



## March 3rd Sermon Questions

### Philippians Part I

#### Philippians 1: 12-26

Icebreaker: Given your priorities and schedule this week, how would you honestly finish this sentence: “For to me to live is . . . “?

Discussion Questions: **Read** the scripture verses above.

1. In this passage, we see that Paul's perspective as one who has received the good news of Jesus allows him to see past the surface of things to what is deeper and truer, namely the reality of God's gracious and extravagant love. How do the circumstances of your life and/or the pull of our culture hinder your ability to keep focus on Jesus and distort your perspective?
2. Verses 12-14 show that Paul is okay with being in prison. He says that his imprisonment for Christ has actually made some believers more “confident” and “much more bold to speak the word without fear” (v.14). Why do you think Paul’s imprisonment had such a positive effect on the Christians?
3. Read verses 15-18a. Paul sounds ok with people preaching about Jesus, even if their motivations are less than ideal. In his sermon, Chris mentioned that beautiful moments and outcomes happen all the time through people and in situations with mixed motives. How have you personally experienced this in your life? Can you think of other stories in the Bible where something was meant for evil but used by God for good?
4. If we can look back to times in our lives when bad circumstances ultimately yielded good things, why do you think we are so impatient with suffering in the present?

5. The central act of history is Jesus' death and resurrection. He has suffered for us! How can the gospel free us from focusing on our circumstances and fixate our hearts on Christ and his cause in this world?
6. In this passage Paul isn't concerned about whether his imprisonment ends in life or death, but only that he would maintain a faithful witness to Jesus. When you are experiencing difficult circumstances, where on the list does your witness to Christ rank? Why do you think that is? What would it take for it to be the highest priority?
7. Verse 21 is striking in its brevity and poetry, but also rather cryptic for the same reasons. Can you put it into your own words? What would it look like for a person to live out practically Philippians 1:21?
8. Paul clearly feels torn between living and dying, between the ongoing needs of the church and the glory of Christ in heaven. Ultimately, he says that he desires death over life, but feels it is more necessary for him to do the opposite. In your own words, what reason(s) does he give for this? What do these verses reveal about Paul's character and priorities? In other words, how does he view his life? What is his ultimate aim?
9. How often does the "what will happen when I die" question come up for you? How do you deal with it? What difference has your faith in Jesus made in your attitude toward death?
10. Paul feels confident that God has more work for him to do (vv. 23-25), even though he admits that his first desire is to be with God. How can his attitude here serve as a model for us?
11. What do you need to do this week to follow Jesus, be transformed by Jesus, and/or participate in the mission of Jesus?