

MESSAGE OUTLINE—TRUE JOY: PERSEVERANCE

Philippians 1:21-30 (NIV)

²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me. ²⁷ 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 ²⁸ 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. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

We experience true joy by persevering...

- 1. For _____**
For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain... not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. **Galatians 2:20 (NIV)**
- 2. With _____**
Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ....

We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character; and character, hope. **Romans 5:3 (NIV)**

Consider it pure joy... whenever you face trials of many kinds... the testing of your faith produces perseverance. **James 1:2-3 (NIV)**

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you [you all] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. **Philippians 1:6 (NIV)**
- 3. In _____**
Firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the sake of the gospel.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. **1 Corinthians 12:27 (NIV)**

[God's] intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known... **Ephesians 3:10 (NIV)**

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. **1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NIV)**

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. **Romans 12:9-13 (NIV)**

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2020—TRUE JOY: PERSEVERANCE

CONNECT: Checking-in and catching-up with one another

- If you were writing your autobiography, what would you title the current chapter of your life?
- How does that reflect the condition of your soul?

EXPECTATIONS—Valuing each other and our time together

- **Leader:** Ask everyone to print a copy of the Small Group Agreement and Tips for Online Small Groups ahead of our first meeting. (Forward to group from Leader Notes)
- **Together:** Review the Small Group Agreement and Tips for Online Small Groups aloud. Consider the ways each of these values will be essential to the health, unity, and harmony of our small groups and our church during our current reality. How might we be tempted to disregard or violate these values?
- **Individually:** Your verbal agreement reflects a commitment to honor the small group commitments with one another.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

- **Opening Prayer:** Thank you Lord, for the gift of your presence here with us. Fill us with true joy as we reflect on scripture together. In Jesus' name, Amen.
- **Read Philippians 1:21-30 aloud.** What inspires you from this week's scripture or message?
- What can you learn from Paul about God's provision in suffering? How is that especially helpful to you during this season?
- How does this passage challenge our contemporary American understanding of true joy?
- What difficult circumstances in your life right now require perseverance? How can we pray for you?

PRAYER and BENEDICTION: Close by praying and blessing one another
Pray for one another: Based on your sharing in CONNECT and the SCRIPTURE REFLECTION, pray for one another. (Continue to pray for one another throughout the week.)

Closing Blessing: *God of mercy and grace, open my heart to hear your voice amidst all the other voices. Help me strive for unity amidst all that is happening in our world. Soften my heart to trust that you are always present, you are always at work, and you are always making things new. Create in us the desire to persevere together this year as we encourage one another to live in Christ. Amen*

At HOME with GOD—Download the Daily Reading Plan from the website

- Follow the prompts to guide you in spending time with God each day.