

The Page Turner

11 - Living the Simple Gospel: Philippians
Church on the Park I Sunday, 26 FEB 2017

Text: Philippians 1:18-20

Theme: There's more to your story than what you think.

Intro: In this passage we see Paul's utter and complete confidence in God's delivering power. This was the secret to Paul's joy. His joy flowed from the fountain of his "earnest expectation and hope." A worried and unsure person does not have joy. But Paul was different. In his darkest hour, he said, "I will not be put to shame in anything." Here's someone who knew his God, the one who turns the pages of his story.

1) The page you are on is not the page you should stay on (Phil. 1:18-19).

- A good book is called a **page turner**. But when a book is bad, you get **stuck** and usually **stop** reading.
 - Don't let the book of your life get **stuck** in a bad spot.
- David said, "Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in **your book** before one of them came to be" (Ps 139:16).
- **David's life** was plagued with **death**. For over **ten** years, **Saul** chased him around in order to kill him. He lived in caves and hills, crying out to God for his life.
 - But then, **turn the page** of his story. The Lord delivers David and becomes king of Judah and later king of all of Israel. He leads the Jews in triumph.
- **The Lord is the great page turner**. Though, **this page** of your life may look **defeated**, there are **many more pages** to **God's story** for your **life**.
- Let's look back at **Joseph** again.
 - His story is similar to David's. His brothers **betray** him, he's **thrown** in a **pit**, he's sold into **slavery**, **betrayed** by **Potiphar's** wife and **locked** up in **prison**.
 - Yet, **turn the page** because that's not the end of the story. Soon he is lifted out of prison and becomes a father to Pharaoh and all the nations. God increases him as his name prophecies.
- Now, let's look at **Paul**.
 - At the height of his ministry he is thrown in **prison**. And things are getting worse for Paul because people are preaching with impure motives.
 - Yet he says, "**I know** that this will **turn out** for my **deliverance**..." (Phil. 1:19).
 - *What comes out of this prison?*
 - It is from this prison that some of the most important writings of Scripture come: **Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon**.
- *How are the pages in your life turned into deliverance?*

2) Prayer turns the pages (Phil. 1:19).

- Paul makes it clear how "this will **turn out** for my **deliverance**" (Phil 1:19).
 - Today, I just want to **focus** on the **first way** the **pages** are **turned**.
- "For I know this will turn out for my deliverance **through your prayers**..."
- It was through **not just his own prayers**, but the **prayers of God's people**.
 - Remember, how I said last week that you can **move too fast**.
 - Well, the **converse** is also true—you can **move too slow**.

- *How do you move to slow?*
- By **not fervently praying**.
 - Without **praying** with **God's people** your life **slows down** and gets **stuck** in **pain and tragedy**.
 - Prayer is not meant to be just a thing you do with **you and your family**—it's meant to bring **all the people of God together**. This is how we **bear one another's burdens**.
 - *Have you ever read a book and got so bogged down in the boring bits that you stopped reading?*
 - If you don't pray together with God's people that is what happens. **The pages of your story never get turned**—you get stuck, bogged down. As Paul said, your faith gets **shipwrecked** (1 Tim. 1:19-2:1ff).
 - It's like the **record** of your life keeps **skipping**, keeps **repeating** itself—you **never breakthrough**.
- I'd like to show you **two examples** of this: 1) **Peter** in prison and 2) **Paul's** near death experience.
 - Acts 12:1-5: Peter in prison at the times James was martyred
 - "So Peter was kept in the prison, but **prayer** for him was being made **fervently** [*ektenos*] by the church to God"
 - **Prayer** brings **God's Kingdom, power** and **angels** on the **scene**.
 - Prayer causes a **miraculous turn** of **events**.
 - When you pray, **God works** in ways you have never **seen** before or even **imagined**.
 - Don't have a **fatalistic attitude** when it comes to trials. *What do I mean?* "God must **want** me to stay and **die** in this prison—that's his **will** for me."
 - Look what **happens** through prayer: **Acts 12:6-19**
 - **Paul's** near **death** experience in **Acts 14:18-20**
 - God uses other **believers** to bring **deliverance**. Look at Paul. Acts 14:18-20
 - "But while the **disciples stood around** [**surrounded, gathered around, encircles, cf. Heb. 11:30**] him, he got up and entered the city"
 - Deliverance happens as we **surround our brothers and sisters**.
 - **Surround** them with love. **Surround** them with God's presence. **Surround** them in prayer. **Surround** them with faith. **Surround** them with God's Word. **Surround** them with help.
 - Surround them like the Joshua and the Israelites surrounded **Jericho**.
 - When they surrounded Paul, they minister **resurrection life** to him.
 - Think about it: he was **stoned** till they **thought** he was **dead**. He may have even been dead. Some think this is when God brought him to the third heaven and show him unspeakable things. This seemed to be the end, but he miraculously revived. **God turned the page through the church's love**.

3) Don't move too slow (Daniel 2:17-19).

- Don't move too **slow**. Don't get **stuck** in the darkness.
- **Reach out** to other believers.
 - When you reach out to your friends in God, you speed up the work of God in and through you.
- God's way is **community** and **friendship**
- Your **prayer life** should be **this big** (stretching out your hands) and your **public ministry** should be **this big** (showing an inch).
- Look at **Daniel's friends** when the King wants to kill all the wise men.

- They were at the brink of death, but their prayer together turned things around.

Conclusion: Jesus wants your life to be a page turner. The more you pray with God's people the quicker the pages turn in your story for your deliverance and the glorification of Jesus in your life.