



What do you do when it seems like your life has been “locked down”? What’s still true when life comes to a standstill? Paul should know, since he spent a lot of time unable to go where he wanted. Still, he was able to thrive in his faith and his ministry. In this series we will examine his prison epistles to unlock truths that remind us that no matter what the believer is going through, there is still life!

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.

1 Rick began by pointing out that when Paul was in quarantine he took his thoughts captive (he affirmed that Jesus is still Lord and we are still blessed). *But perhaps his most surprising assertion, in view of his own difficult circumstances, was **joy is still available**.* How have you experienced that to be true in your life? Follow up: **Read Philippians 4:4**. Why is it important to see that “rejoicing” is a command?

2 I STILL have response-ability. *Life will not allow you to drift in the direction of joy. But you and I are free to choose how we will respond to circumstances we did not choose.* Why is “outlook” more critical to joy than “outcome”? Which one do you tend to focus on more? Follow up: *Paul didn’t just write this from prison; he lived this in prison.* **Read Acts 16:23-25**. How does being reminded of this help you take “response-ability”?

3 REJOICE BECAUSE... God is still worthy of praise. *Worship doesn’t need the right place; it needs the right perspective.* Have you ever heard a song of praise in a place where you did not expect it? How did that experience change you? Follow up: *Praise should not be seen as rooted in our circumstances but as grounded in God’s character.* What attributes of God’s character do you lean into the most when you are in a tough season?

4 REJOICE BECAUSE... There are still reasons to be thankful. *We live in a culture designed to*

produce discontent because it says joy can be driven, worn, remodeled, deposited, or consumed. What is the key difference between that worldview and Paul’s words? Follow up: **Read Philippians 4:6**. Why do you think Paul prefaced the command “do not be anxious” with the command to “rejoice in the Lord always”? How might rejoicing in God help us combat the worry that plagues us? What role does prayer play?

5 Rick went on to ask a pivotal question, “*Will this ‘lockdown’ steal your thanksgiving, or will you still be thankful?*” How has that been going for you (be honest)? Follow up: What can you thank God for right now (share 3-4 things you’re thankful for)? Practice: spend the first few minutes each day this week telling God what you are most thankful for.

6 REJOICE BECAUSE... Witness is still possible in this moment. *Singing in the pain always gets attention.* **Read Acts 16:25**. What do you imagine was going through the minds of the other prisoners? Follow up: The outcome of this story leads to the conversion of the jailer and his family and it says they “*were filled with joy*” (**see Acts 16:26-34**). What are some recent examples of how you’ve seen joy spread?

7 Rick closed by reminding us that “**Joy still brings freedom.**” **Read Philippians 4:7**. Why is it significant to realize that finding joy leads to freedom instead of thinking that getting free leads to joy? How has this been the case in your life?

