

April 14th, 2024: The Captive Letters – Philippians 2: 1-18 – Chaperone

-Welcome – Thank you Colson for reading our text this morning!

-Many of you know that I like to walk along a certain trail on Sunday morning. Well recently I noticed something that brought me back in the afternoon to take some pictures. Here is a sample:



-Things like this captivate me and take me off the normal course I follow.

-A few years ago this tree in Philadelphia caught my attention.



-Please forgive the poor quality, because this is a digital picture of an actual film print picture.

-This led to a major chaperoning failure. You see I was supposed to be with a bunch of 5th graders when we came to a 4-way intersection. We started to cross it and that's when I noticed the beautiful cherry tree. As the group continued straight, I turned right and quickly went down the sidewalk about 100 feet to snap this picture. Then I ran back to the intersection and started to head in the direction of the group but discovered much to my amazement the whole class of 5th graders and their faithful chaperones disappeared. I walked up and down the street and looked into different buildings; finding nothing, my angst increased. Did the rapture happen???

I ended up in a parking garage lost and scared...

-Seriously though, what happened is when the kids crossed the street they turned right and were walking in the same direction I was to take this picture, but they turned into a small alleyway while I took the picture and headed back up the intersection.

-Needless to say I was never asked again to chaperone a field trip 😊

-The word Chaperone – Originally was a French word for a person (such as a matron) who accompanies one or more young unmarried women in public or in mixed company. The word literally meant hood or cape.

-A modern definition is an older person who accompanies young people to a social gathering to ensure proper behavior.

-This morning we are in our second in the series called Captive Letters. Our hope for this series is to read the letters Paul wrote the certain churches and individuals recognizing he did this while he was a prisoner. Understanding the background helps us to fully appreciate Paul's teaching, admonishment and encouragement.

-Background: This letter is written to the church at Philippi which was a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. Paul's connection with this city began with a dream found in [Acts 16: 9](#) During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

-Paul, Silas and Timothy traveled there and met a woman named **Lydia**, a dealer in purple cloth, who became a follower of Jesus.

-It was in Philippi as Dan talked about last week **that Paul cast out a demon** from a slave woman which impacted her owners finances. This led to their arrest and that night there was an earthquake that opened the prison doors and broke their chains off. The jailer was stunned that Paul and Silas had not escaped. He recognized there were men of God and asked what he must do to be saved.

-The next day the leaders of Philippi asked Paul to leave the city, so he and his friends went to Lydias house which likely is the house church that received this letter.

-Please turn in you Bibles to Philippians 2. Our text begins with the word ‘Therefore’ which basically means ‘for that reason’ so before we examine our text, we need to know what the *therefore is, there for*. Also, I want to remind you that originally these letters did not have chapters or verse number. When reading the Bible we need to understand the surrounding verse to interpret correctly.

-The ‘Therefore’ at the end of what we call Philippians 1 it says this...

Philippians 1: 27-30 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

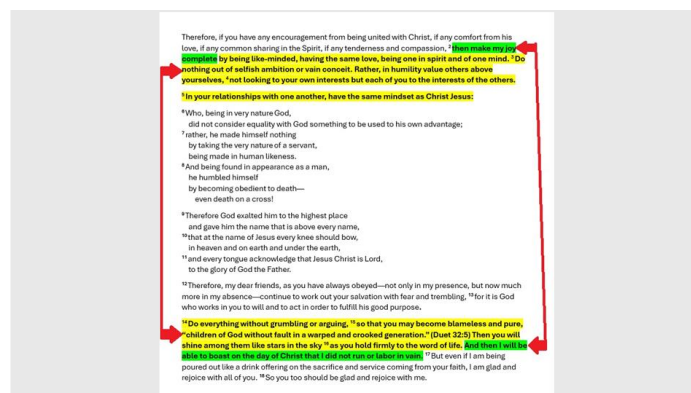
-Paul writes that he is in prison and it’s for the good – the Gospel is being promoted. He says he does not know if he will be free or even live, but regardless he wants to be faithful.

-He encourages the same to the members of the church at Philippi. Stand firm, Strive and don’t be afraid of whatever may happen – This is the sign to unbeliever’s, the sign that you maintain commitment to the Lord and to others, even in the face of adversity.

-For Paul his great joy was to see the members of this church grow in this manner: To be Unified and Unbreakable. The two are tied together in order to be Unbreakable they need to be Unified. So, how do they do it?

That leads us to the ‘therefore’ at the beginning of chapter 2.

-Here’s an image of our text and something I did...



I recommend when studying the Bible to look for connections and make note of them. Here you see Paul’s joy in green is connected to the people’s ability to stay unified in yellow.

-And their capacity for unity had a lot to do with their behavior. You will notice words like humility, not being selfish, or vain, or conceitful, no grumbling or arguing...

-Paul is a wonderful chaperone! He is a more mature Christian who accompanies younger Christians to encourage proper behavior.

-His great joy, the labor of his life is for them to be Unified and Unbreakable.

-Then in the middle of this he pens one of the most beautiful descriptions of Jesus (vs 6-11):

Philippians 2: 6-11 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

-Christ Himself is the ultimate Chaperone – He set the standard for us to follow

-This may seem an impossible task, but that might be why Paul writes the next words (vs12-13)

Philippians 2: 12-13 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

-Some of you might be wondering what it means to continue to work out your salvation. That is where we sometimes use the church word ‘sanctification’ which basically means to the action of making or declaring something holy or the action or process of being freed from sin or purified. Sanctification is necessary so that we may truly live for Him!

-The author AW Tozer in his book called The Pursuit of God writes about what follows after first believing in Jesus:

- ‘It is, however, not an end but an inception, for now begins the glorious pursuit, the heart’s happy exploration of the infinite riches of the Godhead. That is where we begin, I say, but where we stop no man has yet discovered...’ (there is no limit or end).

-I like to use the example of discovering a treasure chest with and begin to dig into the gems and gold only to learn that there is no bottom of the chest that, in fact, it leads into a mine of wealth that never ends...

This gift is free, but it comes at a cost...

-Jesus said in **Luke 9: 23-24** Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.

And Paul comments at the end of our text today...

Philippians 2: 17-18 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

-There is a joy that comes from giving your life to the Lord and you pursue/follow Him.

~Invite Worship Team Forward~

-He came to the world He created and traded His crown for a cross. He set the example let us become more like our chaperone, more like Jesus!