

Small Group Discussion Guide  
Week of 3/20/16

Read Philippians 4:10-13 together.

1. Read Philippians 4:13 again. Now read Romans 8:28, James 1:16-17, and Matthew 7:9-11. What does the message of these verses seem to be? What does this say about the nature of God? What should this do for our confidence in him? Have you ever had a time when you struggled to trust God's confidence that you would like to share? Have one of the verses referenced above helped you?
2. Now read Philippians 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:12, Acts 14:21-22, and 1 Peter 4:12-19. What is the central message of these passages? Do they seem to you to contradict the message of the first verses that we read? Can this difference be reconciled? If yes, how do you suppose that we reconcile the message of each set of verses? Do you think that hard times are where we see God's goodness, or his anger, judgment and wrath in our lives?
3. Pastor Marc spoke about the vital role of context when we begin to interpret scripture. Why is context so important when we read Philippians 4:13? How does knowing the context of Philippians (that it was written by a man who was sitting in prison, who had suffered in every possible way throughout his ministry - see 2 Corinthians 11:24-27) put this verse in a different light?
4. Charles Ellicott spoke about how the contextual emphasis of Philippians 4:13 is the "bearing" of all things (not simply the "doing") through the strength of Christ. How does knowing this truth help us to see the goodness of God even in the middle of our suffering? How does this make followers of Christ to be in a far better position than those who don't know Christ?
5. What is the necessary prerequisite for us to recognize, appreciate, and appropriate Christ's supply of strength in both our good times and our hard times? See John 15:5, Philippians 3:7-11, and Matthew 13:44-46. Can we really receive the strength of Christ if he is not our only treasure? Why or why not? What does treasuring Christ alone look like in our day to day lives?

Pray together...

That we would allow the Holy Spirit to work in us to make Christ our only treasure in this life.

That we would bear up in hard times in the strength that Christ supplies, and that we would recognize all of our good time and good gifts as coming from his hand and not because of our goodness, skill, wisdom, or strength.

For the needs in the group.