

041226

- I. My Notes WWC message 4/18
- II. Series: Koinonia — The Joy of Living in Unity with Christ
 - Title: Sharing the Gospel
 - Text: Philippians 1:12-20
 - Quote: “The Christian life is not our ability to hold on to Christ, but His ability to hold on to us.” — A.W. Tozer (Pastor, Author)
- III. Introduction
 - The noise before the morning. We all deal with it in one way or another ... It usually starts before the coffee is even poured. You reach for your phone — just to check the time — but the screen lights up with a headline that feels like a punch. Another crisis. Another outrage. Another reason to feel like the world is fraying at the edges. You scroll a little further, and the feed is already on fire. Someone you know is furious about something. Someone else is terrified about tomorrow. Someone is mocking. Someone is shouting. Someone is predicting the end of everything. And before you’ve even stepped into the day, your heart is already carrying weight you never asked for.
 - Then you turn on the news while getting ready, and the volume of the world gets louder. Political extremes pulling in opposite directions. Commentators talking over each other. Fear packaged as information. Chaos disguised as urgency. You get in the car, and the radio isn’t much better. You walk into work or school or a conversation with a friend, and beneath the small talk you can feel it — that quiet hum of anxiety, that undertone of “What’s happening to us?”
 - People are smiling, but their eyes are tired. People are functioning, but their souls are frayed. And somewhere in the middle of all of it, you wonder: “Is joy even possible anymore?” Not the fake kind. Not the Instagram kind. Not the “pretend everything’s fine” kind. But real joy — the kind that steadies you, anchors you, carries you.
 - Because if we’re honest, the chaos of today is discipling us. It’s shaping our emotions. It’s shaping our reactions. It’s shaping our fears. It’s shaping our view of tomorrow. And into that world — into our world — steps a man named Paul, writing from a prison cell, surrounded by uncertainty, attacked by rivals, unsure if he’ll live or die. And somehow, impossibly, he says: “I rejoice... and I will continue to rejoice.” How? Why? What did he know that we’ve forgotten?
 - Paul had something our world has lost: an anchor of truth stronger than the chaos around him. The truth of God’s love. The truth of Christ’s grace. The truth of God’s fulfilled promises. The truth of a Gospel that does not shake when the world does.
 - And that truth gave him something the world could not take — joy in the middle of chaos.
- IV. From Chaos to Anchor

- And it's in moments like these — when the noise is loud, when the world feels unstable, when fear is the quiet companion in our thoughts — that we begin to realize something:
- If our joy depends on the condition of the world, we will never have joy at all. Because the world is loud. The world is angry. The world is unpredictable. The world is exhausted. And if we're honest, most of us are too.
- But this is exactly why Paul's words in Philippians 1 matter so much right now. Because Paul isn't writing from a peaceful world. He isn't writing from a calm season. He isn't writing from a place where everything makes sense. He's writing from a prison cell. He's writing with uncertainty hanging over him. He's writing while people attack his motives and undermine his ministry. He's writing in the middle of chaos — not outside of it. And yet, somehow, he speaks with clarity and a confidence that feels almost foreign to us today.
- Paul talks about joy — real joy — not because his circumstances are good, but because the truth that he's anchored to is unshakeable.
- And while it might appear that our focus in this series of messages is joy, it is an acknowledgment of truth. This truth isn't a feeling, or a doctrine, or an idea, or a circumstance. It is a person ... Jesus Christ – the Way, the Truth, our Life. If I were to sum up this letter in one statement, it would be – Paul is teaching us that Jesus Christ is proclaimed and that is enough.
- The Apostle continues to show us something we desperately need to recover: Joy isn't found when the chaos stops. Joy is found when truth becomes our anchor in the chaos of everyday life.
- The truth of God's love. The truth of Christ's grace. The truth of God's fulfilled promises. The truth of a Gospel that does not bend with the culture or break under pressure.
- So, as we continue this journey through Philippians 1 today, we're not just reading ancient words. We're learning how to live with joy in a world that feels like it's unraveling. We're learning how to anchor our hearts in something stronger than headlines, stronger than fear, stronger than the uncertainty of tomorrow. We're learning what Paul knows - that joy is not the product of circumstance, but the fruit of truth.

V. The Storm

- So, when we come to Philippians 1:12–14, we're not stepping into a quiet devotional moment. We're stepping into a storm — Paul's storm — and discovering a truth that speaks directly into ours.
- Paul begins with a phrase that almost feels understated: “Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters...” Listen to what he says.
- **Philippians 1:12-14 CSB**
12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually advanced the gospel, 13 so that it has become known throughout the

whole imperial guard, and to everyone else, that my imprisonment is because I am in Christ. 14 Most of the brothers have gained confidence in the Lord from my imprisonment and dare even more to speak the word fearlessly.

- It's as if Paul is saying, "Before you assume the worst... before you let fear fill in the blanks... before you think my circumstances have defeated me... let me tell you what's actually true."
- And now for the shocking part ... "What has happened to me has actually advanced the gospel."
- At the moment of Paul writing this letter, he is in chains. He's confined. He's limited. He's surrounded by uncertainty. He's living in circumstances that would crush most people.
- But instead of seeing his situation as a setback, he sees it as a setup — a divine opportunity for truth to shine brighter than the chaos around him.
- And here's the doorway this passage opens for us: Paul teaches us that joy begins when we stop interpreting truth through our circumstances and start interpreting our circumstances through truth.
- That's the shift.
- That's the anchor.
- That's the invitation.
- Because in verses 12–14, Paul shows us three things that are just as true today as they were in that prison cell:
 - The Gospel is advancing even when life feels like it's falling apart.
 - God is working in places we would never choose.
 - Courage grows when truth becomes more real than fear.
- Paul's chains didn't silence the Gospel — they amplified it.
- His limitations didn't hinder God's work — they highlighted it.
- His suffering didn't weaken the church — it strengthened their courage.
- And if that was true for Paul, it can be true for us.
- Because the same God who worked in Paul's prison is working in our chaos. The same truth that anchored Paul can anchor us. The same Gospel that advanced through chains can advance through the noise of today.
- Joy is possible in chaos when truth becomes our anchor. This is how Paul lived ... with joy, speaking the truth of Jesus Christ and how God's grace has reached each of us.

VI. Motive

- The drive for acknowledgement and recognition has reached a fevered pitch today. Instagram posts number over 95 million per day ... X (formerly Twitter) users can post up to 2400 times each day and the platform sees almost 500 million posts per day. And Tik Tok, in just the US, sees some 117 million posts every day. People are searching for acknowledgements; they are seeking to "connect" ...

- People have all kinds of reasons for doing the things they do – especially online. It's the same way when it comes to preaching the Gospel. There are a variety of motivations. In what we are about to see, Paul says something profound. If Christ is truly proclaimed, the Gospel wins — even when motives are mixed, messy, or misguided.
- **Philippians 1:15-18 CSB**
15 To be sure, some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of good will. 16 These preach out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; 17 the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, thinking that they will cause me trouble in my imprisonment. 18 What does it matter? Only that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice.
- Paul provides a stark contrast between two types of outward motives: those rooted in selfless love and those who were preaching for other reasons. Some were preaching Christ specifically to "stir up trouble" for him while he was in chains, hoping to add personal insult to his legal injury. These motives are outward-facing and ego-driven, seeking to interpret the "storm" of life through the lens of personal gain or rivalry rather than the advancement of the Gospel.
- In response, Paul adopts a "mercy-motivated" approach that serves as an anchor in the middle of this chaos. Rather than retaliating or becoming defensive about his reputation, he demonstrates a radical "holy indifference" to the attacks on his ego. He shifts the focus from the messenger's flawed heart to the message's transformative power, concluding that as long as Christ is proclaimed, he will "continue to rejoice". This approach allows him to interpret his circumstances through the truth of God's grace rather than through the lens of his rivals' unkindness. For us today, this means finding joy not by winning the argument or silencing the critics, but by anchoring our hearts in a truth that remains unshakeable even when we are unfairly treated.

VII. Perspective

- As Paul moves from the critics outside his cell to the conviction inside his heart, he shows us how to handle an uncertain future. If the "noise" of the world disciples us into fear, Paul's "anchor of truth" disciples us into a radical, unshakeable confidence.
- **Philippians 1:19-20 CSB**
19 because I know this will lead to my salvation through your prayers and help from the Spirit of Jesus Christ. 20 My eager expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all courage, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life or by death.
- Paul doesn't face the storm alone; he relies on the Koinonia of the church and the provision of God.
- He points out three ways that he is encouraged in their commitment to each other.

- The Partnership of Prayer: Paul explicitly credits the prayers of the people for his strength.
 - The Supply of the Spirit: He knows his ability to "hold on" to joy is actually Christ's ability to hold on to him through the Holy Spirit.
 - A Different Kind of Deliverance: Paul's "deliverance" isn't necessarily getting out of prison; it is the certainty that God's purposes will be fulfilled regardless of the verdict.
- The understanding that Paul had of his purpose was simple. Magnify Christ not self. Look at what he wrote ... his "eager expectation and hope" was that Jesus was honored because of Paul's actions and attitudes. It is a message for us to grab ahold of.
 - It's in community that we learn to serve, to encourage, to love, and to live. Paul's life is an example that is difficult for many to comprehend, to embrace. Living is serving Christ, dying is gain.
 - When Jesus becomes our "Life," the headlines and the noise lose their power to shape us and cause us to live for the approval of others.

VIII. Wrapping Up

- When you step back and look at Philippians 1:12–20 as a whole, you begin to see something Paul understood that we desperately need to recover: the Gospel is not fragile. It does not rise and fall with the headlines. It does not weaken when the world shakes. It does not retreat when circumstances get hard. The Gospel advances — in prisons, in pressure, in chaos, in uncertainty, and even through people with mixed motives.
- And if the Gospel is not fragile, then neither is our joy.
- Paul shows us that joy isn't the reward for a peaceful life; it's the fruit of a grounded life — a life anchored in the truth of who Jesus is and what He has already done. That's why Paul can say, "I rejoice... and I will continue to rejoice," even when everything around him says he shouldn't.
- So, here's the question this passage leaves us with:
- What are you anchored to?
 - Because if we anchor our joy to the world, the world will take it.
 - If we anchor our joy to approval, criticism will crush it.
 - If we anchor our joy to comfort, suffering will steal it.
 - If we anchor our joy to control, uncertainty will undo it.
- As we learn to anchor our joy to Christ — His love, His grace, His promises, His Gospel — then even in the chaos, even in the noise, even in the storms we didn't choose, we can stand with Paul and say, "I rejoice... and I will continue to rejoice."
- This is the invitation of Philippians 1:

Let truth become your anchor. Let Christ become your life. Let the Gospel become your lens. Because when Christ is proclaimed — in your workplace, in your home, in your conversations, in your suffering, in your ordinary moments — joy becomes possible again. Not because life gets easier, but because truth gets louder.

- So, as we wrap up today, here's the call:
Live anchored. Live courageous. Live proclaiming Christ. Not perfectly. Not loudly. Not impressively. But faithfully — trusting that God is working in places you would never choose, through circumstances you would never script, for purposes you may not yet see.
- And as you do, the world around you will see what Paul saw from a prison cell: Christ is enough. Christ is proclaimed. And that is enough for joy.
- Let's Pray
- Grace First, Grace Always