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Upper Thames Missionary Church
Easter Season 2021

Come What May – Philippians 1:12-30

Theme: Hope in Bleak Times

-its the dependence we have daily on the Holy Spirit that gets you through the deepest darkness of life.

Philippians 1:12-30 ESV:

If I could sum up for you what we just read in one sentence it would be something like this:

Yes, I know things don't look good, but....

- A. Look what God is doing
- B. I fully expect He will bring about redemption
- C. So keep up your faithfulness to King Jesus.

Part 1 - "Look What God is Doing" (Look) (12-18a)

-Paul's surprising take on his bleak situation.

-he's talking about being in prison, not making progress toward freedom, and he's not receiving help from some Christians around him. Some people think God is punishing him - cursing him for bad behaviour -

He says what has happened to him has a deeper meaning than the suffering that appears on the surface – underneath, his suffering is actually moving the good news about Jesus forward.

-Paul says what God is accomplishing is:

-v.13 evangelising the whole imperial Guard and their close contacts - they are hearing about Christ and seeing the sustaining strength of Christ in Paul's imprisonment.

-v.14 - God is making faithful Christians around Paul more confident in Christ,

-God is making them more Bold to speak the word about Christ and his Kingdom

-God is taking fearful Christians and destroying their fear as they see Paul holding up faithfully in a bleak situation.

-in verse 15 and 16 that there is an **interplay here between the free will of humans who are doing evil things, and God's sovereignty.**

- a form of the question "why does God let bad things happen to good people?" - Why is Paul suffering here at all? Even if God can turn it to good, can't God just do something good without the suffering?

Yet here, in real life, we see that it's more complex than that - people are allowed to do what they want. The Romans want to suppress the truth because of political power, the "antagonistic Christians" want to promote their flavour of Christianity and their person influence by trying to throw Paul under the bus

- God's grace and God's sovereignty allow him to work with humanity while permitting their freedom to make a mess
- God redeems the messes we make and turns them into something good
- the suffering is not the end of the matter

We need to pray for Eyes to see what God is doing through trials we face!

Part 2 - "Deliverance" (Expectation that God will *redeem*)
Vv.18b-27

... An eager expectation of salvation.

Paul contrasts the rejoicing in the redeeming work God has done in a bleak situation (the beginning of verse 18) with the rejoicing of a future hope that empowers him in a dark time (the end of verse 18).

-deliverance vs. salvation

-the problem with the word deliverance is that it could make us think Paul is merely expecting his release from prison at the upcoming trial

-Paul is about to begin wrestling through the outcome of the trial - freedom or execution, life or death, and Paul believes that in either case the outcome will ultimately be his vindication (the nay-sayers will know God really is with him) and ultimately Salvation (God will indeed grant him eternal life).

- He was looking to the example of Job.

Paul's words in 1:19 quote Job's words in Job 13:16. Paul and Job both say "I know that this will turn out to be salvation for me."

Despite what people are saying about them, and how bleak their situation is - they know that God is with them.

**** This is a really big theme in Paul's letter to the Philippians - the theme of "Come What May" - because Paul is writing not knowing whether the near future holds life or death for him – but he does know – God will rescue him and life or death now doesn't change the resurrection life that is to come.***

-This is possible for you, too, if like Paul your hope in **Christ** and you know the ultimate rescue of the Resurrection is coming so no trial or illness or pain can overcome you - Death is not the final word for you or your loved one in Christ.

Part 3 - "Unity" (Keep Up Your Faithfulness)

Vv. 27-30

Paul says - in light of God's redemptive work, in light of his sovereignty and grace, in light of our ultimate rescue, *and* in light of the uncertainty of how God will work things out in my present trial.... **you therefore need to live as confident representatives of Christ and his coming Kingdom.**

Or, as Paul puts it as we read in v 27: " Only let your manner of life be worthy[d] of the gospel of Christ"

- in other words - **live like Jesus.**

What are some of these things Paul mentions here in 27-30?

Stand firm in one spirit

Stand firm as one person

Contend for the faith, which is the gospel in action (I love that!)

Not being frightened by opposition

Your unity and confidence is a sign of their destruction

And a sign of your salvation

You will Suffer for Christ with one another.

-The call to standing firm in UNITY is possible because of the Spirit of Jesus, not their strength, not your strength or my strength!

-Church - we need to pray for each other - boldly and with deep affection and Love like Paul and the Philippians had for each other.

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This is what the life of "set-apart" people looks like - saints (remember not a silly term for "do-gooders" is name for people who know their personal weakness and depend on Jesus both spiritually and communally everyday.

- heavenly citizenship here: though not every translation highlights this. - In V.27 Paul has called on the Philippians, and indeed all of us to "conduct ourselves" but that word is literally "live as a citizen"

-This is our new citizenship - your calling in life is to live as a citizen worthy of Christ and His kingdom. Roman, Israelite, Greek, Canadian.... That's all secondary at most.

So our challenge this week is to do just that -

"in light of everything going on - COVID, economics, family challenges, whatever is happening now.... - COME WHAT MAY" - live this week as Citizens of Christ's Kingdom - that means ***depending*** on His Spirit, ***depending*** on the other members of the kingdom - for a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand - pray for your fellow citizens, and pray that you and they would live as citizens who honour their Lord and King.

Stand together - stand firm - if you aren't standing with your brothers and sisters, you aren't standing firm.

