



Rejoice In The Lord Always!

Sermon-based Guide for Reflection and Discussion Week of January 16

Scripture: **Philippians 1:21-28**

Sermon Title: *Standing Firm Side by Side*

Paul is so deeply in relationship to Christ, that he would be happy for his death in order to be united with Christ; just as he would willing live so as to continue to minister in the name of Christ.

Knowing that God would have him remain, he seeks for the Philippians to progress in their faith so as to embrace its **joy**.

In order for that progress and joy he commands his sisters and brothers to “live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.” Paul recognizes the challenge of that. He encourages them to stand “firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel.”

We are all called to live the gospel together, to nourish joy and unity with each other. We face opposition from others (in and out of the church) but we are called to care for and encourage one another for a unity which is salvation. The conflict is “God’s doing,” meant for our growth in faith.

Questions:

1. In Philippians 1:21-28, Paul is ruminating on his own death and life – “For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.” He even speaks to a preference for death; because it would bring him into the full presence of Christ.
How do Paul’s words fit with your own internal understanding of death?
2. If you had to provide examples of how your life is being lived in “a manner worthy of the gospel,” what are three examples that you would give?
3. Paul anticipates (with joy) what he has hopes for in the life of the Philippians: that they are “standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel.” Have you known the joy in a Christian setting of “striving side by side”? What did that look like? What were (or are) the fruits of that?