**No Matter What – A Study In The Book Of Philippians**

**~Philippians 1:12-18 – Using Difficult Times For Good Things~**

**\*\* As we begin:**

* When life throws us curveballs, we can respond really one of two ways. We can complain about life and what is happening to us, or we can learn and use the situation to further God’s work.
* We need to ask ourselves, “How big is our God?” It is an important question. When circumstances are not note what I would like them to be, it could be easy to act as if God left town.
* In **Phil. 1:12-18**, Paul challenges us to see the “good things” happening in life.

**Using Difficult Times For Good Things**

**Look for opportunities even in the most difficult of circumstances – vs. 12**

* Paul was under house arrest in Rome. He was allowed to see guests **(Phil 4:18)**.
* In **vs. 12** we read that what had happened to Paul had actually been used to spread the message about Jesus to other. The word “really” has the idea of “so much more.”
* He took opportunities to reach beyond himself and his situation. He could have responded negatively.
* His situation had not changed. He simply refused (attitude, mindset) to be controlled by what was happening to him. He decided to use that time in prison to let others know about the One He served.
* The word “advance” is a good word. Progress, furtherance in the teaching of the Good News about Jesus took place in a rather tough situation.
* At times in the middle of difficulties, it is easy to focus on ourselves. Our kids may be struggling at school, it may give us an opportunity to talk to the teacher about what we hope for our children.
* At work, we have a boss who is relentlessly unkind, or hard on us, and we have a chance to show co-workers what it means to reflect Christ in those moments.
* **Point:** Look for opportunities to share our story, our life, the truth about Christ, with people even when we are going through tough times. Even social media can be used for good.

**Others may benefit from our decision to not be controlled by the situation – vss. 13-14**

* **Vs. 13** tells us that the entire imperial guard knew why Paul was imprisoned.
* Who were the “imperial guard.” The Greek word can describe a camp of soldiers, the palace where the governor resided, soldiers at the Roman emperor’s home, or elite soldiers who guarded the emperor. They may have made up the garrison of Rome.
* The Praetorium guard originally numbered close to 10,000, concentrated in Rome by the emperor Tiberius. They had double pay and special privileges.
* Some of these soldiers guarded Paul while he was under house arrest. Paul did not live in Caesar’s palace, but he was guarded by the elite troops.
* Paul was clear that he was prison for two reasons. One, because of his faith and desire to spread the Gospel, and second, he had appealed to see Caesar **(Acts 26:32; Acts 27:1)**.
* I have no doubt that some of the soldiers guarding Paul became Christ followers.
* Others heard the message about Jesus as well **(vs. 13)**. Paul was determined to make a difference.
* **Vs. 14** tells us that Paul had an impact on others, encouraging and giving them boldness to spreadk the message as they looked at what Paul was doing.
* **Vs. 14** says these individuals were willing to speak the word “without fear.” They saw in Paul a fearless determination. This only comes through the Holy Spirit and the depth of our relationship with God.
* These believers were “much more bold” to speak the truth **(vs. 14)**. This could be tough in Philippi.
* Point: What do others see regarding our faith in Christ. Are we afraid of what others might think? Do not allow circumstances to dictate how we act and respond as Christ followers.

**At times the message is more important than the messenger – vss. 15-18**

* This does not give us the freedom to live any way we want.
* There were those who were preaching Christ with wrong motives. Paul, knowing he could not face the troublemakers, made the decision to see the one good thing happening – Christ was preached.
* Note two words in **vs. 15** that describe these teachers whose attitude was a problem. First, the word “envy” describes someone being jealous or envious of someone. It is a work of the flesh **(Gal. 5:20)**.
* This word is never used in a positive way in the New Testament. Guard against this **(1 Peter 2:1)**.
* The second word is “rivalry” which means “contentious disposition, strife.” Some who did not like Paul tried to take advantage of him being in prison to get more well-know.
* At the end of **vs. 15** Paul does mention that there were those teaching about Jesus from “good will”, with “kindly intent.” Their choice was to do things with the right motives.
* **Vs. 16** says that this latter group noted in **vs. 15** taught the Word out of love for God, Paul, and others.
* In **vs. 17** Paul refers to the first group mentioned in **vs. 15**, who proclaiming Christ was out of “selfish ambition.” This describes someone who puts themselves forward, having a factious spirit that is willing to do what is necessary to get what they want. They were unethical.
* They tried to make life harder for Paul. They wanted to draw people to themselves. They were not sincere, their motives were not pure. They worked and making things worse for Paul.
* Vs. 18 is Paul’s conclusion. Whether in “pretense” (that which is put forward to hide the true state of things) or in ‘truth” (the ones speaking out of good will and kindly intent) Christ was preached.
* Point: Even if there are those who are making life tough for us, we must stay the course. Do not throw them under the bus. Be sincere, be honest in our teachings about Christ, with the right motives.

**\*\* Three thoughts to take with us:**

1) We are not in competition with anyone else.

2) Allow God to use us to encourage others even when life is hard for us.

3) Warn others about certain teachers of the Word.