

Main Idea

When life goes off script, God is still at work. What feels like a setback may actually be God's strategy to grow us, shape our character, and advance His purposes—unfinished stories included.

1) Opening Question (Icebreaker)

Leader: Ask but also be willing to open up first so it sets the tone; Keep this light at first — not everyone will share heavy stories immediately.

- Think of a time when something didn't go according to plan. Looking back, can you now see any good that came from it?

2) Key Idea Recap

A look back at Sunday's message:

- "What looks like a setback is actually God's strategy."
- Daniel's life went off script, Paul's life went off script... our lives go off script.
- What stood out to you most from this sermon?

3) Bible Reading

Leader: Have someone read each passage aloud from the NIV or NLT

Philippians 1:6

"Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

- What stands out to you from this verse?
- What is God's responsibility in this verse... and what is yours?

Philippians 1:9–11

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God."

- What stands out to you from these verses?
- Discuss the dangers of knowledge without love and love without knowledge in a Christian's life?
- Paul links love and knowledge. Why do you think both are necessary for spiritual growth?
 - Does your personality tend to lean into more love and less knowledge or more knowledge and less love?
 - How can you marry your pursuit of knowledge and love of God together for greater spiritual growth?

Philippians 1:12–14 (NIV)

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

- What stands out to you in these verses?
- How does Paul interpret his imprisonment differently that we might?

- What circumstance in your life right now is your “imprisonment?”
- How do you interpret this situation differently than Paul would?
- If Paul were in your circumstance, how would he write about what God is doing? (“*What has happened to me has actually served to advance the good news....*”)

4) Personal Application

Leader: *Some may share heavy stories. Allow space. Do not fix. Listen first. Share what may be appropriate in a group sharing and if necessary, invite the person to a personal 1-1 follow-up.*

Let's move from the Bible text to our own story.

1. Where has your life gone “off script” recently or in the past?
2. What emotions did that season bring — disappointment, confusion, anger, grief?
3. Looking back, can you see any way God used that season?
4. If you are still in the middle of it, what would it look like to trust God in the unfinished story?
5. Is there an area right now where you need to say, “I don’t see the good yet, but I choose to trust You anyway”?

5) Additional Scripture Connections

Leader: *To deepen biblical grounding, you can introduce one or two of these and encourage them to memorize them, especially Romans 8:28.*

- **Romans 8:28** Read aloud from the Bible for full verse:
 - “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him...”
- **James 1:2-4** Read aloud from the Bible for full verse:
 - “Consider it pure joy... whenever you face trials... because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance...”
- How do these verses reinforce Paul’s message in Philippians 1?

6) Challenge for the Week

Group challenge:

- Read Philippians chapter 1 once this week.
- Ask God: “Where are You at work in my story?”
- Pursue God this week in Bible and Prayer with KNOWLEDGE and LOVE combined; to KNOW Him.
- If you are not in a Small Group, please join one to discuss the sermon more deeply.

7) Closing Prayer

- Thank God that He finishes what He starts.
- Ask for faith in unresolved situations.
- Pray for courage to trust God’s strategy in setbacks.