

Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

October 6, 2024

Choosing to Shine

The Choices Before Us

Philippians 2:14-16

KEY VERSES

Do all things without murmuring and arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world, ¹⁶ holding forth the word of life so that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

Now in our fifth week following Paul's letter from prison to the church in Philippi, we continue to marvel over the joy that his words convey. Over the past few weeks, we've watched Paul's choices and considered them for our own lives: he chooses to hold the Philippians in his heart; he chooses to serve others and the greater world over himself; he chooses joy which exemplifies a presence of purpose; he chooses to have the mind of Christ; and this week he models for us how to shine like stars. **How have you thought about and applied these choices to your own life these past few weeks?**

Verse 14 presents us with two new choices we can make about how to live our lives. When we enter into difficulties and struggles, our version of "murmuring and arguing" ought to look different than the world around us:

1) Murmuring: Crying out to God is actually a spiritual discipline; the Bible gives us a template for how to lament and we should never be afraid of doing it. Lament enables us to cry out in the belief that someone hears us and has the power to do something about it.

What areas of your life cause you to murmur the most? How can the simple practice of gratitude help keep our murmuring under control, and murmur in a way that's different?

2) Arguing: Instead of embodying a better way of getting along, churches more and more are mimicking the polarization of society. Paul is not saying NOT to argue; rather he illustrates how conflict is necessary and that we can grow amidst our differences. God loves and values each one of us equally, and when we lead with this posture, the other person becomes more important than the argument. The cross is a reminder that we still need saving, and when we start with "I could be wrong," we can more easily listen. **What would it mean for your arguments if the gospel infiltrates everything that you do? How can we shine like stars when we choose to embody something different when we are called to conflict?**