



Staying Positive in Prison

Pastor Jeremy McGarity

"... but the angel reassured them. 'Don't be afraid!' he said. 'I bring you good news that will bring **great joy** to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!'"

LUKE 2:10-11 | NLT

"And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News.

For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ.

And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear."

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-14 | NLT

"It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives.

They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News.

Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me.

But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice.

For I know that as you pray for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me, this will lead to my deliverance."

PHILIPPIANS 1:15-19 | NLT

"For I fully expect and hope that I will never be ashamed, but that I will continue to be bold for Christ, as I have been in the past. And I trust that my life will bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die.

For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better.

But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So I really don't know which is better.

I'm torn between two desires: I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me.

But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live."

PHILIPPIANS 1:20-24 | NLT

"Knowing this, I am convinced that I will remain alive so I can continue to help all of you grow and experience the joy of your faith.

And when I come to you again, you will have even more reason to take pride in Christ Jesus because of what he is doing through me."

PHILIPPIANS 1:25-26 | NLT

Four Essentials to Staying Positive in Prison

I. I need to keep the right perspective. (v. 12-14)

- **Every problem is an opportunity.**

"Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel."

PHILIPPIANS 1:12 | NLT

When I face problems with the right perspective:

- **It witnesses to my Oikos.** (v. 13)
- **It encourages believers.** (v. 14)

"And we know that in ALL things God works for the good of those who love Him ..."

ROMANS 8:28 | NIV

REMEMBER: God has a purpose behind every problem.

II. I need to live by my **priorities** . (v. 15-18)

- My life can be based on my **problems**
or my **priorities** .

Paul's response to his critics:

"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."

PHILIPPIANS 1:18 | NIV

"In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success."

PROVERBS 3:6 | LB

REMEMBER: Focus on what **really** **counts** .

III. I need **strength** to thrive daily. (v. 19-20)

"... for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed ..."

PHILIPPIANS 1:19 | NIV

"I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me."

PHILIPPIANS 4:13 | GNT

REMEMBER: With God's strength, **nothing**
can overtake me.

IV. I need a clear **purpose** to live for. (v. 20-26)

Paul's reason for living:

"For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

PHILIPPIANS 1:21 | NIV

"... Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14 | NIV

REMEMBER: J esus first

O thers second

Y ourself third

NLT = NEW LIVING TRANSLATION, NIV = NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION,
LB = LIVING BIBLE, GNT = GOOD NEWS TRANSLATION.

Small Group Questions

- 1** Share one thing that stood out to you in this week's sermon and why?
- 2** Have you ever experienced a challenge in your life that made you lose perspective? What lessons, if any, did you learn from that hard experience?
- 3** Have you ever been inspired or encouraged by witnessing a fellow believer go through a tough time and still have joy? Share about that experience.
- 4** Read Philippians 1:18-20. How has prayer helped you gain strength and stay positive in the midst of a troubling time in your life?
- 5** How can we be praying for you this week?