

Paul's Lockdown

A MIDWEEK STUDY IN PHILIPPIANS

MASTER PLAN JOY

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Philippians 1:12-26

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❖ Master Plan Joy Reframes Your Story—the Past (12-14)

- Infectious: while the readers are concerned about Paul's imprisonment, he is concerned about their lack of joy (2:18; 14x Paul speaks of *joy*).
- Paul is honest isn't a Pollyanna who denies reality:
 - He doesn't edit the negative facts but retells it from a faith perspective.
 - *what has happened to me* (v.12)
 - *I am in chains* (vv.13,17)
 - *my chains* (v.14)
- First: Paul changes the perspective from his own imprisoned eyes to looking at others he is reaching with Jesus' love.
 - *Brothers and sisters* (v.12)
 - *palace guard and to everyone* (v.13)
 - *most of the brothers and sisters...confident and dare* (v.14)
- Paul pivots to see God's reality and to tell a bigger, better story.
 - *Actually- "really served" (mallon) = "rather, instead of."*
 - This word shifts our attention to the opposite expectation, a different perspective. This is a switch, paradigm shift, change to a deeper reality.
 - "advance" = progress. What would discouraged most, encouraged Paul.
- The reason for joy was because of the master plan—the spread of the Gospel (vv. 13-14).
 - *Become clear-* because everyone knows why (13)
 - because Christians are emboldened to witness (14)
- So Paul doesn't deny painful circumstances, he simply sees beyond it, because a picture without the whole picture is incomplete and perhaps dishonest (Romans 8:28).

❖ Master Plan Joy Makes Lemons Into Lemonade—the Present (15-18a)

- Paul's lemons were: people preaching the gospel from false motives:
 - *envy + rivalry* ("strife, discord, contention") (15)
 - *selfish ambition* not sincerely (17)
 - *false motives* (18)
- Bigger Picture: Joy doesn't focus on the lemons or lemonade but on the Lemon Squeezer.
 - *What does it matter . . . the important thing . . . Christ is preached . . . I rejoice*
 - Faith saw them as the fingerprints of God: Christ was preached (v.18).
- God's cause is His redemptive love for this world through Christ.
 - served to advance the gospel* (v.12)
 - in chains for Christ* (v.13)
 - encouraged to speak the word of God* (v.14)
 - here for the defense of the gospel* (v.16)
 - The important thing is ... Christ is preached* (v.18)
- The higher the cause the greater the joy.

❖ Master Plan Joy Has Checkmate on the Future (18a-26)

- Paul now pivots and makes his move on the future (18-26).
 - *But also or yet even more* (ΔΑλλα kai carh/somai),

- Paul's joy was unstoppable.
 - He tackles & conquers the tyranny of the future (fears & anxieties),
- When you don't know the future, focus on what you know: Three things Paul *knows* (each introduced by *that*): vv. 19 and 25: The future is unknown so we draw trajectories from what is known.
- *That* he will be delivered (19)
 - He will not be ashamed, rather Christ will be exalted (20)
 - *I know that I will remain, and I will continue* (25)
- Paul *knows* "deliverance" or "salvation" will occur (cf. Job 13:16).
- Paul quotes exactly from Job. Starts with Scripture.
 - Paul could mean his release from prison---"deliverance."
 - or ultimate salvation, i.e. death into Christ's presence.
 - or both, as I think it is here.
- This "salvation" is assured through two important means:
1. Prayers of the Philippians
 2. The assistance of the Spirit
- But it's clear, Paul's highest purpose in life is to exalt Jesus, & to do this he needs courage. Courage regardless of the outcome: life or death.
- Verse 21 is Paul's reason for having checkmate on life.
- "For to me" (emoi« ga»r), Paul's bottom-line.
 - The verbless state makes this statement even more like a bottom-line: to\ zhvn Cristo\B kai« to\ aÓpoqanei\ n ke÷rdoB, *For to me: to live---Christ; to die--gain.*"
- When Paul considers living He thinks of Christ.
- When Paul thinks of dying He thinks of Christ.
- Our reason to live and die will determine how we live daily.
- Christ Himself is the secret to Paul's unquenchable joy.
- The person Christ has checkmate (cornered) on is the person who realizes he has checkmate on life.
- Paul is free to consider options (22-24).
- Paul resolves the options in light of Christ's love (25-26).
- Master plan joy in Christ could change our world
- It could free us from how we frame our past, present & future.
 - It could free us from the ups & downs of circumstances & people.
 - Freedom is discovering the person of Christ to be our ultimate cause.
 - What we would die for is what we should live for, and what we live for determines our level of joy.

❖ THINKING IT THROUGH

- What can the game of life take from you or give you to remove your joy?
- Have you ever stared at the face of death to decide your ultimate reason for living?
- Why should Christ be our ultimate joy?
- Is Christ only your ticket to heaven? Is He your source of success to achieve your agendas, or is He your Ultimate Joy regardless of circumstances? How does this answer live itself out in your life?