

Going Deeper- 8/1/2021 – Linda Stevens – Philippians 1



When Paul wrote to the persecuted church in Philippi, he explained how living his own story really meant living as an example of Jesus' story. Paul called on these Christians, as well as on us today, to imitate Jesus' way of life. That even in suffering, they (and we) have a higher purpose for the Kingdom.

Paul mentions living for the gospel 48 times in Philippians 1 and part of 2. He says we must contend for the gospel, or in other words, live for, struggle, suffer. Yes, to contend for the gospel might make for a more uncomfortable life. (Paul was writing this letter from prison,

after all.) However, it is what we have been called to do as disciples of Christ. Paul even acknowledges that he would be more comfortable in Heaven, but admits that he is living this life to serve a purpose bigger than himself.

The church in Philippi is instructed to do three things:

- 1. Contend for the Gospel*
- 2. Live in Humility*
- 3. Behave in Unity*

We should listen to Paul's words to the church of Philippi as words to us, today. As disciples of Jesus, it is our mission to bring others to a relationship with Christ. Even the palace guard who watched over Paul, heard and listened to the message and believed.

Are you living a cruciform life? A cruciform life is cross-shaped; you begin to live the vertical life of loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength, and you begin to live the horizontal life of loving your neighbor as yourself. The cruciform life is not a program, it is a way of being alive and doing life in the place God has planted you. It is the life of Jesus being imitated in our own life. It is contending for the gospel as Paul instructs Christians to do.

Action items for the week:

- 1. Read Philippians and identify the theme of contending for the gospel.*
- 2. Consider how you can contend for the gospel this week.*
- 3. Consider how you can live a cruciform life.*