



Sermon Discussion Guide

September 20, 2026

Philippians 1:12-18

Summary

Big Idea: Trade Glory Theft for Gospel Joy

Paul is aware that his imprisonment for the gospel may shake the faith of the Philippians, and so after his welcome and prayer for them, he turns in our verses to dispel their fears and strengthen them around the truth that come what may, God's mission and the advancement of His gospel cannot be thwarted. Indeed, what we may perceive as hindrances in this life, God can and does use hindrances to ultimately help accomplish his purposes in the world. The first part of our verses deal with how we evaluate and persevere with boldness in the midst of trials and hardships that come to the church from the outside. But what if those hindrances come from within the church? Does this apply even if the perceived hindrance comes from those who preach Christ with selfish motives? In the end, God will bring about his saving purposes through his proclaimed message, and yes, he even uses vessels with the wrong motives. Therefore, setting our sights on God's unstoppable gospel, we are afforded the experience of the joy of God, come what may in this life.

1. Share a time when you were encouraged or emboldened in your faith by Watching the example of another believer responding with gospel joy and confidence through hardships? What was the hardship? How did they respond? Why was it encouraging to you?

Read Philippians 1:12-18

2. In light of Paul's imprisonment, what could the Philippian church be tempted to conclude about the gospel and God's mission?
3. How does Paul address their fears?
4. What gospel-centered perspective, motive, and/or ambition allows Paul to view life this way?
5. How does that mindset influence the way Paul thinks about those who are preaching the gospel with selfish motives?
6. In what ways or in what contexts are you tempted to seek glory for yourself, make yourself the center of attention, desiring the spotlight and recognition? When are you prone to make life about... you?
 - a. How do you know if your ambition and desires are selfish or Christ-honoring? (It will typically show by how you respond when you don't get what you want (self-pity), or by how you treat others who get what you wanted (jealousy, gossip, resentment, ridicule)
7. In your life, when have you seen God turn perceived hindrances into a gospel helps?
 - a. What hindrances are you experiencing right now, that you find it hard to see how they could ever be gospel helps?
8. In light of these verses, what does it mean to trade glory theft for gospel joy?
 - a. What is one thing you can do this week to make progress in that trade?



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