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Grounders:

What chains are holding you back from joy? Typically, the answer is one that deals with our personal discomfort rather than Paul's chains referenced in Philippians. You see, Paul was imprisoned for advancing the kingdom of Christ. Our chains are often a result of advancing our own kingdoms. Paul offers us a paradigm shift that links our circumstances to Christ in order to find joy amidst suffering. We are to link our passion, perspective, and priorities to Christ (Phil. 1:12-30). If any of these three links in our chain are broken, than we will not be able to experience chains of joy.

First, *link your passion to Christ* (Phil. 1:12-18a). Paul was chained to a Roman guard for his passion for Christ. As a result of Paul's passion, the gospel advanced through the entire palace guard. Passion flows from the heart. What gets you up in the morning? What energizes you? What makes you cry? The answers to these three questions reveal your passion. Link your heart to Christ to experience joy amidst suffering.

Second, *link your perspective to Christ* (Phil. 1:18b-26). Whereas, passion is a matter of the heart, perspective is a focus of the eyes. Paul saw every opportunity as one to advance Christ's kingdom. No matter what the circumstances, Paul could exalt Christ. What is your perspective of your chains? Find a friend to pray with you to have Paul's perspective.

Third, *link your priorities to Christ* (Phil. 1:27-30). Priorities are what you do first and foremost. They are pictured in the direction of your feet. Paul challenged the church at Philippi to prioritize Christ by walking worthy of the gospel. "Worthy" is the same Greek word for scales, *axios*. It means that your walk will be balanced with Christ. This week, go first and most often where you can advance the kingdom of Christ. It might be a walk across the office to a co-worker far from God, a walk across the room to a spouse to reconcile your relationship, or a walk across the street to serve someone in need.

Your passion determines your perspective which determines your priorities. Link your heart to Christ, so that you can link your eyes to Christ, so that your feet will walk like Christ. Your chains of suffering will be transformed into chains of joy.

In Him,
Mitch