

CONVERSATION GUIDE:

OPENING QUESTIONS:

- When have you seen God use a difficult situation in your life for something good?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why do you think some people were preaching Christ out of envy and rivalry?
- How do we see similar attitudes today?
- What helps you rejoice in others' successes rather than feeling envious?
- How can we keep the Gospel central in our different vocations and callings?
- In what ways might you need to love Christ's glory more than your own?

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

- Look for ways God might be using your current challenges for His purposes.
- Examine your motivations for serving and ministry.
- Celebrate someone else's success or blessing (tell them)!

GROUP FOCUS:

- Help one another see God's purposes in difficult circumstances.
- If willing, examine each other's motives in serving Christ.
- Share with your GC any ways you want to be free from envy and rivalry.



WEEK 7 THE JOY OF JESUS BEING PREACHED (PHILIPPIANS 1:12-18)

TODAY'S VERSES:

Philippians 1:18 Philippians 4:22
Galatians 6:17 Galatians 1:8-9
Philippians 1:12-18

FEBRUARY 23, 2025

WEEK 7 THE JOY OF JESUS BEING PREACHED

From prison in Rome, Paul writes about how his imprisonment has actually served to advance the Gospel. Through being chained to rotating guards from the elite Praetorian Guard, Paul had unique opportunities to share Christ. Even when others began preaching Christ from wrong motives like envy and rivalry, Paul still rejoiced because Christ was being proclaimed. His response demonstrates putting the Gospel's advance above personal comfort or recognition, showing how to find joy in Christ being made known regardless of circumstances.

Paul leaves no doubt as to the Gospel's progress among both pagans and Christians.

- *Among pagans* – The imperial guard was known as the praetorium and it consisted of 9,000 handpicked soldiers. Paul talked to them about Jesus (they couldn't get away). Paul's imprisonment brought the Gospel to the very heart of secular political power in Rome.
 - *Among Christians* – Paul's imprisonment meant that the preaching of the Gospel advanced in Rome not only with the guards he was attached to, but also others who were strengthened by seeing Paul's strength. Kent Hughes once said, "Persecution has regularly been just what the doctor ordered for fearful Christians."
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What is paramount is the advance of the Gospel – Paul's years in prison, while fruitful, were not a fairytale, even though God used his imprisonment to give courage to a lot of people.

- **Some proclaim "from good will."** This means with kindly intent or benevolence.

- **Some proclaim "from envy and rivalry"** A literal reading of the text means that some people are envious of Paul's success in preaching the Gospel. When Paul arrived in Rome, the focus of the church turned naturally to his plight, and some of the church leadership became envious and began a "Gospel rivalry."

They preached the true Gospel, but they were motivated by a warped sense of their own importance.

We must check our motivation – If we are envious or in the midst of rivalry, it can diminish our witness for Jesus. The only way we move past envy is when we love God's glory more than we love our own.

- *Beware of jealousy and envy.* Every Christian will be tempted with these, so be alert to the presence of these temptations.
- *Beware of the temptation to promote yourself.* We need to recognize when we serve with selfish ambition. The heart of our lives and message must be about a Savior who emptied Himself for sinners.
- *Don't be surprised if others envy you.* God blesses us with unexpected influence; that influence can become an occasion for others to grow jealous.
- *Pray for God to give you the grace to love Him and others.* Paul recognizes that the message is more important than the motives, but he is *clearly* in favor of serving with good motives.

The book of Philipians is filled with exhortations to loving, humble service that puts the needs of others ahead of our own.

Why do we serve Jesus? It is because of the Gospel. **Love Christ's Glory More Than Your Own.**