

Discussion Guide

Philippians 3:1-11 | Singing in Chains

1. Paul opens this passage with a plain command: "Rejoice in the Lord." Before we look at how he gets there, be honest for a moment, how much joy have you been carrying lately? Not contentment, not just doing fine, joy specifically. What's been getting in the way of it?
2. Read Philippians 3:1-6. What kind of things does Paul list as his resume, and what's surprising about someone with a resume like that saying it's all "loss" a few verses later?
3. What's a resume you've built your own sense of acceptance on? Do you see how this resume building has been robbing you of true joy? What would actually be at stake, what would you be afraid of losing, if you tried to tear it up the way Paul does?
4. Read verse 9. What two kinds of righteousness does Paul contrast, and where does each one come from? What difference does that make for us?
5. Read verses 9-11 together. In the original language there's no break between these verses, Paul moves straight from being found in Christ into wanting to know him, share his sufferings, and know his resurrection power. Why do you think knowing Christ and sharing his sufferings are so tightly bound together here, rather than being two separate things?
6. Paul names resurrection power before sufferings in verse 10, and back in Philippi years earlier, he sang from a jail cell with a freshly beaten back. What do you think it actually felt like for Paul to have joy in that moment, not joy that it would end, not joy about something good that had just happened, but joy in the suffering itself, right then. Does that feel believable to you, or does it stay strange? (worth sitting with the strangeness of it for a bit!)
7. Costly love, staying when leaving is easier, forgiving instead of collecting a debt, showing up again tomorrow, is genuinely hard, and this passage says real joy can be found inside it, not just after it. Where in your life would that be true, and where does it honestly still just sound like a hard thing to do, with no joy in sight yet?
8. Is there someone in your life right now who needs that kind of costly love from you? Be honest about what's actually stopping you, fear, exhaustion, self-protection, and name it out loud to the group if you're able.
9. What would it look like this week to go toward that cost expecting to meet Christ there, actually present with you in it, rather than just expecting to survive it?