



PHILIPPIANS OVERVIEW

Stuck in house arrest, Paul writes to encourage the Philippian church to live as citizens worthy of the Gospel in the midst of their suffering. Many of us are also suffering right now. During this pandemic, we are experiencing loss, but we are not losing. We are in this together, growing in Christ and in unity, and God is refining us through suffering and purifying us through loss. To live for Christ and die to self in community in the midst of suffering and loss is to Christ's glory and our gain.

Paul's letter to the Philippians is so apt for us today. We need his words that can enable us, in light of and because of Christ Jesus, to rejoice in the midst of suffering, trial and loss. Now is the time to be a united church on mission together, willing to lose it all for Christ's fame and our gain.

WEEK 4: NO LONGER SLAVES

Read the text: Philippians 1:27-30

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has

been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

In today's passage, Paul exhorts the church to live as citizens worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because we are citizens of the kingdom of Jesus, we can live consistently, collaboratively, and courageously. We can live consistently, not hiding in fear of being seen because Jesus sees us in our brokenness and loves us still. We can live collaboratively, unified and striving together because we are all serve the same King. And we can live courageously because our King reigns and His kingdom can never be defeated. Even our suffering is a gift from our King to make us more like Him.

Discussion Questions:

These questions are written for DNA groups, but you can use in any setting, including missional communities. Because they were written for the intimacy of DNA friendships, you may need to adjust for larger groups.

1. Because we are citizens of Jesus' kingdom, we can live the same way on and off the Zoom call. We don't need to put up a front. We can be honest about the fear, anxiety, or anger we may be experiencing because Jesus knows us fully and yet still accepts us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Have you been honest about what is happening in your heart? Are you currently hiding, or have you shared what you're feeling with your DNA group or others God has put in your life? Why are you hiding? If the Gospel is true, will you trust it and be honest now?
2. Our current moment is revealing how divided our culture truly is. Yet, because we are citizens of greater Kingdom, we're called to unity and one mind. This unity is threatened when we put any other kingdom in front of Christ's. Are there

ways you have begun to let a current political or cultural perspective rule your emotions and relationships; whether right, left, or something else; more than Kingdom of Jesus? Will you repent of this and pursue unity with your brothers and sisters as citizens of the Kingdom of Jesus? What would that look like?

3. God is giving us suffering as a gift to form us more and more to look like Jesus, the King who suffered to serve us. He is inviting us to trust Him in this suffering and to see how He might be using us to serve others through it. But when faced with suffering, we often let fear rule us, seeking either to control it or trying to escape and hide from it. How have you responded to the suffering this current moment has brought? Has your fear led you in vain to try to control your life even more? Or have you responded by trying to escape and hide? What does that look like for you? Will you bring your fear to Jesus and entrust it to Him, the King who is still in control and who loves you deeply?