

1. Read Philippians 1:12-14

a. Paul says his imprisonment has "served to advance the gospel." The whole imperial guard has heard about Christ because of his chains. Where in your life might God be using a hard circumstance as an opportunity you're not seeing yet?

2. Read Philippians 1:15-18

a. Some are preaching Christ out of rivalry, trying to make Paul's suffering worse. He rejoices anyway. Is there someone in your life whose actions are threatening your joy right now? How do you think Paul would encourage you to respond?

3. Paul's chains became a pulpit — and this isn't the first time. The last time he was in a Philippian prison, an earthquake hit, a jailer nearly took his own life, and Paul led him to Christ. That jailer is now part of the church receiving this letter.

a. What does that pattern tell you about how God works through suffering over time? How does this shape your perspective when you suffer?

4. Read Philippians 1:21-24

a. Paul is genuinely torn between living and dying. His reason for wanting to continue living is them. What is your life mostly organized around right now? Compare and contrast that with Paul's perspective in these verses.

5. Read Philippians 1:29

a. Paul says suffering for Christ has been granted to believers. (I.e. given as a privilege) What's the difference between suffering happening to you and suffering being granted to you by the Lord? Does that framing change anything for you?

6. Paul's joy doesn't waver when he's in prison, when teammates work against him, or when he faces death. Where is your joy most fragile right now? How does this first chapter of Philippians challenge/encourage you?