



Date: **January 14, 2018**

Scripture: **Philippians 1:12-18**

Review: Last week (Phil. 1:1-11) we introduced the book of Philippians and looked at how, through it, Paul shows us how to have confidence in God's work through the gospel despite our circumstances, even when we are in the worst of situations. Our position as Christians "in Christ" shapes our identity as servants of Christ which gives us confidence that God will accomplish his gospel work in our lives and the lives of those we minister to as we wait for Christ's return.¹

Recap Last Week: Spend some time discussing last week's sermon.

- What stood out to you from Phil. 1:1-11?
- How did this impact your heart?
- What did the Holy Spirit impress on you?
- How did it move you to change?
- What actions did you take to put it into practice?
- What more could be done?

Transition: Paul now (Phil. 1:12-18) turns to the advancement of the gospel despite his imprisonment and the attitudes of other gospel preachers towards him. Paul wants us to see that whether hardship for the gospel comes from outside or inside the gospel community, we must rejoice that "Christ is proclaimed."²

Discussion for this Week:

- Though Paul was just like us, and no doubt had times of doubt and frustration over his circumstances, he ultimately had a *gospel shaped* view of suffering.
 - How did the gospel³ shape Paul's view of suffering? (see Col. 1:10 for help)
 - How did Paul's view of suffering advance the gospel?
 - How does the reality of suffering actually support the Christian apologetic for the existence of God and the truth of the gospel?
 - Why must our understanding and presentation of the gospel include suffering?
 - What are some contemporary views of the gospel that actually distort it because of their view of suffering?
 - Share some stories (of your own or others you know) of suffering that have strengthened your faith and/or were catalysts God used for the spread of the gospel.

¹ Phil. 1:10 & Col. 2:9-10.

² Col. 1:18

³ Life Group leaders – if you have newer believers in your group, please make sure to explain the gospel so they will understand what it is and the connection it has to suffering.



- How can envy and rivalry creep into our gospel ministry (Phil. 1:15)? What are some examples of this?
- If love and goodwill are to shape our presentation of the gospel, how does that impact how we view gospel preaching Christians/churches from other local churches and other denominations more broadly?

Living out the Text this Week:

- Today – spend some time praying together for people in your Life Group or others you know who are experiencing suffering. Pray for their faith to be strengthened and their witness to those around them
- This week – spend time praying for the persecuted church around the world like Russia, Asia, and North Korea.

Bonus:

- The Philippian church was Paul's first established church in Europe (see Acts 16) so it had a unique place in his heart and gospel ministry. Contrast Paul's language about the Philippian church (Phil. 1:3-11) with Paul's language about the Galatians (Gal. 1:6-10). What does it tell us about our attitude and relationship towards those who we know who have strayed from the gospel?