

The Gospel According to Philippians
Gospel Priorities
Philippians 1:12-30
Sermon Outline

Introduction: Paul had a one-track mind. What was it and what does it have to do with us?

I) Paul's one-track mind

He viewed everything through the lense of the honor of Jesus Christ

A) His present unpleasant circumstances and the difficult history leading up to them

v. 12 ff: I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel

House arrest, buzz among the guard,
Buzz in the city, boldness in the believers

Striking attitude, given the circumstances and history

What “tapes” do you play when things are bad?

B) One-track mind continues to surface

1) Despite malicious preachers

v. 18: What then? Only that in every way...Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice

2) In the face of an uncertain future

v. 20: Christ honored in my body, whether by life or by death

3) When he contemplates continuing in service

vv. 25, 26: For your progress and joy in the faith...So that you may have ample cause to glory in Christ

II) Are we supposed to be like Paul?

A) No

B) Yes

1 Cor. 11:1: Be imitators of me as I am of Christ

Love the Lord your God with all your heart....

*Ezekiel 36:27: I will put my Spirit in you and cause you to walk according to my statutes **I That love will***

Phil 1:27-20: Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ

III) How do we move towards Paul?

We meet the Person who is at the center of Paul's life

v. 21: For me to live is Christ and to die is gain

Phil 3:8ff: I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...I want to gain Christ...to be found in him...to know him and the power of his resurrection, and share in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

Language of deep love—not religious language

Nothing narrow about this

Ask

Share

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Describe someone you know who has a “one-track mind” (could be yourself). What is the track? How does it show itself in the person’s life?
- 2) Paul’s single track is the glory of Christ and his gospel. There are at least four ways in which we see this in Phil 1:12-30. What are they?
- 3) It is easy for us to assume that Paul’s single-mindedness came naturally to him (“After all,” we say, “he was a religious type”). But this is not true. Look at 2 Corinthians 1:8, 4:7-18, and 12:7-10: note how deeply traumatized Paul was by his circumstances. If you have time read Acts 21-28 and list the difficulties Paul had to endure getting to Rome (all of which Paul summarizes in the phrase, “what has happened to me,” in Phil 1:12.
- 4) Where does your mind tend to go when life is tough? Why?
- 5) While we are not called to copy Paul’s calling, we are all called to imitate Paul’s heart. See 1 Corinthians 11:1 and Phil 1:27-30. What stands in the way of you being able to say with Paul, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain”?
- 6) Look at Phil 3:8-11, which is an expansion of Phil 1:21. In many ways it is like a marriage vow: “I want to share life with this person, to enter his world fully, to joy and suffer with him, to think his thoughts after him—and to do this ‘for better or for worse.’” This sounds like a terribly constricting approach to life—a sort of religious “lock down.” Why is it in actual fact an expansive approach to life when the person in question is Jesus? Share or reflect upon experiences in which you have found life expanding in the context of deep commitment to Jesus.
- 7) The really important thing about loving and knowing God through Jesus is that it begins with God knowing and loving us first. 1 John 4:10 says “We love because he loved us first.” Why is this important to understand, and how do we keep it always before us?
- 8) One of the ways we come to know Jesus better is by introducing him to other people. Recall stories in which you have discovered this to be true. Spend some time praying for boldness and opportunity to introduce him to some friends.