



Sermon Text: Philippians 1:12-30

Sermon Date: February 26, 2017

Paul possessed a rugged, unshakeable joy. In our text, we discover that his joy endures in all things because he places more importance upon the gospel than himself. We saw this in three ways.

THE ADVANCE OF THE GOSPEL IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PERSONAL REPUTATION (12-18)

Paul writes this letter from the shameful confines of a Roman prison cell. His reputation is damaged. He is branded as a troublemaker and a criminal. Even some Christians throughout Rome were set against him, preaching the gospel in such a way to afflict him in his imprisonment. Yet, Paul's reputation is of little concern to him. His greater delight is that the gospel is advancing because of his imprisonment. He doesn't seethe in anger or wallow in self-pity; he rejoices that Christ is proclaimed.

THE HONOR OF CHRIST IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PERSONAL SECURITY (19-26)

As Paul writes, he is uncertain of his future. Will he be released or executed as a traitor? He doesn't know. But in this time of profound insecurity, Paul's joy endures because the honor of Christ is what's most important to him. Above all, he wants Christ to be honored—in his life or death. He honors Christ in living by pouring himself out in others-focused, Christ-exalting service. He honors Christ in dying by seeing death as gain. He says, "My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better." Christ will be honored no matter the outcome of his trial; therefore, Paul's joy endures.

THE WORTH OF THE GOSPEL IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PERSONAL SAFETY (27-30)

In this section, Paul turns from his situation to that of the Philippian church. They too are in a season of suffering. Christianity is not safe for them. Yet through his instruction, Paul calls them to prioritize the worth of the gospel above their safety. "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ." Paul encourages them to suffer in such a way that demonstrates the supreme importance of the gospel, rejoicing that they have been granted the opportunity to "also suffer for his [Jesus'] sake."

A gospel-shaped perspective liberates our joy from our circumstances by attaching our joy to our unshakeable victory in Christ. When our joy is rooted in the gospel, shame can't touch it, uncertainty can't stifle it, suffering can't stop it because all those things—shame, uncertainty, suffering—have been overcome by Christ.

Pastor Justin ended by highlighting how we can press home the truths of the gospel in just one of the areas mentioned above—our personal reputations. He showed us how the gospel shapes our reputation. Like Augustine, we too want the Lord to deliver us from the lust to always vindicate ourselves. We can be delivered by not just knowing, but *feeling* the daily reality of the two messages the gospel declares.

1. **The gospel declares a message of judgment:** In the Cross, God judges and condemns us. Guilt, failure, unworthiness, shame, the gospel reveals these to be our true reputation in and of ourselves. Our joy will never be free from the opinion of others until we own the Cross's judgment.
2. **The gospel declares a message of justification:** Yet the Cross also reminds us that the Son of God loves us and gave himself up for us. He took our curse, our shame, our guilt, our unworthiness so that He could love and accept us. In the Cross, God has spoken an unchangeable word about us – we are justified. Alfred Poirier says, "If you truly take this to heart, the whole world can stand against you, denounce you, or criticize you, and you will be able to reply, 'If God has justified me, who can condemn me?'"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?**
2. **How is your joy doing? Is it rugged and enduring? What are some unsteady foundations you base your joy on?**
3. **Why is it necessary to first fully own the Cross's message of judgment for you to grasp fully its message of justification?**