



Life Group Sermon Study Notes
“Reaching the City: Not My Will ”
Pastor James Lowe – October 13th, 2019

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What are some things you need, and what are some things you want?
- Who is someone in your life you can trust, and why?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Phil 4:10-20 ESV)

The epistle Philippians was written while Paul was imprisoned, and is referred to as one of his prison letters. He notes in the first chapter that his imprisonment served as an opportunity to see the whole of the imperial guard impacted by the message of the gospel. (Phil 1:13 ESV) He most likely suspected that these would be his final days on earth and wrote this affectionate letter to encourage the faithful believers who partnered with him in the gospel. One important theme in this letter is Paul's joy amid trials. He encouraged his readers by reminding them to have joy amid adversity.

Paul shows us that if we are going to reach our city there is a cost. He found himself imprisoned, and in need. Yet despite this, he continued to have joy because the gospel was advancing, and the name of Jesus was being lifted. This gives us insight into what Paul might have meant when he wrote: *“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”* (Phil 4:13)

ESV) This saying was not about accomplishing a personal desire, acquiring great wealth, or pursuing great achievements as we might invoke this verse for. Instead, Paul was being comforted in the face of his tremendous needs and impending death by God's calling over his life to advance the kingdom. He was able to have joy and contentment amid his trials regardless of his need. When God called Paul into the ministry Ananias was commanded by God to tell the him what he was going to suffer for God's sake. (Acts 9 ESV) This is where we will find our peace as we contend to see the kingdom advance. When we have confidence in God's will for our lives and seek the kingdom first, we can find the same joy that Paul found. A few years later we know that Paul is martyred for sharing this message of the gospel. Just as Paul bore the cost of advancing the gospel in his body, the Philippian church bore the cost of advancing the kingdom by their generous giving. They did not wait until they had an abundance to give, but instead, sought the kingdom first and gave joyfully for the sake of advancing the gospel message. Because of their faithfulness to give of their time, talents, and treasure the kingdom advanced, and all of Paul's needs were met. Paul encouraged the Philippian church that because they were faithful to meet the needs of the Kingdom God would be faithful in supplying their needs.

When confronted by the need for the Gospel to advance we must ask ourselves a very important question. "Whose will is being done? My will, or God's?" As we continue to seek the kingdom first our answer will increasingly be "Not my will, but yours." We can have confidence that God is always good, and that His calling over our lives will result in the advancement of the kingdom. Are you willing to pay the cost to see the Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven?

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of the points below and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.

- Are there areas in your life where you feel you can grow in confidence of God's will?
- What are some costs you might face in reaching your city?
- What does it mean to seek the kingdom first?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as other requests you may have.

- Thank God for his provision to reach our city.
- Ask God for insights in how to impact our neighbors.
- Ask God what His will is for our life.