**Finding Grace**

**Partakers of Grace**

**Rejoicing in Hardships**

5 reasons Paul wrote Philippians

1. To express in writing his thanks for the Philippians’ financial gift (4:10-18).

2. To explain why he was sending Epaphroditus back to them so they would not think his service to Paul had been unsatisfactory (2:25-26).

3. To inform them about his circumstances in Rome (1:12-26).

4. To exhort them to unity (2:1, 2; 4:2).

5. To warn them against false teachers (3:1-4:1).

3 reasons for joy even when times are challenging

**I. Rejoice when the Gospel Can be Advanced**

A. Instead of focusing on or complaining about the circumstances

**2 Corinthians 11:23-27** - *…in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.*

”Put the advance of the gospel at the center of your aspirations” – D. A. Carson

B. Often in the context of significant obstacles

prokope (progress) – v. 12 – …“the related verb was used of an explorer or an army advance team hacking a path through dense trees and underbrush, moving ahead and with considerable effort. Resistance is therefore inherent to that sort of progress…” (John MacArthur, Philippians, p. 59).

C. In unexpectedly effective places

**Philippians 1:13** - *…so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else…*

**Philippians 4:21-22** - *Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household.*

**Ephesians 6:12-13** - *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.*

A Mighty Fortress is Our God – Verse 3

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God hath willed his truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.

**James 4:7-8** - *Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you…*

**1 Peter 5:8-11** - *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

**Matthew 25:21** - *His master said to him, “Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.”*

**Matthew 25:25** - *And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground.*

**Matthew 25:26** - *But his master answered and said to him, “You wicked, lazy slave…”*

**II. Rejoice in the Opportunity to Lead and Encourage Others**

A. Others fed off Paul’s courage

**Philippians 1:14** - *…and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.*

B. Paul was imprisoned, but God’s Word wasn’t

**2 Timothy 2:8-10** - *Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.*

C. A gospel-centered life is an influential life

**Acts 20:24** - *But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.*

**1 Corinthians 9:16** - *For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.*

**Romans 1:14-16** - *I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

**III. Rejoice Even When the Ministry Context is Imperfect**

A. The motivation of some involved was impure

B. Some were actually seeking to add to Paul’s distress

**Philippians 1:18** - *What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice…*