

MESSAGE NOTES

Shine Like Stars

To Live is Christ and to Die is Gain

Philippians 1:12–26 (NIV)

¹² Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴ And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

¹⁵ It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸ But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. ²⁰ I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

NOTES:

Philippians 1:12 — “What has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.”

- Paul reframes his imprisonment not as a setback, but as a strategic advance.

Philippians 1:18 — “The important thing is that in every way... Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.”

- Even when others preach with mixed motives, Paul doesn't defend his status or resent their influence. Instead, he rejoices that Christ is being proclaimed, showing that the message matters more than his reputation.

Philippians 1:21 — “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

- To live is Christ is to surrender the small, anxious self and receive each day as a gift held in His presence. In that quiet yielding, life is no longer something to control, but a space where Christ gently becomes all in all.
- “You may never know that Jesus is all you need, until Jesus is all you have.” - Corrie ten Boom

NOTES:

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

April 19, 2026

Shine Like Stars - Philippians 1:12-26

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at solanabeach.church for sermon video, message outline, resources and small group questions print version.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Get reacquainted with one another by sharing with one another about a time when you experienced joy.

CONNECT WITH GOD

The Practice of Beholding In this practice, you are invited to “behold” something. What you behold can be as ordinary as a blade of grass or as grand as a sunset. Maggie Ross defines beholding as “an understanding that does not ask for what something is, but simply opens itself to the mystery of its being”. Consider these words on the Practice of Beholding, from *The Center of Action and Contemplation*: solanabeach.church/041926

- Someone who is truly beholding is, first of all, silenced with the utter gratuity of a thing, a tree, a bird, even an insect. We find ourselves allowing it to have an inherent dignity and voice. We let it give us a leap of joy in the heart and in the senses. To behold is to allow and to taste our awe in the wonder of nature.”
- “Beholding happens when we stop trying to ‘hold’ and allow ourselves to ‘be held’ by the other. We are completely enchanted by something outside and beyond ourselves. Maybe we should speak of ‘beholding’ because, in that moment, we are being held more than really holding, explaining, or understanding anything by ourselves. We feel ourselves being addressed more than addressing something else. This radically changes our situation and perspective.”
- Make a plan to enter into a time of “beholding” each day this week. Practice it. Become aware of God’s creative presence in whatever you behold. Let yourself remain present to this practice, allowing it to become habit, as it cultivates in you an attentiveness to the gift of joy this Eastertide.
- Next week, share with your small group what you’ve discovered, how you’ve been surprised, or how you have encountered Jesus this Eastertide through the practice of beholding.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Together:** Pray for the Holy Spirit to illuminate the scripture as you read. Read Philippians 1:1-26 (our focus for this week is **1:12-26**)

- **Alone:** Reflect/journal on the following prompt, slowing down and leaving space for silence as you listen for God as you reflect:
 - Where in this passage do you sense God drawing you as you read? How might you linger there?
- **All together** or in **smaller pairs:** Share with one another.

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

If needed, read the passage again. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Consider watching the BibleProject video on Philippians solanabeach.church/041926
- Review the sermon outline.
- What do you know about the context and background of Philippians?
- What has surprised you about Philippians 1 or its context?
- What catches your attention as a central theme or argument of Paul’s in this passage?
- How does Paul describe the impact of his imprisonment on the spread of the gospel?
- In light of Easter, how does “to live is Christ and to die is gain” reshape your understanding of life, death, and what is eternal?
- How does Paul’s attitude in Philippians 1:1-26 help you to understand what it could look like to be Christlike in your own families, communities, country, and the world?
- What feels unfinished in your reflections about this passage? What questions remain?

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: explore the quote below, in connection with the passage this week.

“To live is Christ” is to surrender the small, anxious self and receive each day as a gift held in His presence. In that quiet yielding, life is no longer something to control, but a space where Christ gently becomes all in all. (from the Sermon Notes)

PRAYER

Close your time with the prayer below:

“Living Lord, you meet us in unexpected places and surprise us with the abundance of your love. Feed us by Your word and fill us with your Spirit so that we may follow you this day, and always through Jesus Christ, your son, our Savior. Amen.” (*Feasting on the Word, Liturgies for Year A, Third Sunday of Easter*)