

Phillipians 1:1-14

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you o God, let these words be from you for your people in this season. Amen.

Set the scene, you're in prison because people are sick of hearing about Jesus and what he did, so they find a way for you to be guilty and taken into prison.

You're sitting in a prison cell, wondering who will feed me or support me here? Who will be my help.

Paul is in prison, due to spreading the gospel of Jesus to those around him.

The letter we are going to study during this 8 weeks is Phillipians which is based on a church community that Paul began during a missional trip to Phillipi.

Not only have they been transformed by Gods word by the are actively participating in Gods work not only by words but by actions.

Prison in these times, were not like the prison we have today, there wasn't 3 meals a day and food available to you.

As a prison of this time, you were heavily supported by those outside the prison.

It was common for people in prison to be brought meals from those outside the prison.

It was common to see people walking around the prison. It was more like a hospital, but worse. You could be stuck in a cell with many people.

You could starve to death because it wasn't up to the higher powers to support your prison stay.

So, here in most readings first Paul greets the community he speaks to.

Then we begin to give the letter a theme with the first few verses in the chapter.

Paul acknowledges his

Partnership: Collaborating with others in ministry and sharing resources.

Gratitude: Acknowledging and appreciating the contributions of others

Paul's confidence in the Philippians stems from their shared faith and God's work in their lives. God's faithfulness: Trusting in God's goodness and provision. Sincere affection: Paul's genuine love and care for the Philippians.

Because they didn't just live by their words but by their actions Paul was encouraged and spoke highly of them because through their faith, their actions followed.

God's sovereignty: Trusting that God can use any circumstance for His purposes.
Courage in adversity: Finding courage to share the gospel even in difficult situations.

Even as Paul is facing his own struggles and imminent death, he doesn't let his circumstances dictate his faith and joy in God.

Paul understood that God doesn't waste time during the Roman imprisonment. though we may waste time by not sensing God's purpose for our lives at the moment

But God can use even the toughest situations to proclaim his glory.

Though Paul is in prison, he does not use this as an excuse to stop sharing the gospel.

How many times has God given us an opportunity to share his words with others, but we fear what they might say or think.

“And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.” Philippians 1:9-11 NRSV

Paul's heart was captivated by Jesus, and we can hear that his passion for Jesus overflowed to his desire for many to encounter Jesus and have a deep relationship with God through this encounter with Jesus.

Paul praised this community because they didn't just hide or shy away but through their own Jesus encounter, they became bold to go and share God's word with many. The passion of Paul to share the gospel, overflowed and captivated the community in Philippi and they too through the work God was doing in Paul were passionate for others to encounter the living Christ with others.

Paul's joy despite imprisonment shows that true joy comes from a deep relationship with Christ, not from circumstances.

When we go back and remember our own journey moments where we felt God turn up, we can begin to find in our hearts are joy that is everlasting.

This joy that fills our hearts can fill others, but it takes a moment to be reminded all that God has done.

I always remember when I finished my first degree and how unhappy I was during my graduation.

I remember walking on the stage receiving my bachelor certificate and thinking wow, the all-nighters to get assessments in, the hours upon hours of study and lectures, tutorials attendances.

It was a moment I vividly remembered even saying to myself to make sure you do something that you are passionate about, and you have a joy doing.

If we live into our circumstance too much, we often are blind to the possibilities of God working in us.

Joy can be a choice when we continue to choose God everyday and every moment. Paul didn't let his circumstances dictate his joy but used his faith in God to guide his joy.

Every day we can choose a joy that can sustain us through all seasons of life. It's not easy but it can be helpful for living into the life and community that God calls us to be.

"I want you to know, beloved, that what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to everyone else that my imprisonment is for Christ; and most of the brothers and sisters, having been made confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, dare to speak the word with greater boldness and without fear."

Philippians 1:12-14 NRSV

Let us pray.