SEEING PURPOSE IN TRIAL

TEXT: (Philippians 1:12-14, NIV)

12 Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14 Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

INTRODUCTION

1. "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21, NIV).

I. TO LIVE IS CHRIST

1 "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (I Thessalonians 5:16-18, NIV).

2. "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior" (Habakkuk 3:17-18, NIV).

A. Manifested in Difficult Times

1. "It has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ" (Philippians 1:13, NIV).

B. Manifested in Everyday Living

1. "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Philippians 2:12-13, NIV).
2. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28, NIV).
3. "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe" (Philippians 2:14-15, NIV)

C. Manifested When Facing Death

1. "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body" (Philippians 1:21-24, NIV).
2. "For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (II Timothy 4:6-8, NIV).

II. LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF TRIALS

A. Enhances Your Faith

1. "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39, NIV).

B. Teaches Submission

1. “To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (II Corinthians 12:7-10, NIV).

C. Helps Us Appreciate the Good Times

1. “I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread” (Psalm 37:25, NIV).
2. “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:12-13, NIV).

III. THE STRENGTH CHRIST GIVES

A. Rejoice

1. "Now then, brothers and sisters, be joyful in the Lord" (Philippians 3:1, GWT).
2. "Always be joyful in the Lord! I’ll say it again: Be joyful!" (Philippians 4:4, GWT).
3. "The joy of the LORD is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10, KJV).

B. Be Contented

1. “I’ve learned to be content in whatever situation I’m in. I know how to live in poverty or prosperity. No matter what the situation, I’ve learned the secret of how to live when I’m full or when I’m hungry, when I have too much or when I have too little” (Philippians 4:11-12, GWT).

C. Recognize God supplies all our needs

1. "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

CONCLUSION:

1. "The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way" (Psalm 37:23, KJV).
2. "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father...So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29, 31, NIV).
3. “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees. Though the arrogant have smeared me with lies, I keep your precepts with all my heart. Their hearts are callous and unfeeling, but I delight in your law. It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold” (Psalm 119:67-72, NIV).
4. "A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all" (Psalm 34:19, NIV).
5. “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time” (Hebrews 11:24-25, NIV).