



from the inside out

Week 3 Home Study: Paul's Faith – Phil 1:12-30

MEMORY VERSE

For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing for he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well. Philippians 1:27 - 30

BASIC STUDY

QUESTION 1

Read Philippians 1:12-30. Afterwards, review the Class Notes. Be sure and note anything you want to bring up in small group.

QUESTION 2

Paul does not deny his circumstances in the physical world, but he does look through his circumstances in the physical world to see what is going on in the spiritual world. Record how Paul sees God is using his negative circumstances for God's mission:

Has good ever come out of your negative circumstances?

If you can't see good in your negative circumstances yet, can you have faith that God has promised that good will come from them?

How is this faith?

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QUESTION 3

Read the lyrics to Mariah Carrey's song "Make it Happen:"

Not more than three short years ago. I was abandoned and alone without a penny to my name -- so very young and so afraid. No proper shoes upon my feet. Sometimes I couldn't even eat. I often cried myself to sleep. But still I had to keep on going never knowing if I could take it -- if I would make it through the night. I held on to my faith. I struggled and I prayed and now I've found my way. If you believe in yourself enough and know what you want. You're gonna make it happen. Make it happen. And if you get down on your knees at night and pray to the Lord. He's gonna make it happen. Make it happen.

I know life can be so tough and you feel like giving up, but you must be strong. Baby just hold on. You'll never find the answers if you throw your life away. I used to feel the way you do. But still I had to keep on going never knowing if I could take it -- if I would make it through the night. I held on to my faith. I struggled and I prayed. And now I've finally found my way. I once was lost, but now I'm found. I got my feet on solid ground. Thank you Lord. If you believe within your soul just hold on tight and don't let go. You can make it. Make it happen.

Now read Philippians 1:12-30 and compare her theology with Paul's theology. What are the differences?

Is the statement "Faith has nothing to do with believing hard enough" correct or wrong?

Is the statement "Paul's faith did not depend on God changing his circumstances" right or wrong?

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QUESTION 4:

In Philippians 1:29, Paul says, “For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well.” Given this, what is the good news to Paul?

Now Contrast Paul's good news with this statement from a TV evangelist: “America must return to Godly values or God will bring punishment upon American.” What is the good news to this TV evangelist?

What is the good news (Philippians 1:21)?

DEEPER STUDY

QUESTION 5

Read Habakkuk (it is just 3 short chapters). According to all that the prophet Habakkuk knew about God's holiness and covenant, God should have arisen to correct the sin and in justice in Israel. But such correction had not been forthcoming. The prayers of the righteous Israelites and their struggle for justice in the land seemed in vain. Habakkuk writes this book as a protest to God. But by the last two verses, Habakkuk 3:17-19, Habakkuk's attitude had changed. Compare his change of attitude to Paul's attitude in Philippians 1:12-30.

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QUESTION 6

In Philippians 1:14, Paul talks about how his problems have made others into a bold witness. The church in Rome where he is under house arrest has been living “undercover” trying to stay off the radar of the Roman government for fear of persecution (since they cannot vow allegiance to the emperor as a god.). Why do you think Paul's situation has made them bolder?

Can you think of someone in your life who you consider to be “a bold witness?” Why and how are they bold? Do you think their boldness makes an impact on others? Has it made an impact on you?

How can you be a bold witness?

QUESTION 7

In Philippians 1:15-18, Paul tells of some people who are in Rome and preaching the gospel for the wrong reasons. Read Acts 2 which describes the formation of the church in Rome. Reflect on how is it possible to go from a spiritual high like this to having leaders with wrong motives? Do you know anyone who is clearly doing God's work, but you question their motives? What example has Paul set for responding to them?

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SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- 9:45 am (5 min) – Say or read the memory verse together. Read the whole scripture.
- 9:50 am (10 min) – Does anyone have anything in particular that they wanted to discuss about the lesson this week?
- 10:00 am (10 min) – How often do we tell potential members about the gift of suffering (Philippians 1:29)? In what ways do you find yourself or our congregation trying to spin the message of Jesus into something the culture will find appealing?
- 10:10 am (10 min) – What about Jesus is so important to you that you would be willing to suffer and even die rather than renounce him?
- 10:20 am (20 min) – Ask “what has God been doing in your life this week?” Pray for each other.
- 10:39 am (1 min) -- Close by saying the Philippians Prayer:

Dear God, May our love abound more and more with knowledge and full discernment; so that we may choose the things that are excellent, so that in the day of Christ we may be sincere and blameless, being filled with the fruits of righteousness that come through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God. Amen