

2022 Lent Discipleship Bible Study Series

Week 2 (13/03/2022): Proclaim the good news of God through word and deed

Text: Philippians 1:12-26

INTRODUCTION:

At our confirmation, the Bishop asks you the question: “Will you each, by God’s grace, strive to live your whole life as a disciple of Christ, loving God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourself?” We then declare: “I will, with God’s help.”

Today, we are on the second of the series of our Lent Bible Study through the Epistle of Philippians to encourage us on our discipleship journey. We encourage each person to read through the book of Philippians. Also read the passage to be studied a few times before Sunday. This way, you can come to the study prepared to discuss on it.

Last week we looked at “Living among God’s faithful people.” Today we turn our attention to “Proclaim the good news of God through word and deed” through Philippians 1:12-20.

In Lent, the passion and death of Jesus comes to the forefront of our contemplation. But Jesus’ death is not to be kept a secret. His death and resurrection are meant to be the good news proclaimed from the housetops.

Lent invites us to proclaim the good news to all through living out the truth of God in our lives. We can emulate St Paul who found courage to boldly proclaim Christ – despite imprisonment and threats of death. He even discovered how God used the negative experiences of his life to proclaim Christ.

Text: Philippians 1: 12-26 (NRSV)

Paul’s Chains Advance the Gospel

12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16 The latter do so out of 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.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and God’s provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. 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 labour for me. 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.

²⁷ Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹ For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well – ³⁰ since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Discussion Questions:

- Can we remind each other about the background of the Epistle of Philippians?
- If you were in Paul's position being wrongfully imprisoned, what kind of things would you write to your family/friends/brothers/sisters in Christ?
- How would you describe Paul's attitude to his unfair imprisonment? How did it help in the proclamation of the good news of God?
- How can our attitude to adverse situations help to proclaim the good news of God?
- What does it mean for you to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed? (cf. verses 12-14,20)
- What drives Paul to say in verse 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 was Paul's motive for proclaiming the good news of God? How do we align our motives with his?
- Sharing the Gospel is a "team effort" and not an individual struggle. Where do you see this in today's passage?
- What does Paul mean when he says in verse 21, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." What implications does this statement have for us today?

Prayer: Gracious God, we thank you for the good news of Christ Jesus. Use our lives to boldly proclaim your good news made known in Christ. Use our words and our actions to reflect the goodness of your love. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.