

Life Group Lesson 3

When Life Goes Bad Can Actually Be Good
Philippians 1:12-19

PRESS ON

together

Big Idea

From Sunday: Whenever life goes bad, it's an opportunity for something good.

For Today: Whether something is good or bad in your life, God always works good. God is always with you.

Icebreaker question: Think of a time in your life that was initially bad and later turned out to be good. What happened? How did what was bad, turn out to be good? How long did it take to find out something good had actually come out of something bad?

Video

Today's 7-minute video features Pastor Burkey teaching about the good Paul sees amid the bad of being in a prison cell, and what that means when we face challenges in life.

Read Philippians 1:12-19

In verse 12, Paul starts to give an update on his prison life. The Philippians had sent a man named Epaphroditus to care for Paul. They wonder how bad it is; Paul's about to share how blessed he is. They wonder what's God up to; Paul's about to say whether life is good or bad, God is always working good ... here's what God is doing!

As you look over your life the past week, what can you share with the group of how you have seen God work good?

One area the Philippians think life is bad for Paul is his being in chains (vs. 13). How do you see Paul describing his chains as actually being something good?

COVID has been a challenging time for our church, community, country, and world. What good have you experienced since March in navigating the COVID crisis? What are some "good things"/"God things" you hope happen for people in your life because of this COVID time?

In verses 15-18, Paul even shares how his imprisonment is motivating others to share Christ. One wise piece of advice I received in life is you can learn from the experience of others, or you can learn from your experience. The experience of others doesn't cost much to you, but *your* experience will.

When have you learned from the experience of others? What lesson did you learn?

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When you think of a powerful witness of someone going through a difficult time, whom do you think of? What witness are they sharing? How can you learn from their experience to share Christ with others?

In verse 18 Paul says, **"I will continue to rejoice."** If he had only said, *"I rejoice,"* it would have opened the possibility he would not continue to do so. If he only stated, *"I will rejoice,"* it could have been viewed as though he were waiting for change to come first. What threatens your joy in life? What fuels your joy? Why?

Paul gives a hidden gift in verse 19 when he quotes from Job 13:16 **"this will turn out for my deliverance"**.

The quotation from Job controls Paul's own concerns. It is a classic piece of what literary critics call *"intertextuality,"* the conscious echoing of fragments from an earlier text in a later one, refitting the borrowed language into the author's own setting. I call it praying God's Word.

This hidden gift of showing us how Paul frames his faith with God's Word, with God's story, in the lives of others who have faced bad things and discovered the great goodness of God, and Paul's own story of you think it's bad in prison, but actually God is doing much good.

Action Steps

Look for the gift. When we see a fire in California, we see destruction. When a giant Sequoia tree sees a fire, they see a new addition to the family. The heat of the fire opens the cone to plant a seed to bring forth life. They look for the gift a fire brings.

At the end of each day this week, look back over your day and look for the gifts God has given in the good and not-so-good moments of life. You may not immediately see something bad that God has made good, just rest assured in all of your life God works good, so thank Him!

Press On Together Prayer

As you close in prayer, I invite you to share with your group, and then take turns praying 2 prayers. As you pray the two prayers below, focus on thanking God for something in a bad situation you face, and asking God to help you see the good He is up to in your life or someone else's life.

1. A Prayer of Gratitude: Thank you God for ...
2. A Prayer of Grace: Grace: God, I (or ?) need Your grace (help) to ...