

Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

November 10, 2024

Choosing Our Habits

The Choices Before Us

Philippians 4:8-9

KEY VERSES

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 As for the things that you have learned and received and heard and noticed in me, do them, and the God of peace will be with you.

Paul describes how a Christian community should look different, because the people can hold things together like others can't -- rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep --- and do both simultaneously. **As we move through these post-election days, how are you doing? Are you choosing the gospel story of reconciliation and restoration over all other emotions or responses? How are you seeking to be an example to others with your responses?**

In verse 8, Paul exhorts us to use our minds to think about the many reasons we have for giving thanks to God. Gratitude is not the result of our circumstances, and is most important to practice when things are hard. When we practice gratitude, we are reminded that God is still near and working in our lives. As Thanksgiving approaches, let's not wait until then to build a collective memory of the things God has done in our lives. **What are the things God has done for you for which you are the most thankful? How can you build in a simple daily practice of gratitude right now?**

At first glance Paul might come across as conceited in verse 9 -- urging fellow believers to imitate him. Unlike the early church, we have endless resources to grow and develop in our faith. Paul and the New Testament church had only the habits they practiced from following Jesus. Paul knows they know what they are supposed to do - to continue to practice the Christian habits and disciplines that they have been taught. We know that the building of habits is vital to enacting any kind of change in our lives. The habits of solitude, community, and service are nothing new - simply what the Lord taught us, and as his followers we have sought to model them for thousands of years. **How do these three habits look in your life right now?**

- 1) **Solitude** - how is your relationship with the Lord? Are you able to see yourself as Jesus sees you? What do you do already and where do you need work (prayer, daily devotional, listening for God's voice)?

- 2) **Community** - we are more urbanized but lonelier than ever as a culture. Where two or three are gathered, Jesus promises to be there among us. Who really knows you? Who knows how to pray for you?
- 3) **Service** - we are called to steward our world alongside God. Where do you sense God calling you to serve in your family/community/greater world?