

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. *Enjoy discovering more about Him!*

"JOY THAT ADVANCES THE GOSPEL" | PHILIPPIANS 1:1-18 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

- **What is something you enjoy about this season?**

"A Deep Love for People" Philippians 1: 1-11

Paul is thankful for the Philippians because they share a love of Jesus and a partnership in the gospel that he prays will bear fruit.

- **What is the difference between being with Christians and partnering with Christians?**
- **Who has God placed in your life that brings you joy because of shared faith?**

"Confidence in God's Work" Philippians 1:6

Paul is sure that God will complete the good work He started in His people.

- **What is hard about trusting in God to finish in what He started?**
- **What helps believers to remember God's faithfulness in finishing His good work?**

"Gospel First, Circumstances Second" Philippians 1: 12-18

Paul finds that his imprisonment has actually helped advanced the gospel and something to thank God for.

- **What are ways God uses difficult circumstances for greater purposes?**
- **What would it look like to see a current situation as an opportunity instead of an obstacle?**

"Christ Connection: The Defeat Was Victory"

Jesus' death on the cross looked like the end but it was actually salvation for the world.

- **How can Jesus' victory through death be encouragement for a struggle you're facing?**

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

While Paul is in prison, he is thankful God still has a purpose for him there and can use it to advance the gospel. His joy is greater knowing God sent him others to partner with as they live for Jesus in difficult circumstances.

- **Who are people you should encourage because they are partnering with you in your faith?**
- **What are setbacks or restrictions that you are facing that God could be using to position you for His purposes?**
- **Ask God to remind you of His faithfulness and to trust in His purposes in your circumstances.**

Joy That Advances the Gospel

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those watching online 10am.
- B. Slide1-5 AP: EVPRC. Starting Point. CK Volunteers. At Risk. Widows Fellowship.
- C. Slide6 Baby Dedication: Christian Ray Garcia.
- D. Slide7 Ordination: I wanted to take a moment to share something **really meaningful** for us as a church family. We'll be ordaining 2 of our own soon, **Jason Bell** and **Cam Seely**, men we've had the privilege of serving alongside, watching grow, and seeing God's hand on in very real ways. This is a special moment not just for **them**, but for **all of us**. [we'll be ordaining Jason first, followed by Cam in May]
 - 1. Take a moment to personally congratulate them when you see them.
- E. Prayer: TY **Your** love for us goes way beyond our **salvation**. That you desire us to possess **Unshakable Joy**. Please show us: how to find it, fight for it, embrace it, and not let it go.

II. Intro:

- A. PHILIPPIANS - *Unshakable Joy*.
 - 1. Books Overall Theme: **Joy** is found **in Christ**, **not** in *circumstances*.
 - 2. We as believers have a **countercultural view of Joy** - As christians we believe in **joy**, we believe in **pleasure**, we believe in **satisfaction**.
 - 3. We just have a **different source** of this **Joy** than the outside world. It's **deeper**, more **abiding**, it's **built** on truth. [so, It's a **letter of Joy** (16 x's) not because of something but **Someone** (JC/CJ 18's ch.1)]
- B. **Big Idea**: What happens to me **matters less than** what **God** is doing through me.
- C. **Illustration**: You ever had something completely ruin your plans?
 - 1. A trip you were excited about, canceled. **A delay that throws everything off**. Something breaks at the worst possible time.
 - 2. And your first thought is: *"This is getting in the way of my life."*

3. **But** every once in a while - later you realize: ***That interruption actually led to something better!***

D. **Maybe**, you avoided something worse? **Or maybe** God used that moment in a way you couldn't see at the time? **Or maybe you met someone you never would have met?** [At age 17, senior yr, I got a speeding ticket, **or** the time I ran a police officer off the road ... *accidentally*. I had to go to Traffic School/Norwalk. It became an excuse to talk to *a cute cheerleader* in my school. **Not** only that, I said, *why don't I pick you up so we don't have to both drive out here*. **And It Worked! I married here!**]

1. Traffic Ticket - I found my wife! ***That interruption actually led to something better.*** We almost always see *interruptions* as **obstacles** - God often sees them as **opportunities!**

E. **Philippi** became a **colony** of *the Roman Empire* in 31bc/Acts 16:12. **What's a Colony? For our citizenship is in heaven** (3:20), Some translate it *we are a colony of heaven*.

1. Rome would normally send out **300 veteran soldiers** who served their time, w/their families **and** settle them in a strategic location.

2. They'd **speak Roman language**, wear **Roman dress**, have **Roman ceremonies**, & **Roman customs**. They were stubbornly & unalterably **ROMAN**.

a) Just as the **Roman colonists** never forget that *they belong to Rome* - **You** must never forget that **you** are *citizens of heaven*; & *yur conduct must match yur citizenship*.

F. **Slide8** Paul is writing **Philippians from prison**. [Imprisoned in **Caesarea**, 2 yrs wrote *Eph, Colos, Philemon*. Imprisoned in **Rome**, 2 yrs, wrote *Philippians*]

1. **Slide9 Map**: orig met them on his **2nd missionary journey** when he was **out starting Jesus communities**. (see Acts 16). Now writing them 10 yrs later.

a) Macedonian call. Destination Europe. Duty to share the gospel. [9 m. inland]

2. Being in chains **wasn't a minor inconvenience**, **not a delay**, **but a full stop** on his ministry - at least from the outside. **And yet...** He's full of **joy**. **Why?**

a) **Because Paul has learned something most of us are still learning: God's purposes are bigger than our plans**. [prison can cut of a man from men, **but** not from **God**]

G. Slide10 This morning we'll take 1:1-18 - **Joy That Advances the Gospel.**

III. Slide11 **1. A DEEP LOVE FOR PEOPLE (1:1-11) Read**

A. Paul opens **warmly**, *not correcting*, but **celebrating**. *I thank my God - I always pray with joy.* [this church *partnered* with him in *the gospel*]

1. Paul *shows his hand* in his **opening prayer**, giving us the **topic** and the **tone** of the whole letter. Find **joy**, in *prayer*, in **Christ**, and in **Community**.

a) **Joy** is often tied to **people**, not *possessions*.

B. Slide12 A writing often attributed to **Cyprian** from the **3rd century** says, *"This seems a cheerful world, Donatus, when I view it from this fair garden under the shadow of these vines. But if I climbed some great mountain and looked out over the wide lands, you know very well what I would see; thieves on the high road, pirates on the seas, in the amphitheaters men murdered to please, the applauding crowds, under all roofs misery, and selfishness. It really is a bad world, Donatus, an incredibly bad world. Yet, in the midst of it, I have found a quiet and holy people. They have discovered a joy which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of this sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not ... these people, Donatus, are the Christians ... and I am one of them."*

C. Slide13 (2) **Partnership in the gospel** - *partnership* = **Koinonia/fellowship**. It's *"being united around a common mission."* Picture two friends that say, *'we both like baking sourdough, let's start a business together.'* Or *a coffee shop together.* When you get friends united in a mission, you get **joy**. What was Paul and the **Philippian believers mission** they were **united** in? **Getting the gospel to people!**

1. C.S.Lewis said, *"Friendships begin when one asks the question what you too?"* It's **commonality**. We as believers have a stronger ... **you too?**

D. (Pstr Tony Merida re: *"partnership in the gospel"*) If you ever **worked in a restaurant** you know there's a big difference between **customers** and **coworkers**.

Yet, a lot of people treat the church like **customers** rather than **coworkers**.

Don't look at the church like **you're** a **customer**, **where** we're trying to **serve and please you**, **and** if you *like the service* you'll **give us a tip**.

1. **We are a band of brothers and sisters** who work all week, and then gather together each week, **to encourage one another and sing praise to God for His grace.**
 2. **We are coworkers.** If you have christian **friendships**, **but not on mission together** there's going to be **joy you're missing.** **But**, if you have friendships built around **gospel and doing mission together** that forms deep abiding relationships. [Paul says, *let's suffer together. Let's rejoice together. This partner in finances together.* which they did in ch.4].
 - a) **Is that happening in your life?** Do you have friendships **rooted in the gospel**, suffering alongside of others, in the mission, giving financially, praying for one another. **That's what a team** looks like, **That's what co-laborers** look like. **That's what a church** looks like.
- E. **Slide14 (7,8) Note Paul's emotions:** feel - I hold you in my heart, I yearn for you, with the affection of Christ Jesus.
1. I want to commend unto you, **not only the theology and discipline of Paul, but also his emotion and passion** as well.
- F. Who has God placed in your life that brings you **joy** because of shared faith?

IV. Slide15a **2. CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S WORK (6)**

- A. *And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*
- B. **Slide15b** God starts it. God sustains it. God finishes it. [salv-sanct-glor]
1. **Your growth** is not just up to you, it's anchored in **God's faithfulness.**
 2. **Your story with God** didn't begin with **your decision** - it began with **His.**
 3. God **isn't** just changing what you do (behavior mod / ch attendance) - He's changing who you **are.** **But why am I not further along?** - **God is more committed to your transformation than your timeline.**
- C. (6) Martin Luther said, *I believe in two days: Today, and that day.*

D. Where do you need to trust that God is still working, even if you don't see it?

V. Slide16 3. GOSPEL FIRST. CIRCUMSTANCES SECOND. (12-18)

A. This is the heart of the passage. Paul says, *My chains have actually **advanced** the gospel.*

1. **So** What if your chain **isn't** just holding you back? - *What if it's actually **positioning** you? - What if it's creating a **platform**?*

a) The same thing that feels like it's **restricting** you... may be the very thing God is using to **reposition** you.

2. Paul didn't **deny** the chains, he just **redefined** their **purpose**.

a) In Paul's case it was **the Imperial guards** *in the whole praetorium* (Lt.) **were hearing the gospel**. **Other believers** were becoming bold.

(1) What looked like a **setback**, became a **platform**.

(2) **Slide17** You **can't** imprison the Message!

b) His chains were not **stopping** the gospel, they're **servicing** it.

B. What situation in your life feels like a **setback** right now?

VI. Slide18a 4. THEME OF THIS CHAPTER?

A. God Uses **Difficult Circumstances** for **Greater Purposes**.

1. We tend to ask: *Why is this happening to me?*

2. Paul asks: *How can this be used for the gospel?*

B. **Contrast**: [Our Default **vs.** Paul's Perspective]

1. This is **ruining** my plans. This is **advancing** God's purpose. Get me out of this. Use me **in** this. Why me? What now, God?

C. **Slide18b** **Joy grows** when your life is about **something bigger than yourself**.

1. What if the thing you want **out of**... is the very thing **God wants to use**?

D. What would it look like to see your current situation as an **assignment** instead of an *obstacle*?

VII.Slide19 5. CHRIST CONNECTION

A. Paul's mindset didn't come out of *nowhere*. *It came from Jesus*.

1. Jesus' Example: The cross looked like **defeat**. It was actually **Victory**.

a) What looked like **the end**... became **salvation**. He brings **life** through what looks like **loss**.

2. The same God who **used a cross** - can **use your circumstances**.

B. Where do you struggle to believe God can bring something good?

C. Slide20 Closing: *Joy is not found when everything goes your way... Joy is found when you know **God is at work**, even when things don't.*

D. Prayer: Father, TY that **You** are the One who **began** the work in us.

And You are **not** going to leave us as **unfinished projects** drifting without purpose.

But instead, we are **held securely** in **Your** hands.

E. Keywords: Gospel. Joy. Philippians.