

## **7-24-24 – Philippians – Week 3**

Now, Paul transitions from his imprisonment to the situation in Philippi  
The one trapped encourages the free... in darkness, encourages the light.

**Phil. 1:27-30** – NLT – “<sup>27</sup> Above all, you **must live as citizens of heaven**, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are **standing together** with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News. <sup>28</sup> Don’t be **intimidated** in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself. <sup>29</sup> For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also **the privilege of suffering** for him. <sup>30</sup> We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it.”

- **“Citizens of heaven”** – he traveled often; foreigner. Different. **Paris O**
  - As followers of Jesus, we live differently. Rules. Responses.
  - Live in a **manner worthy** of the Good News of Jesus. Not to earn.
    - Jesus died in our place. Paid the price. Ransom.
    - Live to honor that sacrifice. Be a credit to Christ.
      - Heart **transplant**... live **befitting** of the gift of life.
- **Stand together** w/1 **spirit & 1 purpose, fighting together for faith**
  - Our enemy is not within the house of God; it’s outside
    - Enemy is the one who denies Jesus... interferes w/ relationship
    - Enemy teaches hate not love... ignores grace of the Cross
    - Enemy opposes prayer... bans Bible...
      - 52 countries make the Bible illegal or severely restricted:
      - Afghanistan – Iran – Iraq - Somalia – N. Korea – Egypt
      - Saudi Arabia - China – Cuba – Morocco – Libya – Vietnam
    - N. Korea – practice faith in secret/ 15-yrs in labor camp
    - Muslim countries: Bible/ **corrupt text** about Jesus, contradicts Koran. Islam – fasting growing... Japan, 110% rise since 2010
    - U.S. – Bible ban in Utah, now changed; suggested in Ks, Tx, & Fl
    - U.S – zoning codes to restrict home worship CA Couple fought \$300/\$500 fines

- **Paul's conversion** in Damascus - **Acts 9** – “<sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. <sup>16</sup> I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”
  - Paul considered it a **privilege** of suffering. The **2 sides of Grace**. Fulfillment of what he was told in the beginning. Truth.
  - James, brother of John, killed by sword. Peter – prison
    - We don't usually experience that level of suffering here.
    - But suffering/persecution shows this: making a difference!
      - Enemy doesn't target sideline teammates - active players  
... **playmakers get a target** - and that's reason to rejoice!
  - **Don't be intimidated** – God is on your side. God wins!
    - Can't stomp out message of God's love. Nero tried. 1<sup>st</sup> century.
    - Oppression is designed to stop action. Keep going.
    - Paul speaks of “the **privilege of suffering**.” Why?
      - **1) Blessings come ... God restores... pays back. Justice.**
        - Our suffering is **never final**. Pit/palace. Cruc/Resur
        - **1 Pet. 2:9** – “For it brings favor if, mindful of God's will, someone endures grief from suffering unjustly.”
        - **Matt. 5:10** – “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
        - **Matt. 5:11** – “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.”
      - **2) Our trials/suffering make us better. Grow.**
        - **James 1:3-4** – “<sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”
      - **3) During persecution/pain/trouble – draw closer to God.**
        - After 9/11, churches flooded... see our need.
        - We know we're dependent. Lost w/o God.
          - Lion's den – but we're not alone

**Song of Week – “God Gave the Song” – by Sandy Patti**