

## 2 – Proclamation of the Gospel Propels Joy

### *Small Group Leader Notes*

There are two types of people in this world- optimists and pessimists. The Apostle Paul always seemed to have an optimistic view, despite his circumstances, because his joy in the Lord produced an unwavering confidence that the gospel would prevail. This week's small group discussion will walk you through the idea that the proclamation of the gospel propels joy.

As you kick off your discussion time, I would encourage you to watch the Gospel Project video again if many of your group members were absent last week.

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/philippians/>



**Read Philippians 1:12-18. Despite his imprisonment, what was the Apostle Paul's primary concern, and what was his demeanor in it all?**

*Paul continues to show joy despite his imprisonment. His primary focus continues to be propelling the gospel. Throughout his time in jail, Paul continues to share the gospel with everyone he comes in contact with and other Christians are emboldened as a result.*



**Read Acts 16:11-40. This passage gives us some insight to Paul's time in Philippi when the church was planted. How welcomed was Paul and the gospel?**

*Paul's first recorded arrest took place in Philippi in Macedonia during his second missionary journey, sometime around AD 51. A demon-possessed slave girl kept following Paul and Silas and shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved" (Acts 16:17). The girl was disruptive and annoying, and finally Paul turned to her and commanded the demon to leave her. The girl's owners were furious that their source of income through soothsaying was gone, so they dragged Paul and Silas before the authorities and accused them of causing public riots. The magistrate, going against Roman law, had them beaten and thrown into prison without a trial (Acts 16:23-24).*

*But during this imprisonment, the Lord caused an earthquake. Paul's and Silas's chains came loose, and the prison doors swung open. When the jailer saw the doors open, he assumed the prisoners had escaped and, knowing he would be held responsible, drew out his sword to kill himself. But Paul called out to him, assuring him that all of the prisoners were still there. The jailer was so overcome with gratitude that he took Paul and Silas into his home and tended their wounds. Paul spoke to him about Jesus, and the jailer and his entire household received Jesus as Lord and were baptized (Acts 16:31-34). Paul's first imprisonment resulted in glory for God, and the salvation of many.*



**Have you ever felt that God made a mistake in allowing you to go through a difficult situation, but later saw the wisdom of God as it began to work out? Explain.**

*Let's be real for a minute. We have all been here. We have a finite view of how the Lord works in us and in the people around us. It is easy to get caught up in a situation at hand and lose sight that God is always at work.*

*Notice that Paul talks about the palace guards in Philippians 1:13. These were not your average prison guards. These were the secret service members to Caesar. They had privileges that very few had. In fact, they actually had a say in who was appointed as Caesar. Acts 28:17-31 gives us more detail on Paul's time with these guards. In verse 31, we read that Paul proclaimed the gospel, "with all boldness and without hindrance." Not many people had access to these men. However, due to Paul's imprisonment, he had complete access to them that he wouldn't normally have had.*



**What does it mean when Paul says that his "chains are in Christ" (Phil. 1:13)?**

*As Paul spent time with the guards and other prisoners, it became evident that he was not guilty of any crime, but was in prison simply because of his faith.*



**Paul says, "...and because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear." (vs14). When was the last time your optimism and confidence in the Lord encouraged someone else, or when did someone do that for you?**

*Paul's joy from knowing that the gospel will prevail was so contagious that it encouraged others to boldly share their faith as well. It is one thing to read this and appreciate Paul's commitment to leading others in their faith. It is another to read this and ask ourselves how we can do that in our own lives. How can we, despite the challenges we find ourselves in, continue to live out and share our faith in a way that would spur on other believers in our Oikos to live boldly as well? We do this by Emulating Paul's belief & reliance on Christ.*



**Reread Philippians 1:15-17. Paul clearly talks about two different groups of people here. What do they have in common with each other?**

*It is easy to read this passage, recognize the difference between the two groups, and do our best to emulate one over the other. The fact is that, while one group clearly liked to stir up trouble for Paul, they both preached the gospel. The trouble-making group seems to have sound doctrine. We know from Paul's other epistles that he would have corrected their theology if he needed to. Even though their motives and behavior are not acceptable, they are still preaching the gospel.*



**In what ways do we, as believers, have a tendency to be like this contentious group of people?**

*It is easy to fall into this pattern. There are pastors and churches out there that we just don't like. Even though they accurately teach Scripture, we do not like their method, the worship music, or the programming at the church. There was something about Paul that this group of people did not like. We really do not know exactly who these people were, or what their issue was with Paul. 1 Corinthians 1:11-13 makes it clear that there were divisions in the church over which spiritual leader was preferred. Perhaps this was the group's issue. Regardless, we must resist the temptation to slander other pastors and ministries simply because they do not meet our preferences.*



**How does Paul respond to those who seek to afflict him in his imprisonment, and how can we emulate Paul as we encounter similar situations?**

*First of all, we must reject the teaching and ministry of those who persistently teach heretical ideas. Paul sets this example throughout his epistles, especially in Galatians. In this particular case, these people are not teaching heresy. They are proclaiming Christ as Lord and maintaining accurate biblical theology. Clearly, Paul does not appreciate their demeanor. However, he rejoices in the fact that the gospel is still being proclaimed by them. Why? Because the proclamation of the gospel propels joy.*