

The Shared Life

Discussion Questions

Paul writes in Philippians 1 that his imprisonment actually advanced the gospel rather than hindering it -- in what ways have you seen God use a difficult or confining circumstance in your own life to accomplish something you could not have done in easier conditions?

The sermon describes courage not as the absence of fear but as doing the work and trusting Christ with the outcome -- what is a specific area of your life right now where you are being called to act courageously while surrendering control of the results to God?

Paul declares in Philippians 1:21 that for him to live is Christ and to die is gain -- how would your daily priorities, decisions, and relationships look different if Christ were truly the organizing center of your life rather than one commitment among many?

The sermon distinguishes between the plan of salvation and the broader gospel, describing the gospel as God's work to restore humans to union with him and communion with others -- how does this larger understanding of the gospel change the way you think about your responsibility to the people around you?

Ephesians 4:1-3 calls believers to humility, gentleness, and patience as the practical expression of living worthy of the gospel -- which of these three qualities is most difficult for you personally, and what do you think that difficulty reveals about where you need to grow?

The pastor described the danger of 'dating the church' rather than making a full commitment to a local body of believers -- what fears or reservations tend to hold people back from full commitment, and how does the gospel speak directly to those fears?

Psalm 23 was used to illustrate what it looks like when Christ is truly your life -- which image or phrase from that psalm resonates most deeply with your current season of life, and why?

The Greek word “synathluntes”, translated as 'striving together,' paints a picture of believers contending side by side rather than against one another -- where do you see the greatest temptation within the church to turn that shared striving inward into conflict rather than outward toward the mission?

Jude 3 urges believers to contend earnestly for the faith once entrusted to the saints -- in a culture with many competing causes and voices demanding our energy and attention, how do you discern which battles are truly worth contending for as a follower of Christ?

The sermon closes with the image of co-contenders standing side by side for the faith of the gospel -- who are the people in your life who function as your co-contending partners, and what intentional steps could you take to deepen those relationships so that you are genuinely striving together rather than simply attending the same church?

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5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Day 1: Courage in Every Circumstance

Reading: Philippians 1:19-21

Devotional: Paul wrote from a prison cell, yet his concern was not his comfort but Christ's honor. He did not ask for an easy outcome. He asked for courage. That is a striking prayer. When life presses in on us from every direction, our instinct is to pray for relief. Paul prayed for sufficient courage so that Christ would be exalted in his body, whether in life or in death. The outcome was not his to control. His conduct was. Ask yourself today: am I praying for easier circumstances, or am I praying for the courage to honor Christ inside the circumstances I already have?

Day 2: The Commitment That Changes Everything

Reading: Psalm 23:1-6

Devotional: David described a life fully surrendered to the care of a faithful shepherd. Green pastures, still waters, restored souls, and even the darkest valleys all fall under the sovereign watch of God. Paul echoed this same reality when he declared that to live is Christ. That kind of commitment is not mustered through willpower. It is the fruit of trusting a shepherd who has never once abandoned his flock. When Christ is genuinely your life, not just your Sunday routine, everything changes. Your provision, your protection, and your peace all flow from him. Where are you still trying to be your own shepherd?

Day 3: Conduct Worthy of the Gospel

Reading: Ephesians 4:1-3

Devotional: Paul urged the Ephesians to live a life worthy of the calling they had received, marked by humility, gentleness, patience, and love. These are not suggestions for the spiritually advanced. They are the everyday fabric of a life shaped by the gospel. The gospel is not simply the doorway through which we enter salvation. It is the standard by which we live once we are inside. Because Christ was humble, gentle, and patient toward us, we are called to extend those same qualities to the people around us. Your life either confirms or contradicts the gospel you claim. What does your conduct say about the Christ you follow?

Day 4: Hope That Holds in Hard Seasons

Reading: Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 5:3-5

Devotional: God's plans for his people are rooted in hope, not harm. That promise was given to a people living in exile, far from home, surrounded by uncertainty. Paul built on this same foundation in Romans, reminding us that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance produces character, and character produces hope. Hope, Paul wrote, does not put us to shame. It does not disappoint. It is anchored not in favorable circumstances but in the love of God poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Whatever season you are walking through right now, the plans God holds for you have not changed. His hope is not fragile. It holds.

Day 5: Co-Contending Together for the Faith

Reading: Philippians 1:27; Jude 1:3

Devotional: The Christian life was never designed to be lived alone. Paul called the Philippians to stand firm in one spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel. Jude echoed that same call, urging believers to contend earnestly for the faith once entrusted to all the saints. We are not spectators. We are not solo competitors. We are co-contenders, standing side by side, fighting not against each other but alongside each other for the sake of the gospel. Look around at your church community. Those people are your partners in this work. Who in your life needs you to stand beside them this week?