

TOO HOT TO HOLD - SHARING GOD'S GRACE

God's Word:

Philippians 1:12-30

Key Verse:

"WHAT THEN? ONLY THAT IN EVERY WAY, WHETHER IN
PRETENSE OR IN TRUTH, CHRIST IS PROCLAIMED; AND IN THIS I
REJOICE. YES, AND I WILL REJOICE."

PHILIPPIANS 1:13



Breaking It Down:

This week's lesson is about sharing the Gospel with others. This is something almost all of us find difficult. When Paul started talking about this subject, he wasn't someone who just rambled on about something he didn't know. Paul knew what he was talking about. He had been put into prison – probably house arrest – for telling people about Christ's resurrection. That seems so foreign to most of our minds, but back then, Christians were put into prison or killed for believing in Jesus. Even today, Christians in China and many African and Islamic countries deal with that same kind of treatment.

However, Paul's persecution didn't stop him from talking about Jesus. In fact, God used it to share the Gospel with the whole palace guard! (Verse 13) The Gospel was advanced and Christians were encouraged to be courageous for evangelism because of Paul's response to his persecution. What God-haters tried to use for evil, God turned around and used for good!



Sometimes, we may feel shameful about calling ourselves Christians because there are so many bad examples of Christianity that get publicized. Catholic priests are

accused of abusing kids and cult leaders marry teenagers and get busted for polygamy and abuse. Some televangelists go on and on about how you can become rich by becoming a Christian and sending them \$100. It can be hard to stand up for Jesus because of these terrible examples. Verses 15-18 say that we shouldn't be concerned about people who preach Christ out of impure motives. But if some teachers are leading people away from the Gospel, this is a different issue, and people need to be warned about them. However, what matters is that Christ is preached. Regardless of what others are doing, we need to live the life of a disciple – where both our actions and words reflect Christ. This is tough! Regardless of what's preached on TV, we need to be a "sweet smelling sacrifice" for Jesus.



Living It:

It's interesting that Paul was concerned about being ashamed of the Gospel. (Verse 20) I never noticed this before, but probably even mighty Paul was tempted to stop sharing the Gospel sometimes. Isn't that encouraging?!! The thing he did was he didn't allow himself to think about it. He EXPECTED himself to be proud of Jesus and courageous about telling of Jesus' resurrection and the meaning of the resurrection.

For Paul, it didn't matter if he lived or died; it all benefited him and it benefited Christ. Whether he was alive or dead, he preached Christ. He wanted to go home to Heaven, because it's SO MUCH better than this life, but his number one concern was preaching Christ.

There's a guy in my church who's always urging us to talk about Jesus. He's given us this example: Are you proud of your boyfriend/girlfriend/best friend? Do you talk about your best friend to your other friends? If someone said bad things about your best friend, would you defend him or her? Do you spend time thinking about the nice things your friend does for you?



Jesus is the best of best friends, and how many of us hardly think about Him during the day or thank Him for the good things that "happen" in our lives?

We need to conduct ourselves in a worthy manner, as it says in verse 27. This means being kind to everyone, because God has been kind to you despite your sinful behavior. Be forgiving and don't hold a grudge. Sacrifice your benefits for the benefit of others. Consider ways that you may unite with the other people in your church to share the good news of Jesus inside and outside your church. Stand up for Jesus by calling into talk shows on the radio or explaining on Internet blogs or forums (if you parents allow it)

why faith in Jesus is so good. When others in your classes, on the ball-court, at the mall or at home put down Christians, prove them wrong by your actions and your words. Realize that when you stand up for Jesus, it's like putting money into heaven's bank. That's the kind of stuff you can "take with you."

Conducting yourself in a worthy manner also means being a good example. Some people think they can either live or die to themselves; however, there are always younger people that look up to you. Who in your life looks up to you? Just like Paul showed other Christians in his day what following Jesus was all about, we need to live our lives in a right way so that others can do what's right too.



Understanding It:

1. What are the two ways mentioned in verse 15 for preaching Christ?
2. Did Paul want to go to Heaven more or stay and preach about Christ more?
3. What are some ways that you suffer for Christ?
4. Are you avoiding suffering for Christ so that you can fit in? Why is this not the right way to live?



Doing It!



This week, start every day praying that God will give you opportunities to show someone the value of a relationship with Christ. Pray specifically for the non-Christians in your life that you can demonstrate Christ to them.