

JOURNEY TO OZ "IF I ONLY HAD COURAGE" PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26

This Week's Core Competency

Giving Away My Life – I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes. Romans 12:1 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.*

Paul is clearly a radical, perhaps unique, example of a person who spent his life fulfilling God's purposes—especially with respect to proclaiming the gospel. We catch a glimpse of "how so" in Philippians 1:12-26. The Philippians are examples, too, because of "their partnership" with the apostle "in the gospel" (v. 5).

The apostle is under house arrest in Rome after a series of harrowing events that began with a beating at the hands of a Jewish mob in Jerusalem, followed by his arrest and trial before the Sanhedrin, followed by a plot to kill him, followed by his trial before Felix, followed two years later by his trial before Festus, followed by his appearance before King Agrippa, followed by his trip to Rome which ended in shipwreck and an extended stay on Malta, followed, finally, by his arrival and incarceration in Rome (Ac 21:17-28:16). Paul's epic odyssey began in May, A. D. 57 in Jerusalem; it ended nearly three years later in February, A. D. 60 in Rome. Two years after that he was still sitting in prison waiting for his day in Caesar's court.

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

— Paul

Commenting on his circumstances, he tells his Philippian readers, "Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel" (1:12). Talk about looking on the bright side! And even though some of his brothers, who were inspired by Paul to preach Christ, held something against him and preached out of selfish ambition with a view to making trouble for him, he still continued to rejoice (v. 18). How was he able to do that? Now we get a glimpse of his secret. "For I know," he says, "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" (v. 19). The Greek word translated "deliverance" in the NIV is rightly translated "salvation" in other versions. Paul was confident that no matter the outcome of his temporal circumstances his eternal destiny was secure. Then he goes on to say "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (v. 21). His single-minded focus on giving away his life to advance the gospel exalted enabled him to put his personal circumstances in proper perspective. Too often the things that matter to us are not the things that matter to God, and vice versa. Making the things that matter to God matter most to us, like Paul did, will enable us to be content regardless of our circumstances, like he was. As one author says, "The heart of everything, of course, is Paul's utter devotion to Christ. And his desire that Christ alone be 'magnified' in his life, however present circumstances turn out. Here surely is a word for all seasons, if we also are to be effective bearers of the gospel in our day" (Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT, 138, 39).

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Commenting on their partnership, he reminds them how they helped him in "the early days" (4:14). "As you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent to me aid again and again when I was in need" (4:15, 16). Afterward, the church also sent him a gift at Corinth (Ac 18:5; 2Co 11:9) and then, most recently, another at Rome (4:18). More importantly, men and women there worked for the advance of the gospel in Philippi. Epaphroditus was their messenger sent to take care of Paul's needs in Rome; he almost died for the work of Christ (2:25-30). Euodia and Syntyche were two women who "contended" at Paul's side "in the cause of the gospel" (4:3) along with Clement as well as others whom he calls "my fellow workers" (4:3). These were all giving away their lives with Paul.

For Discussion

Don and Gloria are retired. They worship regularly, are connected to a Community Group and Home Group, and give generously; nevertheless, they are looking for other ways to give away their lives. Where do they start looking?

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Philippians 1:12-26

12 Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14 Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16 The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18 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.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19 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. 20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.
(NIV(c)1984)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Underline "I want you to know" in v. 12.
- * Box "as a result" indicating *result* in v. 13.
- * Circle "palace guard" in v. 13.
- * Number the occurrences of "chains" in vv. 13, 14, 17.
- * Bracket "for Christ" in v. 13.
- * Box "because" indicating *reason* in v. 14.
- * Bracket "in the Lord" in v. 14.
- * Draw a line through "of God" in v. 14.
- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 15, 18, 20, 24.
- * Highlight "Christ is preached" in v. 18.
- * Circle "deliverance" in v. 19.
- * Highlight v. 21.
- * Box "so that" indicating *purpose* in v. 26.

day **2**

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. What had happened to Paul?
2. What made the outcome of what had happened to him so unexpected?
3. In what sense was he "in chains *for* Christ" (lit., "my chains in Christ")?
4. More specifically, describe the two-fold result of what had happened.
5. Explain the *contrast* in verse 15.
6. Comment on the *method*, *message*, and *motives* of Paul's rivals in Rome.
7. Explain the *reason* why Paul continued to rejoice in such adverse circumstances.
8. Put Paul's expectation and hope expressed in verse 20 in your own words.
9. Paul said, "For me to live is Christ." How so? (See v. 22).
10. He also said, "and to die is gain." Again how so? (See v. 23).
11. **Discussion:** What did Paul think of his chances of being released following his trial?

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Paul wrote Philippians from Rome while imprisoned there. His last recorded face to face meeting with the Philippians (Ac 20:6) occurred five years earlier when he stopped in Philippi on his return to Jerusalem, April 6-14, A.D. 57. He wrote his letter to them in the spring of A.D. 62 (H. Wayne House, *Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament*, 131, 32). A lot had happened in the meantime. "Most likely he included all the events from his imprisonment at Jerusalem through his imprisonment at Rome. There were the riot, the two-year imprisonment at Caesarea, the appeal to Caesar, the threat on his life, the trip to Rome with its shipwreck, his house-arrest and restricted freedom, and the impending trial. However, the focus is on the Roman events" (Richard R. Melick, Jr., *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, NAC, 70).

Although Philippians 1:12-26 is made up of three paragraphs, it can be divided into two parts. On the structure of the passage one author writes, "The Philippians were concerned about Paul's condition in prison, as their gift to him through Epaphroditus shows (2:25; 4:10, 14); thus an important reason for Paul's letter, which he sent back with Epaphroditus (2:24, 28-29), was to let them know his circumstances. He does this in 1:12-26. In the first part of this section (vv. 12-18a) he describes how his present circumstances have 'served to advance (eis prokopen) the gospel' (v. 12), and in the second he reflects theologically on the two possibilities, death or release, that await him after his arraignment (vv. 18b-26). This second part of the section concludes with Paul's statement that he believes he will be released for the Philippians' 'progress (eis ten . . . prokopen) and joy in the faith' (v. 25)" (Frank Thielman, *The NIV Application Commentary: Philippians*, 58).

In the first paragraph (vv. 12-14) Paul tells his readers that contrary to what they might have expected, everything that had happened to him actually served to advance the gospel. First, the gospel advanced inside and outside of the prison by word of mouth from soldier to soldier and then to everyone else who had any knowledge of Paul's circumstances. They all knew the apostle was not in prison because he was a criminal. His prison chains indicated something else entirely. He called them "my chains in Christ" because he was a person "in Christ," a disciple related to Christ by faith, and because he

was a person in prison "for Christ," his imprisonment had to do with his Christian faith. And second, the gospel advanced through the preaching of Paul's Christian brothers who were encouraged in the Lord to boldly preach the gospel by the apostle's testimony.

In the second paragraph (vv. 15-18a) Paul explains that the gospel advanced outside the prison despite the ill will of some of its preachers. Apparently, some of those who preached the gospel had something against Paul personally and used his imprisonment as an opportunity to promote themselves and to advance their own agendas. Hard to believe, but they actually tried to make trouble for Paul while he was under house arrest. Paul uses a literary form, *chiasmus*, to contrast the two kinds of evangelism taking place in Rome in response to his imprisonment:

A Some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry (v. 15)

B Others out of good will (v. 15)

B' The latter do so out of love . . . (v. 16)

A' The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition . . . (v. 17)

Paul didn't let their mixed motives bother him, however, because his consuming desire was to see Christ preached, and because he was, Paul rejoiced.

In the final paragraph (vv. 18b-26) Paul reflects on potential outcomes of his trial and expresses confidence that everything that has happened "will turn out for my deliverance," which either refers to his deliverance from prison or ultimate salvation and vindication before Christ. The latter seems more likely given his musings on life and death that follow in verses 20-23. In verse 20 he expresses the confident hope that when he appears before the Roman tribunal he (a la Job and the psalmists of old who trusted in God) will not be put to shame but will have the courage to boldly defend the truth so that in the end Christ will be exalted regardless of the trial's outcome. His confidence is grounded in two facts: their prayers on his behalf and the provision of the Spirit of Christ. In verse 21 he declares "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain" and then goes on in verses 22 and 23 to explain what he meant. If he lives, he will go on serving Christ, and if he dies, he will go to be with Christ—a classic example of a win-win situation. How could he decide between the two? To die and be

with Christ was far better for *him*, but to live and serve Christ was far better for *them*. In the end, he was convinced that he would remain with them for their spiritual progress and for their joy with a view to them boasting in what the Lord had done for and through Paul once he saw them again.

The question, of course, is what relevance do Paul's experience and his reflections on it have for contemporary believers? They were relevant to the Philippians because they were Paul's partners and wanted to know what was going on with

their missionary. What's more, they were relevant to them because they provided an example for them to follow as they worked for the advance of the gospel in Philippi (cf., 3:17). Therein we find their relevance for us. Consider Paul's words to the Philippians in the next paragraph. "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ . . . stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you" (vv. 27, 28).

The Message of the Passage

Courageously continue to advance the gospel, unmoved by your opponents, knowing that one way or another you will be delivered in the end.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about what God wants you to know . . .

–Write about how God wants you to feel . . .

–Write about what God wants you to do . . .

“If I Only Had Courage”

(Use the space below for Sunday's message notes)

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 12 **brothers** Or "brothers and sisters" (TNIV, the NET Bible). "The Greek word may be used for 'brothers and sisters' or 'fellow Christians' as here (cf. *BDAG* 18 s.v. [*adelphos*] 1, where considerable nonbiblical evidence for the plural [*adelfoi*] meaning 'brothers and sisters' is cited)" (the NET Bible, 17^{tn} on Php 1:12).
- v. 12 **I want you** "In Paul's time when people wrote letters whose primary purpose was to inform a friend or family member of their circumstances, the transition from the initial greeting to the letter's crucial information was often made with the statement, 'I want you to know that . . .'" (Thielman, 57; see citation of letter from Theonas, a young soldier, to this mother provided).
- v. 12 **what has happened** Lit., "the things to me," i.e., "my circumstances"; cf., "my situation" (the NET Bible); "this business of mine" (NEB).
- v. 12 **advance** The Gk. word [*prokopen*] connotes "advancement in spite of obstructions and dangers which would block the path of the traveller. The chief obstacle to the fulfillment of Paul's ministry was, at this time, his enforced confinement in the praetorium (1:13). But the unexpected thing is that although his activity has been restricted in this way, the actual imprisonment has resulted in a powerful witness for Christ in the scene of his captivity and a consequent triumph of the gospel in the pagan world (cf., 2 Tim. 2:9)" (Ralph P. Martin, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, TNTC, 70).
- v. 13 **palace guard** Gk. *praetorium*. "The word originated to denote 'the general's tent' or 'the headquarters within a camp,' evolving over time to refer to a governor's palace. By the first Christian century it was frequently used also to denote the Praetorian Guard, the emperor's own elite troops, stationed in Rome. If Paul is in Rome, as is most likely, then he is referring to this guard, since there was no Praetorium (= 'governor's palace') there" (Fee, 113).
- v. 13 **chains for Christ** Perhaps the phrase has a two-fold connotation. "For Christ (lit. 'in Christ') may also be taken to mean that it was Paul's example of the way in which he bore his suffering in Christ, i.e. as a Christian in union with his Lord, that gave point and power to his witness" (Martin, 70; cf., Thielman, 59).
- v. 14 **in the Lord** Rather than "brothers in the Lord have been encouraged" perhaps "brothers have been encouraged in the Lord" is better (see Fee, 116; cf., ESV, the NET Bible, TEV, NRSV).
- v. 19 **help given by . . .** Lit., "the supply of the Spirit" (NKJV). The question is whether "Spirit" is the subject or object of "supply." Most translations take Spirit to be the subject and therefore the "Supplier" of "help." Others argue for the sense "the supply, or help, that consists of the Spirit" (see Melick, 82, who's inclined to the first, and Fee, 132-35, as well as, Thielman, 76, who argue for the second).
- v. 19 **deliverance** Either his deliverance from prison or his salvation in some other sense. Paul's allusion to Job 13:13-18 together with his mention of life and death in verses 20, 21 suggest he's convinced whether he's acquitted and released or not he will ultimately be saved and vindicated before Christ. "The result is a sentence which reads (paraphrased): 'This whole affair will turn out to my ultimate salvation and present vindication, when, through your prayers and the supply of the Spirit of Christ my earnest expectation and hope are realized at my trial and not only am I not brought to shame but in a very open (or bold) way Christ is magnified in every way—whether I am given 'life' or sentenced to death'" (Fee, 132).
- v. 20 **be ashamed** Or "put to shame" (NRSV; NET Bible footnote). "Here Paul uses the language of the Greek rendering of the Psalms. They affirm that 'no one whose hope is in [the Lord] will ever be put to shame [*kataischyno*], but they will be put to shame [*aischyno*] who are treacherous without excuse' (Ps. 25:3). The Psalms often also speak of exalting (*megaloyno*) the Lord (Pss. 34:3; 35:27; 39:16; 57:11; 69:30; 70:4; 92:5; 104:1, 24; 126:2-3). Paul's intention, then, is not to deny that he or anyone else will be ashamed of his conduct in the test awaiting him, but [to deny] that God will allow him to be put to shame before the forces of evil ranged against him. He will ultimately triumph over evil because his hope is in the Lord" (Thielman, 77; see also Fee, 135, 36).
- v. 21 **to live is Christ . . .** "This is rhetoric at its best; its potency, however, lies not in form alone, but in its singularly focused affirmations. If Paul is released, as he expects (vv. 24-26; 2:24), that means he will continue ('now as always') to be a man 'in Christ, participating in Christ's sufferings (3:10) and service him in the gospel . . . Likewise, if Paul is executed, that means the goal of 'living' has thus been reached: he will finally have 'gained' Christ (as v. 23 verifies)" (Fee, 141).
- v. 22 **Yet** "A follow-up to v. 21 could have gone in one of two directions: either Paul could contemplate what the two alternatives would mean for him; or he could contemplate the two alternatives themselves, as to which he might prefer. What he seems to have done is both" (144).
- v. 26 **joy** Gk. *kauchema*, "to boast or be proud." "Paul's usage comes directly out of the LXX, especially from Jer 9:23-24, where the truly wise person 'boasts' not in 'wisdom, might, or wealth,' but 'in the Lord'" (Fee, 154). When Paul returns to Philippi, he anticipates believers there will "boast in the Lord," i.e., in what he has done in and for Paul.
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Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

In our text for this series we have been studying the letter Paul wrote to the Philippians while he was in prison. In today's passage, Paul models a necessary skill that, as parents, we should develop. Despite his dire circumstances, Paul was able to encourage the Philippians and point them to Christ. He reframed his circumstances in light of God's greater purpose. Unfortunately the world gives us many opportunities to reframe events for our kids. From natural disasters to social injustices to acts of violence and cruelty, our kids are inundated with bad news. Even if we can shield them from tragedy in our culture, they will encounter a bully at school or a personal/family crisis. Because we serve a Sovereign God, we have the privilege of using every situation to help them develop their spiritual muscles. We can help our families view every situation through the spiritual lens of God's goodness and fairness. When we live in such a way, we become a beacon of hope to those around us who have none. Just as Paul used his imprisonment to advance the gospel, our families have the responsibility of refocusing a lost world on our loving Savior. Look for opportunities this week to reframe a bad event and lead your child's heart to God.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Philippians 1:12-26

1. For what reason did Paul say he was in chains?
2. Paul says that two types of people were preaching the gospel for two different reasons. What are they?

What Do You Think

1. Was Paul's imprisonment an encouragement or discouragement to other believers?
2. Why was Paul not worried about his death? (hint: Verse 23)
3. In what ways can we help others know Jesus through difficult circumstances?

What R U Going To Do

With the help of your parents find a current event that is a challenge for someone. (Snow storms in the northeast, a local fire, someone who is sick, etc). Talk about ways that we as Christ followers could go BEYOND and serve others in that situation.

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Giving Away My Life - I give away my life to help with God's work.

Memory Verse

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."

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC ____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.