

RESILIENT JOY
Don't Stop Now!
Acts 16; Philippians 1

Complications for the Philippian Church

- Their mentor is in prison
- Their messenger almost died
- External opposition
- Internal conflict

Joy – a deep confidence and contentment in God

Joy – it's both a gift and a responsibility

"...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act to fulfill his good purpose." (Philippians 2:12-13)

"...I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith..." (Philippians 1:25)

Paul challenges the Philippians to:

- Think clearly
- Relate sacrificially
- Live boldly

Why take this seriously?

"Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you." (Philippians 3:1)

Devotional Week One
Don't Stop Now!
Acts 16 and Philippians 1: 1-2

Overview of the Sermon Series:

Philippians is a letter written to a group of Christians who got off to a great start—yet now their lives have become more complicated. Their mentor is in a distant prison, one of their leaders almost died, and, as a community, they are facing external pressures and internal conflict.

In the midst of this chaos, Paul writes this letter of encouragement. Central to his message is an invitation to develop resilient joy. This type of joy is more than a feeling or emotion; it's an attitude and mindset

that's rooted in one's relationship with God and one's confidence in the gospel. It's a mindset that builds endurance, fosters community, and empowers us to live boldly as part of God's mission.

Family Talk

(Use these questions to prompt conversation with your family after the sermon.)

1. Have you ever started something well (a project, a relationship, a trip, etc.) and then ran out of steam? What happened?
2. How do you respond when you feel overwhelmed, tired, or done?
3. How does your response affect you...your relationships...your walk with Jesus...your witness for Jesus?
4. How can you have joy in the difficult moments? How can you share joy during this time?

Going Deeper-Personal Devotions

The "Going Deeper" devotional that accompanies the sermon series provides questions for study, reflection, and application.

Background to the Study:

View the Bible Project overview on Philippians to get a better idea of the content of the book.

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

Philippians is a letter written from the Apostle Paul to the church in the ancient city of Philippi (modern Greece). Philippi was a Roman colony and proud of its Roman citizenship. Paul most likely wrote the letter from Rome while under house arrest for sharing the Gospel around 62 A.D. The story of Paul coming to Philippi, and the beginning of the church in that city, are recorded in Acts 16:11-40. Paul's coming to Philippi, and the founding of the church, happened around the year 51 A.D. This means that he has maintained a close relationship with those in the church for over 10 years. Paul wants to encourage the Philippians to live out the implications of the Gospel within their community, even in the midst of persecution, all while maintaining their joy in the Lord.

As evident in Acts 16, the church in Philippi got off to an amazing and encouraging start. However, by the time Paul writes Philippians, the church is facing a growing number of complications. Among other things, it's simply challenging to be followers of Christ in a Roman colony. In response to these challenges, Paul pens this letter to encourage and reinvigorate these followers of Christ. His goal is to help them develop resilient joy—a joy that is the "safeguard" (3:1) they need in order to thrive in the midst of the obstacles they are facing.

The impact of the gospel on Paul's own life is described in this statement: "for to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (v. 21). In other words, his awareness of God's work through Christ empowers him in the present and equips him to look to the future with confidence.

Phil. 3:15-21

Read the entire chapter of Acts 16 and the first two verses of Philippians 1 for this week's devotional time. As you read Acts 16, imagine that you are observing the interactions as they occurred in order to make the passage come alive.

Information Questions:

1. Paul and Silas were on a missionary journey together and were joined by Timothy. Where were they hoping to go next? What stopped Paul and his companions from going to Asia or Bithynia? How were they persuaded to go to Macedonia?
2. Identify the people they meet in Philippi. Describe how each responded to the gospel. Why do you think their stories are included in Acts 16?
3. Philippi was a Roman colony in Macedonia (modern day Greece). How did Paul leverage that fact when interacting with the officers? Why do you think he waited until that moment to announce he was a Roman citizen instead of declaring it before he was put in prison?

Reflective Questions

1. Paul and Silas redirected their plans in obedience to the voice of the Holy Spirit. How would you describe the work of the Spirit in your life?
2. Acts chapter 16 shows that the church in Philippi started strong but, we're going to discover as we study the book of Philippians, the people were struggling to maintain the same strength of faith. Reflect on how your faith journey started. How would you describe it now? How do you keep your faith strong? What causes it to diminish or fade?
3. Spend time thinking about each of the people we meet in Acts 16. With which one do you most identify? How do they spur you on in your faith journey?

Application Questions

1. Acts 16:14 states, "...the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message." What are ways that you can open your heart to respond what God is saying to you?
2. Paul and his companions were willing to be obedient and surrender their own plans in obedience to God's direction. Are there ways that you are being challenged to lay down your own needs and desires to obey God's word and His direction in your life?
3. Paul and Silas lived their faith, even in difficult circumstances, and were given an opportunity to speak to the Philippian jailor. Think of the people in your sphere of influence who need to hear the gospel from you. Pray for the courage to share your story of salvation with them.

Group Discussion Questions:

1. How would you define joy? Give examples of a time when you experienced joy. Why was that experience joyful?
2. Paul begins his letter by saying in verse two, "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." What is implied in his greeting? What does that greeting mean to you?
3. Paul is challenging us to a life of resilient joy. Why should we take his challenge seriously?
4. What do you think Paul means when he writes in Philippians 3:1 that he is writing "...the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you?"
5. Why is it challenging to maintain momentum in our Christian walk?
6. Have you found this current situation to be a hindrance or a help to your faith journey? Why?

If you have time, prepare your heart for worship on May 24 by reading Philippians 1:3-11.