

## WHAT NOW?

Wednesday, May 20th 2020

*Philippians 1:1-4:23*

*I strongly urge you to read the whole book of Philippians before continuing to read (or listen to) this devotional!*

Like Paul being released from prison, corona restrictions are slowly being lifted. No doubt some of us have had more time to reflect on our relationships with others, with God and even with our own selves. We now ask ourselves, “What will life look like when we gain this freedom again?” A quick recap of Paul’s letter can hopefully give us a few guidelines...

We’ve learned that Paul was one of many servants God had chosen to spread His gospel of free eternal life through His crucified and risen Son, Jesus. Paul had many companions, including Timothy, Epaphroditus, and even the Philippian church themselves, who all recognized the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and out of their love for Christ were willing to come alongside Paul in his time of great suffering in prison. Christ’s design of a church family truly is encouraging and amazing. **Guideline 1: Recognize this blessing in our lives and express our thanks to God often through words and loving others.**

We also saw how Paul not only viewed each of his brothers and sisters as equals in their service for the gospel, but also how he had deep affections for them. He was a man who deeply loved God’s people and wished to see them grow in love and knowledge of God. That’s why he even wrote this letter in the first place; he knew the true way to life is through knowing the risen Christ and living for Him. Are we also convinced that He is the way to true life? **Guideline 2: Remind ourselves and others often that Christ is the way to true life.**

Paul had a lot of time to sit and reflect while imprisoned to realize that in Jesus, nothing can take away our significance, security, peace and joy. “Rejoice in the Lord!” Paul wrote multiple times (Phil. 2:18,3:1,4:4). I imagine him thinking, “You don’t have to let your circumstances determine who you are or how you live – let Christ do that! He is the King of the Universe, after all!” These past few months have been tough, but they’ve helped us see Christ is our stability! **Guideline 3: Rejoice in the Lord often that He is our stability!**

Jesus is the true way to life and worthy of all glory and honor. Here’s my own wording of just a few things Paul encouraged the Philippians to do: “Look at Christ! (2:5-11) Live for Christ! (1:21) Know Christ! (3:7-11) Spread Christ’s message! (1:12-20) Love your brothers and sisters in Christ! (4:2-3) Work for Christ! (2:12-13, 29-30) Trust in Christ! (1:6,3:20-21)” Jesus had changed Paul’s heart and mind so much that Paul couldn’t see any other way to live or breathe. **Guideline 4: EVERYTHING in life should be about Jesus Christ!**

**Guideline 5: Learn to encourage one another to live for Christ just as Paul did the Philippians, especially using God’s Word to remind, encourage and correct each other!** What were some verses God encouraged and strengthened you with? Memorize them and use them to encourage your brothers and sisters! Were there any specific devotionals God used? Thank that brother or sister for their encouraging words! In anything and everything, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.” (Phil. 4:23)

**Prayer:** Lord, we thank You for giving us Your Word and revealing to us what life is all about: Jesus Christ. Help us to practically love You and our brothers and sisters, and to rejoice in You at all times. We praise You for Your love, Your power, and Your wonderful promises of grace and peace. Amen.

-Tony Grigg-

