

STUDY NOTES

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN A SERIES *at* NEW CITY CHURCH

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message “Joy in a Difficult Journey” on 4/15/18 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these study notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: PHILIPPIANS 1:12-21

“WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME...”

At the time of writing, Paul had been through a lot. He was in prison, his boat crashed, he was bitten by a snake, and he was about to go before the Roman Emperor Nero to find out whether he would live or die. To add to it now, people who were “on his team” wanted him dead. Yet his response to all of that is that he rejoices because the Gospel has been progressing and advancing.

The Gospel is still good news in the middle of suffering

- *How do you feel about Paul’s response to all that he’s been through?*

ALL FORMS OF ATTACKS

Paul went through all forms of attacks. He was spiritually attacked, he was attacked with natural disasters, he was physically attacked, and he was personally attacked by his friends. Yet, he still found joy in the Gospel.

The Gospel moves in any circumstance.

- *What sort of difficult situations have you been in recently that feel like attacks against you?*
- *How do you usually respond to difficult circumstances?*

FINDING DELIVERANCE IN OTHERS

Paul trusted that he would find deliverance. But that deliverance for him wasn’t just relief for the situation. In fact he was completely okay with the fact that deliverance might be found through death. However, he was strengthened by the prayers of the people that loved, cared for, and supported him.

- *Why do you need to open to others about what you are going through in life—whether big or small, happy or hard?*
- *How have you gained strength from people who supported you in hard times?*

FINDING DELIVERANCE IN JESUS

Paul was comfortable with possibly being killed for his beliefs—the ultimate form of earthly suffering. He was comfortable because he felt Jesus show up for him. The early church believed that, “At the very time when they suffered such torments, they weren’t absent from the body, but rather, that the Lord then stood by them, and communed with them.” This is the same Jesus that suffered himself. He knows what it is like.

Jesus never promises that you will escape pain, but he does promise to show up and be with you in it.

- *How have you felt God’s presence more in difficult circumstances than in happy circumstances?*
- *Why is it so comforting to see the ways that Jesus suffered?*
- *Pray that you would each experience communing with God in any circumstance.*