

Small Group Discussion Guide — April 18, 2021

- Series: if/then
 - Sermon: New Living Translation
 - Scripture: Philippians 1: 12-23
-

FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK:

Were you able to consider this week how living in the hope and power of Christ's resurrection can change your day-to-day reality? What has that looked like for you?

CONNECT:

1. What stood out to you from this past week's service, and why?
2. Has the pandemic made you feel more imprisoned, or more free? In what way?

ENGAGE:

1. Read Philippians 1: 12-18.
 - Why do you think Paul's imprisonment emboldened "the brothers" to speak the word without fear?
 - Why do you think Paul is so eager to advance the gospel?
2. Read Philippians 1: 19-23.
 - What do you think Paul meant by "to live is Christ, and to die is gain"? How do you relate to this statement? How easy or hard is it for you to say this?
 - Paul is confident of his "deliverance" (v. 19). For Paul, what does that deliverance look like? Does deliverance always mean relief (problem solved), or could it mean something different?
 - What are Paul's considerations in choosing between life and death? What does Paul prefer? Why does he feel it is more necessary for him to remain?

APPLY:

1. How do you understand the difference between the idea of the resurrection (what the disciples believed in before Jesus's death) and the reality of it? What did it come to mean in the disciples' lives? What does it mean in yours?
2. David described life without the resurrection reality as wrapped up in idols and fears. What do you think about this idea? How would "seeing resurrected Jesus with your own eyes" free you from that trap? What would living without fear of loss or death look like for you?
3. Paul describes his ultimate goal as defense of the gospel. What is your ultimate goal in life? Does your faith in Christ shape that goal? Or, what is something that you would like to accomplish before you die? How can Christ be exalted in that goal/accomplishment?

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, could you help us by the power of your Holy Spirit, the same One who raised Jesus from the dead, to lift us out of the gray cloudy living of worry and fear, into the bright sun of the clear bursting reality of Jesus alive? Free us from the bondage of our fear, and empower us to be fully alive, the way you intended. In your name we pray, Amen.

GOING DEEPER

1. Paul describes two different groups who are speaking out for Christ in verse 15. What are some issues that keep Christians from standing together as one? How could this be improved among the church?
2. What reasons would you give for wanting to remain here on earth versus departing to be with Christ (or vice versa)?
3. Describe some ways the actual reality of living this way – as though you “consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ ... considering those things garbage, that you may gain Christ” (Philippians 3:8) – would be considered crazy. Does it make more sense to live this way, or to hold onto our fears?

SCRIPTURE

Philippians 3:8

QUOTATIONS

“If you have forgotten who you are in Christ, what are you left with? You are left with Christless Christianity, which is little more than a system of theology and rules. And you know that if all you needed was theology and rules, Jesus wouldn’t have had to come. All God would have had to do was drop the Bible down on you and walk away. But he didn’t walk away; he invaded your life as father, savior, and helper.”

-Paul Tripp, New Morning Mercies