**one thing – wk2 – One Joy**

**Locked in a room, chains, roman jail. Few visitors come and go – 2 yrs years go by – A lot of time to mope, sulk, and get bitter… but he didn’t.**

**Today we pick up where we left off. - Philippians 1:12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me…**

**Paul arrested in Jerusalem for preaching Jesus (doing something good) Sent by ship to Rome (wreaked), dragged across Italy. In jail awaiting appeal to Caesar Nero. He writes… one was a letter is to the Philippians (800m. away) a church he founded 11yrs earlier.**

**One the darkest places of his life – awaiting possible execution - What does he write about – joy!**

**There are those here who wish things were different in life**

**What do you wish that you could change?**

**If you could change something in your life, what would it be?**

**Today I want you to experience Philippians through this wish**

**Is it possible to be joyful no matter what? Everything Paul had dreams of, was stripped from him - yet joyful - How do we do that?**

**Many avoid thinking or acknowledging suffering - Christians often live in an illusion, just have faith it will be gone. Suffering is real – tragedy is real – bad days / years – dreams robbed – real.**

**Sometimes we suffer because of our sin – Sometimes we just suffer…**

**INSTEAD OF ASKING “WHY?” ASK “WHAT?”**

**Instead of asking “why?”, we are going to ask 2 “what?” questions**

1. **NOW WHAT?**

**What is God doing? What is God’s purpose? What does God want to show me? What does God want to do through this?**

**Philippians 1:12 - Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.**

**Instead of asking why? - Paul asks what is God doing in this? He could see God’s purpose and hand.**

***“Advanced”* – GK. prokope (prok-op-ay') = “to advance by chopping down whatever impedes progress" literally a pioneer advance, the progress of an army, an expedition. Describes one who clears away brush and obstacles, so the army advance.**

**Paul was saying – hey, I am clearing the way. I am paving the way - Your family is watching – your friends are watching – your co-workers. It was hard – but a way is being made for you.**

**Philippians 1:13-14 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.**

**The very chains Roman soldiers thought would restrain him, God used to release him (Phil 4:22 – references Christians in Caesars household) \*\* Adversity opens doors for the gospel!**

**What are the chains in your life that you think are binding you?**

**Two Thoughts:**

* **God can change your obstacles into opportunities**
* **God can change your setbacks into setups**

**Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, whohave been called according to his purpose.**

**When something happens we don’t understand, first thing to say is now what? God, what do you want to do with this?**

**Keep Your Eye on the Donut and Not on the Hole. Now what?**

**2. SO WHAT?**

**What was going on at the time at Philippi…**

**Some were preaching Christ for popularity / power – follow me not Paul**

**Some were preaching Christ for prosperity – selfish gain – to get rich**

**Philippians 1:15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16 The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.**

**What can Paul do about it? He is 800 miles away in jail – they come in talking trash about Paul. (Gk. *Tis gar plen* = so what? What does it matter?) The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached.**

**19 Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.**

**When you run into something that starts to steal your joy, if it doesn’t really matter - tis gar plen - So what!**

**The truth is - some things are important and must be addressed. But usually the things that freak us out are not – to that - tis gar plen!**

**Here’s how to judge if you can say so what - or - deal with it:**

**• what will this matter 100 years from now? If it doesn’t, tis gar plen**

**• what does this mean in eternity? If it doesn’t, tis gar plen**

**• what is really most important right now? If it doesn’t, tis gar plen**

**Now what? What do you want to do God?**

**So, what? If it doesn’t matter, it’s not going to get me down**

**3. GUESS WHAT?**

**Philippians 1:20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me.**

**Third question – Guess what? No matter what happens – I win.**

**If I lose my head – I will live with Jesus!**

**If I get out of here – I will live for Jesus!**

**Is the state of being joyful possible - A no matter what joy? Absolutely**

**You may not be happy with it… (Based on what happens) but Joy is based on knowing God is up to something good**

**22b Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.**

**To leave this crazy world would be great - but for you – I’ll fight another day - for you joy.**

**Level 1 Joy – The Now what - So what – living**

**Level 2 Joy - the win-win living**

**Level 2 is ultimate joy – This is where Paul lived and where God wants you to live. For me to live is Christ - to die is gain.**

**My life is God’s to do as he seems fit for his glory!**

**I still struggle with this sometimes – I still care too much about what others think of me – about things that do not last – I hold on to tight**

**God is working in me – a No matter what – mentality. For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.**

**Phil 1:27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God.**

**Whatever happens: This is what I want to hear about you… that you are living bold honorable lives for Jesus – not in fear.**

**Phil 1:29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.**

**The question today is not if we will suffer, but when and how will we respond? I am determined – that no matter what – I will rejoice – I will trust in Jesus – because God is up to something good**

**Philippians 2:1** **Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.**

**Do this for me… if I never get a chance to hug you again – do this. This would make be joyful… if you could get along, love each other, like Jesus loved you. \* “Can you do that for me?”**

**This is what I pray for you… that you live with great joy, bold, and honorable lives for Jesus, in the face of adversity - and most of all – have a deep love for others.**

**That is my prayer my children – and for you.**