

## Discipleship Displays God's Purpose

You are going to see a number of images that have something in common.

Many people attribute their experiences to luck.

We know about the danger lurking on the other side of a ladder.

So we don't walk under them.

We don't like the number 13, it is unlucky.

Koreans don't like the number 4.

And multiple 4's are to be avoided at all cost.

A free parking spot in front of the store we say, "That was lucky."

But as Christians we do not rely on luck.

Is it just lucky that a person comes to believe in Jesus?

Is it lucky that Jesus was born 2,000 years ago?

Is it just lucky that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead?

Is it just lucky that a woman sick for 17 years was healed by touching Jesus?

We believe that God is in control.

When we understand that, nothing is left to chance.

We understand we are part of God's plan in bringing people to Himself.

We find creative ways to show Jesus' love to the world.

We follow the example of God Himself.

He is the Creator God.

He took nothing and made everything that we see.

And Our Heavenly Father planned to send His Son Jesus.

It was His plan to reach all in the world from before creation.

He did not just hope that we stumble into salvation.

He prepared the way through Jesus.

Jesus **"did not think equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name"** (Philippians 2:6-9).

Jesus did not think Himself too sacred or holy to enter this world.

He was willing to surrender everything in order to reach you and me.

And Paul made the same decision.

He confesses as strong desire to be in heaven (v. 23).

**"My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better."**

But Paul intentionally stayed in this world for others.

He wanted to leave this world and be with Jesus.

But it was more important that he stay here and bring others to Jesus (v. 24)

**"To remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account."**

He knew he had to be in this world to accomplish God's will.

What did he know God wanted him to accomplish?

Three things seem to stand out in these verses.

**I** He knew he needed to help them experience **PROGRESS AND JOY IN FAITH** (vs. 25)

He was convinced that this was part of his ministry to the people of Philippi.

He was not to leave their spiritual growth to chance.

They needed to keep growing.

They needed to become richer and stronger in their faith.

There should be progress and joy.

That is progress in joy and faith.

II Paul also desired to see them **GLORY IN CHRIST JESUS** (v. 26)

He wanted to give them absolutely no cause to complain.

He wanted them to glory in Christ Jesus.

He said earlier in verse 6, **"And I am sure that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."**

Paul was going to hold them in his heart.

He wasn't about to jump ship.

He was going to finish what he had begun.

He wasn't concerned about what was happening to him.

He would endure anything so that Christ might be glorified.

He would endure anything to advance the gospel.

He was chained in prison but that did not restrict him.

Through his chains Christ was being glorified.

There wasn't a guard who hadn't heard about Jesus.

The church received confidence in the Lord by his chains.

They were able to speak boldly of Jesus without fear.

Paul's clear mandate was to remain in this world.

People still needed to hear about Jesus.

His voice alone would not reach everyone.

The way in which we suffer in life can also bring glory to God.

**"We are the true circumcision, who worship God in spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh."** (Phil. 3:3)

III There was one more reason why Paul was committed to the Philippian.

He wanted to see their **PROGRESS AND JOY IN FAITH**.

He wanted to them **GLORY IN CHRIST JESUS**.

And thirdly he wanted to see them **STAND FIRM IN ONE SPIRIT** (v. 27).

He wanted to see them become intentional in their faith.

He wanted them to be united in their reach.

If everyone did their own thing the work would not get done.

He wanted them to have Jesus' purpose in mind.

**"Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ... Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus."** (2:2, 5)

Paul wanted to see them strive side by side for Jesus.

He committed himself to see that happen.

Paul wanted the Philippian to be a church for others.

In order to do that they needed to have the mind of Christ.

Jesus needed to reign over every word, every thought, every deed.

These three things are essential for reaching the world.

We must have progress and joy in faith.

We must glory in Jesus Christ.

We must stand firm in one spirit, with one mind.

In chapter 4 Paul shows how essential this is.

**"Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved."** (Phil. 4:1)

In 1993 I finally started using a computer.

It was an Olivetti laptop.

It was amazing, nine inch monochrome monitor.

I can remember the first sermon I typed on that machine.

I have it right here with me this morning.

It doesn't look so special.

But putting that sermon on paper was a unique experience.

It was so quiet.

No more white out.

I could cut and paste without scissors and a glue stick.

There was no auto correct but typing was so much faster.  
I was joyous.  
But then something went terribly wrong.  
I noticed a spelling mistake in the centre of the screen.  
So I moved the cursor to where the mistake was and tried to correct it.  
In that instant the computer decided to go to war with itself.  
It did not matter what I did, I stopped making progress.  
For some inexplicable reason letters started disappearing.  
For every letter that I typed the next letter disappeared.  
The faster I typed the faster the words disappeared that I had already typed.  
I was getting nowhere.  
No matter what I did or where I started, the battle raged.  
One letter wiped out the next letter mercilessly.  
My joy was turning to frustration and anger.  
What is wrong with this thing?  
I couldn't get around this problem.  
My sermon was self-destructing.  
I finally called a friend.  
That was long before that line was made famous by Regis Philbin on *Millionaire*.  
I described my dilemma to my friend.  
My friend suggested I tap the insert key.  
I did and the problem was fixed.  
Once it was fixed progress resumed and joy returned.  
The sad truth for Paul was the church in Philippi had a problem.  
That problem was robbing them of their joy.  
He saw people who used to work side by side that were now at odds.  
Euodia and Syntyche were arguing with each other.  
Their fractured relationship was sucking the joy right out of the church.  
It was crippling the congregation's progress in joy, glory and the Spirit.  
This internal war could render the congregation ineffective.  
So he invited others to help him bring this struggle to an end. (4:3)  
Too much was at stake, names entered into the book of life.  
If you want to touch heaven then touch life at the same time.  
Are you experiencing progress and joy in your faith?  
If not the world is impacting you more than you are the world.  
Are you finding your glory in Jesus?  
Or has something else captivated your heart?  
Are you standing firm in one spirit?  
Or are you living for yourself?  
Life in Christ does not happen by accident.  
It didn't in your life and it doesn't in the lives of others.  
God has purposely reached this world to bring us to Himself.  
When you invest yourself in others you are a display for God.  
God's heart for discipleship is displayed through your words and actions.  
**"What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you."** (Phil. 4:9)

**Closing Song            Spirit of the Living God**