

## Philippians 1:3-20

<sup>3</sup>I thank my God every time I remember you.

<sup>4</sup>In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy <sup>5</sup>because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, <sup>6</sup>being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

<sup>7</sup>It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. <sup>8</sup>God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

<sup>9</sup>And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, <sup>10</sup>so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup>filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

<sup>12</sup>Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. <sup>13</sup>As a result, it has

become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. <sup>14</sup>Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

<sup>15</sup>It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. <sup>16</sup>The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. <sup>17</sup>The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. <sup>18</sup>But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, <sup>19</sup>for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. <sup>20</sup>I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

## Community Group Study 8 Nov 2009

### Introduction

The pursuit of happiness is one we are all familiar with. Culture tells us that some of the avenues we look to are processes, possessions, places or people. In this passage Paul is stuck in prison, and clearly does not have access to any of these things that people look to for their joy. Yet, in prison, he writes as one full of joy, despite his circumstances. The key phrase in this passage is in Paul's statement that 'He who began a good work in you will bring it through to completion' we see Paul's underlying worldview that salvation is God's work, and it's security is as secure as Jesus' place in heaven. God's saving work rescues us from seeing ourselves as the center of the universe. Only when we repent and worship God as central and worthy of all praise, are we freed to be full of joy and to love others.

Paul's cry then is that God's external work of salvation which become real, experiential and transformational, that their love would 'abound more and more'. Paul demonstrates this in his own life by dealing correctly yet graciously with those who are rivaling him in preaching the gospel.

### Discussion

- >>What are the major ways that people you interact with pursue happiness?
- >>How do you personally pursue happiness?
- >>If you truly believed that salvation was entirely God's work, that it was secure in Him, and that you were unconditionally loved, how would that change the way you lived your life?

### Explain the text

- >>What should a Christian's attitude be towards suffering?
- >>How important does Paul consider his life, death and reputation compared to the Gospel?
- >>Why does Paul not oppose those who preach the Gospel out of envy and rivalry?

### Application

- >>What do you need to repent of and have faith in?
- >>What and who should you start to love as a response to Christ's freeing work in your heart?
- >>How can we pray for others as Paul prayed for the Philippians?
- >>Think of ways you have wrongly prevented the gospel from being preached.