

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-21

REVIEW...

- **PHILIPPIANS 1:1-3**

- o The opening of the letter is unique – Paul introduces himself as a servant of Jesus...
- o An unusual greeting from Paul (*only 3 times*) - he usually opens with 'Paul an Apostle'...
- o But Paul did not need to establish his authority in order to correct this church...
- o Instead he wanted to come along side them as a servant and build them up in their walk!

- **PHILIPPIANS 1:4-11**

- o Paul was thankful for the church in Philippi...
 - He was in prison in Rome - but every time He thought of them it brought a smile...
 - He had a great love for the church because they stood by him – even in prison!
 - Paul knew God would finish the work He had started in them many years ago...
- o Paul's prayer for the church in Philippi...
 - Was that they would overflow with the knowledge of the Love of Jesus...
 - That they would know what really mattered in life – a relationship with God...
 - That the church would walk in sincerity – and abound with fruit towards God!

REJOICING IN SUFFERING... (8 THINGS)

- **1ST – THE THEME OF THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS IS JOY...**

- o When we are going through trials and tribulations – joy is not our first response...
 - Our natural reaction is to want to complain – we want to curse and get mad...
 - But if we are honest – the trials we are going through are really not that bad...
 - Consider for a moment Job – who lost everything he had - wealth / family / heath...
 - It would have been easy to give up - just to curse God and walk away...
 - But instead Job worshiped the Lord – and in all he did he did not sin - **Job 2:10**
 - Paul takes it a step further – not only are we not to curse God – we are to rejoice!
- o We rejoice in tribulations/hardships – because they serve a purpose - **Romans 5:3-5...**
 - When we face trials/tribulations in life – we get to see God's faithfulness
 - When we have no money – and we see the Lord provide for all our needs
 - When we are sick – and we see the Lord miraculously heal
 - If there were never any challenges – we would never get to see God do a work!
 - Tribulations give us perseverance/patience...
 - As we experience God taking care of all our needs – looking out for us
 - We gain confidence that He will take care of us the next time as well...
 - When we sit down in a chair – we do not inspect it first to see if it will hold up...
 - We have confidence because the chair has never failed us before!
 - It is not that we are men of great faith – we have seen God's great faithfulness!
 - We are confident the Lord will take care of us – cause He has never failed us

- Our confidence in the Lord's faithfulness – gives us a godly character...
 - We become known as those who trust in – rely on the Lord...
 - Men who do not panic in the trials – men who patiently wait on the Lord...
 - Who trust in / depend on Jesus – cause we have learned He is trustworthy...
 - So we can rejoice in trials because we know they make us Godly men!
- 2ND – BECAUSE TRIALS SPREAD THE GOSPEL... VS. 12
 - o The word 'spread' – is a military term that means to trail blaze...
 - Paul was a trailblazer – going to spread the Gospel where it had never gone before...
 - Romans 15:20 – “My ambition has always been to preach the Good News where the name of Christ has never been heard...”
 - As a results Paul went through a LOT of trials – he was in CONSTANT danger!
 - I Corinthians 11:23-25 – “I have... been put in jail often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. Five different times the Jews gave me thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned.”
 - The path of the Gospel was paved with the trials of those who shared Jesus!
 - All of these things happened – because Paul was out sharing the Gospel message...
 - While life might have been easier if he kept his mouth shut – people needed to hear!
 - There are few things that will inspire more hatred in men - than love for Jesus...
 - The more we stand for Christ - the more others will come against us...
 - The question is do we let those trials shut our mouth – or make us bolder...
 - Often people turn back from sharing Jesus just because of little incontinences...
 - It is raining - I do not want to get wet / there is a basketball game on TV...
 - People need to hear the Gospel - the alternative is hell - so we need to tell them!
- 3RD – BECAUSE GOD HAS US WHERE WE ARE FOR A PURPOSE... VS. 13
 - o Paul was in Rome – in prison in the Praetorian Guard house...
 - He was there for two years chained to Roman soldiers – 24 hours a day 7 days a week...
 - The soldiers would change shifts every six hours – a new person to tell about Jesus!
 - Paul was not chained to a guard – they were chained to him – captive audience!
 - God had put Paul right where He wanted him – as an opportunity to share Jesus!
 - o God has us where we are on purpose – it is no accident...
 - We often make the mistake of overlooking the opportunities in from of us...
 - If we are in school – we might think of it as a prison – but it is an opportunity...
 - For 8 hours a day we are surrounded by students who cannot go anywhere!
 - Or perhaps it is our work – and we feel like it is a prison...
 - But God has us there so we can use it as an opportunity to share the Love of Jesus!
 - We think about Jesus in church - but it is the everyday people that need to hear!
- 4TH – BECAUSE IT GIVES BOLDNESS TO OTHERS... VS. 14
 - o Most believers were much bolder because of Paul's chains...
 - They saw that Paul was not going to let anything stop him from sharing Jesus...
 - And the boldness of Paul was contagious – it helped others stand up as well!
 - When Joseph of Arimathea stood for up for Jesus – so did Nicodemus - John 19:39...
 - The boldness of Joseph was contagious – Nicodemus stood up for Christ as well!

- o When we stand up for Jesus – we will find we are not alone...
 - Whether we know it or not - people are watching us - following our example...
 - If we are conforming to the world - chances are they will 'stumble' with us...
 - The opposite is also true - if we stand up for Jesus – it will give boldness to others...
 - When you are willing to go to Bible studies - you will find others follow...
 - When you stand up for Jesus around family / friends - it gives other boldness too!
- 5TH – BECAUSE GOD HAS CALLED US... VS. 15-18
 - o Some people preached the Gospel - trying to add to Paul's chains... vs. 16-17
 - In other words there were people who wanted to get Paul into even more trouble...
 - Speaking of the Judaizers - religious teachers who said you had to keep the Law...
 - Paul had an ongoing battle with these false teachers...
 - His first encounter with them came after his return from his 1st missions trip...
 - **Acts 15:1** - "Certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'"
 - They thought by 'preaching in Paul's name' – it might add years to his sentence...
 - Others preached the Gospel – out of Love for Paul...
 - Not wanting to add to Paul's chains – they knew he was there to defend the Gospel!
 - o Defense – *apologia* - defense / reasoned statement / argument (*apologetics*)
 - o It is important to be able to give a defense for our faith in Jesus
 - o We do not need to be able to answer every question – know every verse...
 - o But we should be able to answer questions - tell people about Jesus!
 - o **I Peter 3:15** - "If you are asked about your Christian hope... be ready to explain it."
 - o Paul did not care what their motivation was – he was not going to be distracted...
 - No matter what others did – He was going to just do what God called him to do!
 - People are going to say bad things about us – false accusation to make us look bad...
 - We can defend ourselves - run around putting out all the little fires...
 - But no sooner to we extinguish one – than another accusation pops up!
 - We cannot react every time someone makes a false accusation against us...
 - If we do we will waste all our time and effort – rather than using it to serve God!
 - If we are guilty - then we need to repent / if not – then who cares what people say...
 - God knows we are innocent – and He is the only one who really matters...
 - Do not be distracted by the comments – be faithful to the calling God has given you!
 - No matter what their motive – Paul rejoiced Jesus was preached!
 - There are a lot of people today who abuse the message of the Gospel...
 - There are many 'pastors' / 'teachers' today who use the Bible as a way to get rich...
 - TBN - if you do not give us money – it is your fault people will go to hell...
 - Or pastors who will send you their sweaty cloth to heal you - for a small 'love' gift...
 - Televangelist who talk as much about money as about the Good News...
 - Amazingly God can still use these people to spread the Gospel - people get saved...
 - Not to their credit - but to the credit of God - who can use people with bad motives!

- 6TH – WE KNOW WHAT HAPPENS IN THE END... VS. 19

- o Paul knew the trials would have an end – one day he would be saved...
 - Our trials are only for a moment – heaven will last for an eternity...
 - We can also rejoice in hardships – knowing what waits for us in the end...
 - **II Corinthians 4:17** - “Our light and momentary troubles...”
 - Following Jesus is not a guarantee we will not go through suffering in this life...
 - But it turns out to be just the opposite - Jesus guarantees suffering - **John 16:3**
 - But it turns out - they are just little problems - in the light of eternity!
- o But how to we find the strength to endure the trial...
 - Paul gives two things – prayer / and the supply of the Spirit of Christ...
 - We are not alone in our trials – we are called to pray for each other...
 - **James 5:16** – “Pray for each other... the earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results.”
 - Pray that the Spirit is poured out on our lives – so we have the strength to stand!
- **7TH – CHRIST IS MAGNIFIED... VS. 20**
 - o Paul understood that as he stood boldly in his trials – people would see Jesus...
 - If God blesses us – and we praise Him – that is nothing extraordinary...
 - When we are in the midst of a trial – and we praise Him – people take notice!
 - God uses us to reveal Himself to others who otherwise do not know Him!
 - o Why does God need us in order to magnify Himself...
 - Our sun is so big – if hollowed out – could hold 1.3 million earths
 - The next closest star to our sun (*Antares*) is so large it could hold 64 of our suns
 - In comparison – the star Hercules could hold 110 million Antares...
 - Epsilon – the largest known star – could hold 3 million Hercules...
 - Yet – they only look like a prick of light in the sky - because they are so very far away...
 - God is huge – but lost sinners are very far from Jesus...
 - It is though our lives that we magnify Christ so that they can see His love
- **8TH – TO LIVE IF CHRIST – TO DIE IS GAIN... VS. 21**
 - o Paul understood that it was all about Jesus...
 - While he was still alive – He lived to tell others about the Love of Christ...
 - Life ultimately has one purpose – to choose where we will spend eternity...
 - Nothing else is as important – no other decision we make lasts forever!
 - So as long as we are alive – we should live to tell others about Jesus!
 - o Paul looked forward to the day when he would die...
 - That was the ultimate victory – to go home and see Jesus face to face!
 - Death to us is not scary – it is not uncertain – it means going home!
 - So whether we live or die – it is all about one thing – Jesus!