

Philippians 1:12-30

Sermon Questions

Gathering

1. We all go through ups and downs in life. How are you right now? Are things good or bad or somewhere in between?
2. Have you ever tried to encourage someone going through a difficult time? What do you say to them?

Looking at the Text

Paul is writing a letter to the church in the city of Philippi. Many of these people have become good friends of Paul but he has not seen them in a while and he is concerned. He wants to be sure they are standing together as a group and not fighting with each other. He also knows they are getting some persecution from the people in their city. So, he shares his situation with them. Paul is under house arrest in Rome and is awaiting a trial before Caesar. He can't go anywhere, can't visit churches or start any new communities. However, he has found reason to be joyful and he hopes to inspire the people in Philippi and all of us reading the letter.

Read Philippians 1:12-18

1. Paul says that what has happened to him (his house arrest) has actually caused more people to hear about Jesus. What are the two ways this has happened as listed in verses 13-14?
2. With Paul in prison, the Christians in Rome actually talked more to others about Jesus. But he says that there are two very different motives at work. What are they?
3. Even though some people want to make Paul's life more difficult, he can still be joyful. What does he say in verse 18 about why he has joy?

Read Philippians 1:19-26

1. Paul is facing a trial before Caesar. He thinks he is going to be freed but he might be executed. How does Paul feel about these outcomes? Why does he think he will be freed?
2. Why is Paul unafraid to die?
3. What will he do with his life if he lives?
4. What do you think Paul means when he says "For me to live is Christ"?

Read Philippians 1:27-30

1. Now Paul starts to address his concerns for the church in Philippi. What is his main concern in verse 27?
2. What do you think he means when he says, "striving together as one for the faith"? What would be the opposite of this?
3. Paul does not want the Christians to be afraid of those who oppose them. Why is this important?

Applications

1. The church in Philippi is facing opposition from non-Christians in the city. What does Paul say in verse 29 about their suffering? Have you ever suffered or been opposed because of your faith?
2. Paul is ultimately in prison on a false charge. The government thought he wanted to cause trouble but he did not. Do you think people sometimes dislike Christian for the wrong reasons?
3. Do you think Christian are ever opposed because of their own behavior and not because of Jesus? Why might that happen?
4. Paul wants the church to stand together. Why do you think disunity is such a concern when facing opposition?
5. Paul 's purpose in life was Christ. Living for him was about following Christ and telling others about him. Can you identify with that? Does that sound like your life or does that sound crazy?