Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, **26** so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

The church in Philippi was the first Jesus community that Paul started in eastern Europe

Paul sent this letter to them during one of his many imprisonments for a very practical reason. The Philippians had sent one of their members, Epaphroditus, to take a financial gift to Paul and to support him in prison. Paul sent this letter back with Epaphroditus to say thanks for the generous gift and address the community.

We saw earlier that Paul considered himself to be a bondservant (or bond slave) of Christ and we took a look at what that meant. Here, we see a great illustration of what that actually looks like.

Paul's goal, no matter the cost, was to serve Jesus by preaching the gospel. He did not allow persecution, suffering, beatings, or even prison to deter him from his purpose. **Instead of complaining about his chains, he sees them as a means through which the gospel is advancing.**

We also see that Paul's attitude influences those around him. His chains serve as a testimony, inspiring others to proclaim the gospel boldly. **Our response to adversity can have a profound impact on those watching us.** When we navigate trials with faith and trust, we become living testimonies of God's grace and faithfulness. In our own trials, we can also find encouragement to seek the purpose God may have in our challenges. We can often feel trapped by our circumstances. Like something or someone is keeping us from living the life we were made for. Paul teaches us that God can use whatever circumstances, whatever chains or prisons to further the gospel. He can use them for His glory.

This should spark great joy in our hearts. One of the greatest longings of every person is to have a sense of purpose. So often it seems like certain circumstances can keep us from fulfilling it. **As believers, our**

greatest purpose is to know God and to make Him known. These are two things that circumstances cannot take away!

Matthew 6

33But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

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Acts 28

23They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus.

True freedom is the confidence of eternity with Jesus! *This confidence gives us the strength we need to endure the trials of this world for the sake of God's Kingdom.*

Philippians 1

21For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Galatians 2

20I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

3 questions

What are you living for?

Who are you living for?

What is your great purpose in life?