

To Die is Gain

THE PATH TO JOY, A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS

LESSON 3 (1:12-30)

His adversaries would have liked him to believe that he was finished, but Paul knew otherwise. *“If God is for [me], who can be against [me]”* (Romans 8:31, NKJV)? *“Who can bring a charge against [me]”* (8:33)? Who can condemn [me]? (v.34) Who shall separate [me] from the love of Christ” (v.35)? *“He... has determined [my] time and the boundaries of [my] dwellings... In Him [I] live and move and have [my] being”* (Acts 17:26, 28).

Rather than resign to the lie, Paul trusted that his chains were Christ’s means of accomplishing in and through him what his circumstances outside of prison could never do.

READ PHILIPPIANS 1:12-18.

1. List every negative aspect of Paul’s circumstances.

2. How might the Philippians have felt about Paul’s predicament? What spectrum of opinions may others have had as to why Paul was in this situation?

How can others’ view of our circumstances positively or negatively influence our understanding of our difficulty?

3. How did Paul *feel* about his chains? Why?

4. How were others benefited because of Paul's bonds? (vv.12-14)

5. How can hardships be profitable to the Christian and to those around him/her? What do trials produce that ease cannot?

6. Compare the two parties listed in verses 15-18. How do their motives differ?

7. Why was Paul able to rejoice in spite of their intentions? How does your attitude toward the ill-willed compare to Paul's?

CONTINUE READING IN PHILIPPIANS 1, VERSES 19-26.

8. Did Paul seek deliverance? What did he expect? Explain.

9. How was Paul willing to magnify Christ? Does this challenge your manner of life and interpretation of what it means to follow Christ? How?

10. How does shame, or the fear of it, keep us from sharing Paul's attitude toward others, suffering, and death? Why was Paul able to declare, "*In nothing I will be ashamed*"?

11. What is meant by Paul's statement in verse 21?

12. What did Paul consider when choosing between life and death?

13. Ultimately, what did Paul place before his own desires?

KEEP READING, PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30.

14. What is the gospel? What does it mean to live worthy of it? (vv.27-29)

15. What was the goal of the Philippian adversaries? (v.28) How does our conduct aid or thwart our adversaries' plans?

16. How did Paul encourage the Philippians to view suffering? (v.29)

17. Reread verses 12-30 of Philippians 1. What transforms difficulty into opportunity?