



# Sermon Notes

**Topic:** Thriving in Hardship

**Bible Passage:** Philippians 1: 12-24

**Preacher:** Ps Paul Curtis

**Date:** Sunday 17th August 2025

## Study Guide Overview

- Paul's thinking is always shaped by God's call on his life (v21-24)
- He reminds us that a "big picture" approach means we focus on what really matters (15-18)
- This one purpose creates unity and provides encouragement (v14)
- Delivering us from both this life and the next (v19)
- Knowing that God is always at work, achieving his purposes (v12)

## Small Group Questions/Discussions

Read verse 21-24. Discuss Paul's attitude to life – What is obvious to you? How does life become simpler, more peaceful, when we share Paul's desire to do what pleases God first and foremost. How does God's call on your life shape your thinking?

Not everyone was doing the right thing – some were preaching Christ for all the wrong reasons but Paul says "But what does it matter" How should this attitude change and direct our thinking (1) as a church (2) and in our own individual lives? Paul's reasoning was that in the end, Christ was preached. How do we live out what really matters – how do we become the aroma of Christ?

The church at Philippi was under persecution. How does this attitude "what really matters" strengthen the church? What is the danger of being divided if persecution comes our way? Later on in the letter, Paul talks about living a life worthy of the gospel – what does that mean? What effect does it have on us when we see people living out their faith, giving off the aroma of Jesus, even in the midst of difficulty?

When we focus on what really matters, God delivers us. Paul certainly had his mind on heaven, but in what other ways are we delivered? Paul was in prison, but was filled with joy – why? What is your response to these statements: *We either have **God's peace** or we are trapped by the **world's pain**. We are either **delivered** from all the rubbish or we **live in it**.*

In v12, Paul reminds us that his being in jail turned out to be the best outcome. How could this be – what 2 things happened as a result and both meant Christ was preached even more effectively. When you look at Paul's situation, you see God working in the background. How does this change the way we look at life when it feels like we are trapped in prison. Consider another statement, if it really does matter, then God is in control of it. What is your response? What really mattered to Paul above everything else – how will that shape our thinking this week?