

DAILY READING PLAN

Week of October 16, 2022
No Matter What: Rejoice
Philippians 1:18b-26



Day #1 – Read Philippians 1:18b-26 | *“...I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance. It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.*”

In the message this weekend, I shared a manifesto written by a young Zimbabwean pastor who was later martyred for his faith. He wrote: *“I am part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have Holy Spirit power. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I am a disciple of [Jesus Christ]. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away or be still. My past is redeemed. My present makes sense. My future is secure. I'm finished with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, worldly talking, cheap giving, and [limited] goals. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. So I'll go until He comes, give until I drop, and work until Jesus stops me. And when he returns, he'll have no problem recognizing me. My banner will be clear!”* What stands out for you in this? What resonates most with you?

Day #2 – Read Philippians 1:18b-19 | *“...I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance.*”

At the beginning of our worship together I asked you this question: “When your back is up against the wall, your hands are tied, when your vision is limited and your feel like you're coming apart at the seams, what do you do? When we feel painted into a corner, and we're sure we've come to the end of ourselves, there is one appropriate response: Rejoice. Let me say it again, rejoice. How do you react or respond to that statement? Is “locating yourself in joy” a challenge for you? What do you think the Apostle Paul was getting at when he challenged people to rejoice, “no matter what?”

Day #3 – Read Philippians 1:20 | *It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death.*

Paul was in prison when he wrote the letter to the Philippians. What do you think helped him “speak with all boldness” so that “no matter what” Christ would be become evident in his life? Can you recall moments of challenge in your life through which Jesus was visible to you and or others?

Day #4 –Read Philippians 1:21 | *For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.*

These words from the Apostle Paul have inspired millions of Christ followers. What do you think Paul meant when he wrote this? The young Zimbabwean pastor wrote these words: *“I’m finished with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, worldly talking, cheap giving, and [limited] goals. I no longer need prosperity, position, promotions, or popularity. I don’t have to be right, first, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now live by faith, I walk by patience, I am uplifted by prayer and labor by power.* What stands out to you from these lines?

Day #5 –Read Philippians 1:22-26| *If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.*

Perhaps the young pastor from Zimbabwe had Paul’s words in mind when he wrote this: “My pace is set. My road is narrow. My way is rough. My companions are few. My guide is reliable, and my mission is clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the adversary’s presence, negotiate at the enemy’s table, pander at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity. I won’t give up, shut up, or let up until I’ve stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and preached up for the cause of Christ. With what phrases do you most deeply connect? How do these words from the Apostle Paul and the young pastor from Zimbabwe inspire you today?