



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Choosing Joy: The Gospel is Advancing

Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor

Scripture: Philippians 1:12-19

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

Philippians 1:12-19 (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

In this passage of scripture, Paul is writing from a prison cell. Even though Paul is in jail, he is still experiencing joy. Paul reminds us that joy comes when we have a right vision of who God is. He starts with grace and peace and offers thanksgiving for community and prays for them. Because of Paul's examples of grace, peace, thanksgiving and prayer it allows him to have joy in any situation. Paul worked to advance the gospel both internally where he was and externally to others.

Culturally, we secure joy or happiness through the following: power - removing authority, potential - self-actualization, productivity - your accomplishments, pleasure - what you enjoy on your own terms and perspective - adjusting your views to having the "right" attitude. Christian joy is not found in these five P's. Instead it is found in the person of Jesus Christ. *The degree to which we are in relationship with Jesus Christ is the degree to which we find joy in our lives.*

- Paul has joy because the Gospel is advancing due to what has happened to him. Paul doesn't complain about his circumstance or say that his current situation is destroying his plans. Although Paul is locked up in prison, he knows that you can't lock up the Gospel or put God in chains.
- Paul has joy and rejoices because he doesn't need to be at the center. There were leaders who were preaching the Gospel but with the wrong motives. The mystery of the Gospel is that even in the wrong hands it can still lead to transformation. Paul didn't need to get all of the attention, he was content to be hidden, not needing to be in the spotlight. Even though Paul was hidden, the gospel still went out and was heard.

Even in a pandemic the Gospel is advancing, and this should bring us great joy. The gospel is the good news that God's kingdom has come near in Jesus Christ and through his death, resurrection and ascension, the powers of sin and death no longer have the last word. When we talk about the transmissibility of the Gospel--all it takes is a droplet of grace, His love, His power to change one's life. The Gospel is the anti-corona virus. Spiritually speaking, you need to remove your face mask and let a droplet of the Gospel transform your life.

We want to be seen and we want to be noticed. There is a line that we cross where we know we are doing this from a bad place – when we need another person's approval or acceptance in order to feel good about ourselves. Instead, our identity needs to be rooted in God's approval and in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

To share the Gospel can often cause great hurt. Advancing the gospel doesn't mean calling out people's sins but recognizing where they are in their suffering and offering them comfort and peace.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Lead Pastor Richard Villodas, continue in our series through the book of Philippians. Today Pastor Rich highlights two reasons that the apostle Paul was filled with joy, that often escape us.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, what did community look like? Other family, friends? Or was it isolated? Looking back who in your community could you be thankful for?
3. Of the five P's Rich mentions -- power, potential, productivity, pleasure or perspective -- which one do you feel yourself most drawn to? What do you believe this says about you internally?
4. Within your community, even while at home, what small way can you find to transmit the gospel to someone this week? How can you share His power, love, and/or grace?
5. Have you ever made a mistake on how you shared the gospel, or acted in a way that would put off others to Christ? What could you have done better?
6. How do you feel about the statement that even in the wrong hands and with the wrong motive, when the Word is preached truthfully the message can still change people's lives?