



PHILIPPIANS

WHAT LIES AHEAD

PROCLAIMING CHRIST IN ALL THINGS.

We're told from a young age to pursue things that make us happy and/or successful. Avoid hard/sad things and pursue good/happy things at all cost. And yet, of course, bad things still happen to all of us - and when they do, we're often not prepared or equipped to process and respond to them.

In Philippians, Paul offers us another perspective to our suffering. Despite being locked up in prison, Paul rejoiced. He rejoiced because he knew God was still working through his situation and people were still coming to follow Jesus not in spite of, but *because of* his time in prison.

Paul, in prison, doesn't seem to worry about his personal happiness. He doesn't seem to feel as though his life has lost meaning or purpose. He never writes as though God has abandoned him. Instead, Paul says, "My purpose, no matter what happens, is that Christ can be proclaimed."

We see through Paul's story that we can rejoice no matter the pain, or the sorrow, or the mess because God has been faithful and He will continue to be faithful. We get to live, not as people chasing personal agendas, wills, or desires - but rather, we get to live as people confident that whatever the world throws at us - we can pray, we can sing, and we can say "God, may you be proclaimed as good, loving, kind, and faithful - even through this mess."

IN THE BIBLE.

Acts 16:12-15

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. 27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. 34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

Philippians 1:3-11

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. 13 For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ. 14 And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear.

15 It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives. 16 They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News. 17 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. 18 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. 19 For I know that as you pray for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me, this will lead to my deliverance.

QUESTIONS.

Feel free to talk through some or all of these questions

- 1.) What sticks out to you in the above verses?
- 2.) What were some results of Paul's imprisonments?
- 3.) How did Paul respond to hard things/suffering?
- 4.) Whatever your pain, can you see God working in it? How can Christ be proclaimed?

TAKE TEN:

- How did you see God work in your life this week?
- What has God been teaching you in His Word?
- What kind of conversations are you having with your pre-Christian friends?
- What good can you do around here? (in your life/circumstance)
- How can we help you in prayer and what do you want us to ask you about next week?

Whenever you read the Bible, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What does this tell you about God?
2. What does this tell you about yourself and the world?
3. How is this going to change who you are and how you live?