

TO THOSE WHO USE THE SERMON STUDY GUIDES:

Please note that in 2023, Pastor Jody and the church office have begun a new routine for the study guides. Beginning next week, they will be posted by noon on Fridays. It would be a help if our church family could work within this timeline, but if you have any questions or concerns, contact Susanna Allen, Communications Coordinator, at sallen@kschurch.org. Thank you for caring to use a resource that allows you to invest more deeply into our sermons. We appreciate you!

Sermon: It's All About The Gospel

Text: Philippians 1:12-30

Discussion Questions:

- Philippians is one of four letters of Paul that are referred to as “The Prison Epistles.” Read aloud this description of these four letters (from gotquestions.org):

The prison epistles—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon—are so named because they were written by the apostle Paul during one of his incarcerations. It is generally accepted that Paul wrote the prison epistles during his first Roman imprisonment. The exact date he wrote each of the prison epistles is unknown, but the two-year period he spent under house arrest in Rome has been narrowed down to the years AD 60–62. Paul’s imprisonment in Rome is verified by the book of Acts, where we find references to his being guarded by soldiers (Acts 28:16), being permitted to receive visitors (Acts 28:30), and having opportunities to share the gospel (Acts 28:31). These details, along with Paul’s mention of being with “those who belong to Caesar’s household” (Philippians 4:22), support the view that Paul wrote the prison epistles from Rome. Paul’s Roman incarceration produced three great letters to the churches of Ephesus, Colossae, and Philippi, as well as a personal letter to his friend Philemon.

Three of the prison letters, also called the imprisonment or captivity letters, were bound for three churches. Two of these churches (in Ephesus and Philippi) he founded on his second missionary journey (Acts 20:1–3). One (in Colossae) he had never visited but was familiar with. Paul’s letters reflect his pastor’s heart, full of love and concern. The epistle to the Philippians is Paul’s most joyful letter, and references to joy abound within its pages (Philippians 1:4, 18, 25–26; 2:2, 28; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 10). He encourages the Philippian believers to rejoice in spite of suffering and anxiety, rejoice in service, and continue to look to Christ as the object of their faith and hope.

The fourth prison letter was written to Paul’s “friend and fellow laborer,” Philemon (Philemon 1:1) as a plea for forgiveness. While the prison epistles reflect Paul’s earthly position as a prisoner of Rome, he makes it clear that his captivity was first and foremost to Christ. Paul’s time in prison was for the purpose of spreading the gospel in the Gentile capital of Rome. The Lord Himself told Paul to “take courage! As

you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome" (Acts 23:11). Paul's time in captivity is no less profitable to us today than it was to the first-century churches he loved so well.

- How is Paul able to talk so much about joy while he is sitting in a prison cell?
- What else does Paul say about his incarceration in Philippians 1:12-14?
- What might encourage you to proclaim the Gospel without fear? (Phil 1:14)

- What is the difference between preaching Christ "out of envy and rivalry", and doing so "out of goodwill"? (v. 15) How might preaching Christ out of selfishness "stir up trouble" for Paul?
- Why do you suppose Philippians 1:21 is such a well-known verse? Do you believe this to be true?
- The Gospel takes center stage in our passage today. Discuss as a group what the Gospel is. How would you describe the Gospel to someone who hasn't yet placed their faith in Christ? What does it mean to "conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the Gospel"? (v. 27) How do we "strive as one for the faith of the Gospel"? (v. 27)
- Paul also addresses in the passage the effect that fear can have on our willingness to share the Gospel. Have you ever experienced this kind of fear? How can this passage change us?