



SERIES: Philippians (May / June)

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Monday, May 10, 2021

Scripture: Philippians 1:15-18

TITLE: Truth Or Motivation?

What's more important? Truth or motivation? In other words, if you had to rank speaking truth with wrong motives, or speaking lies with sincere motives, which is better? I mean, telling someone that the diagnosis is terminal might be the truth, but delivered through a phone call from an uncaring office person might seem pretty harsh. Likewise, getting a call from the doctor who tells the patient they're fine, because the news is just too hard to handle – that is actually cruel.

So what's better? Truth or motivation?

What about when it comes to theology and doctrine? What matters more? Doctrine or motivation? Paul has the answer for us in Philippians 1. And the answer might surprise you, as it surprised me. Here's what Paul said:

“Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. ¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.” (Phil.1: 15-18, ESV)

There's Paul sitting in his apartment on house arrest, and he turns on the TV, and there's a televangelist with his preacher sneakers, looking fly and spouting off the Gospel. Okay, well, that's not exactly what Paul did, but Paul is aware of people sharing the Gospel out of wrong motives. They aren't doing it just to see the Gospel expand, but they want to be the top evangelist and church planter. They are preaching the true Gospel, but their motives stink. They want to tease and torment Paul, who's in chains awaiting trial. Paul's response to these people is quite shocking. He says, “So what? Whether they want to make me feel bad, or glorify God, they are preaching the true Gospel. The real Christ is on the move. For that reason, I celebrate.”

Doctrine or motivation? Paul says, “Doctrine.” Now, Paul's not saying that these men are good men. They are pretentious, and that offends God, but regardless of motivation, the true Gospel is being preached. That gives him reason to celebrate.

It's like on a sports team, you may not care for a certain player, but as long as the pass is complete, and the points are scored, who cares who did it? That's Paul's point.

So here's my challenge for you today: choose joy, in spite of the challenge, conflict, or division. Doctrine matters. Motivation matters as well. But regardless of the external circumstances, we can choose joy. We can face opposition, rejection, competition, manipulation, and hesitation, but as long as Christ remains, we win. Our joy is not dependent upon our circumstances, but on our Savior. So today, choose joy.