**Philippians 1**

I. Introduction: Are you happy?

A. The past 50 years has seen the rise of wealth, disposable income, technological advancements, etc. but it has also seen the rise of depression in our nation

B. Contemporary happiness is defined in terms of the individual pursuit of **pleasure**. We put ourselves at the center of our world and look for our world to bring us pleasure

C. Biblical happiness is defined in terms of **purpose.** It’s about living for something greater than ourselves and the life of virtue and character that emerges from such a life (see Luke 9:23-25)

II. Philippians and the cause of the gospel

 A. Philippians is a book about joy

 B. Philippians is also a book about the gospel

 C. The themes of joy and partnership in the gospel are inter-related

 1. 1:3-5: Paul’s joy emerges in view of their partnership of the gospel

2. How much of our affection for each other is fueled by our partnership in the gospel (our mutual mission to spread the gospel)?

 D. What would it look like for us to be a church on mission?

 1. We would preach the gospel; verbal proclamation (v. 14)

 2. We would pray for the gospel (v. 19)

 3. Christ would be at the center of it all (v. 21ff)

 E. Paul’s source of happiness (2:14-18)

 1. He is willing to pour his life out for the sake of the gospel

2. He chooses discomfort over comfort, yet this uncomfortable life produces great joy as he participates in a cause much greater than himself

III. Self assessment

A. When you look at your life and its orientation (how you spend your time, money, thoughts, etc.) are you living your life for the cause of the gospel? Is the cause of the gospel central to everything you do?

 B. When was the last time you proclaimed Christ to an unbeliever?

C. Is our church marked by this joy that the Philippians had because of their partnership in the gospel?

IV. Apologetics as a helpful tool

 A. 1 Peter 3:15: always prepared to give a defense of the gospel with gentleness

 B. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5: we destroy false ideas and take every thought captive to Christ

**Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss the claim made on Sunday that contemporary culture defines happiness in terms of pleasure whereas the Bible defines happiness in terms of purpose. Do you agree that the culture’s perspective will never lead to true happiness whereas the Bible’s will? How have you seen that play out in your life or in others’ lives?

2. Consider Jesus statement in Luke 9:23-25. What strikes you most about Jesus’ perspective? What response, if any, do you have or want to have to his words?

3. Honestly consider the question posed on Sunday: When you look at your life and its orientation (how you spend your time, money, thoughts, etc.) are you living your life for the cause of the gospel? Is the cause of the gospel central to everything you do?

4. Paul describes what it looks like to live a life on mission in Philippians. Accordingly, it involves 1) verbally proclaiming the gospel (1:14), praying for the spread of the gospel (1:19), and putting Christ at the center of our lives (1:21ff). As you consider those qualities, is there anything specific you feel called to pursue at this time in your life?

5. Consider 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. How do you react to Paul’s perspective in those verses? How does your own perspective intersect with the perspective he has in those verses?