



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

# Mission of God: Paul the Prisoner

Bible Reading: Eph. 3:1, 13; 4:1

[Watch LIVESTREAM here at 10am](#)

[Join our post-sermon discussion on Zoom at 11am](#)

[Join our citKids Connect discussion at 11am](#)

“For this reason, I, Paul, the *prisoner of Christ Jesus* on behalf of you Gentiles...So...I ask you not to be discouraged over my afflictions on your behalf, for they are your glory...Therefore I, the *prisoner in the Lord*, urge you...” (Eph. 3:1,13; 4:1)

## I. Why is Paul in Prison?(Eph. 3:1; 4:1; Acts 22:21; 24:27; 28:16, 30)

- A. The Paradox of ‘Paul the Prisoner’
- B. ‘Paul the Prisoner’ –Victim or Victor?
- C. Arrested for speaking God’s radical truth (Acts 22:21)
- D. God verified his revelation to Paul (Acts 13-21) & Peter (Acts 10:34; 15:8-9)
- E. “For this reason...” (Eph. 3:1a; 2:11-22)
- F. “On behalf of you Gentiles” (Eph. 3:1b; Acts 13:46b-47; 14:27; 18:6b)

## II. Paul Understood His Imprisonment to be God’s Will for Him (Eph. 3:1; 4:1)

- “For this reason, I, Paul, *the prisoner of Christ Jesus...I, the prisoner in the Lord*, urge you...” (Eph. 3:1a; 4:1)
  - A. An actual prisoner of Rome or its civic authorities
  - B. In reality a prisoner “of Christ Jesus” & “in the Lord” (Eph. 3:1; 4:1)
  - C. Bringing others into the correct understanding (Eph. 3:12-13)
    1. If I’m following God, shouldn’t everything go great?
    2. Realizing that we all have access to God—“*we have...confident access thro’ faith in him*” (Eph. 3:12-13)

### III. Paul Went Deeper in Prison

- “Like a plant in harsh winter, Paul in prison was forced to put his roots down even deeper than he had yet gone...into the meaning of Jesus and his death.”—N. T. Wright
  - Paul: “I’m bound like a criminal. But the Word of God is not bound.” (2 Tim. 2:9)
- A. Paul continued to proclaim God’s kingdom & taught about Jesus (Acts 28:31; Phil. 1:12-13; 4:22)
- B. Paul found new ways – e.g. writing instead of going

### IV. What Are Our ‘Prisons’?

- A. Due to spiritual warfare
- B. Due to the difficult situations we are in (Gen. 16 & 21)
- C. Due to doing something we know we shouldn’t have done

### V. How Do We Go Deeper With God?

- A. We have access to God—“*In Christ Jesus our Lord...we have...confident access through faith in him.*” (Eph. 3:12)
- B. Developing your private world
1. Cultivate your inner garden
  2. Bible study group
  3. Silence and Solitude
  4. Music and Singing
  5. Journaling
- C. Deeper roots in community
- D. You are not too young or too old to start