INTRODUCTION

- How can we rejoice in God when the world is falling apart, or even our lives or livelihoods might be in turmoil?
- Paul’s emphasis was on our right relationship with God and always remembering the Big Picture and the End Prize
  ➔ We Win and We Will be Transformed into Something Greater and more Glorious

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### Passage Comments

- Would we give up our high paying job, big house, 401k (or 201k these days) to pursue whippings, beatings, imprisonment for preaching to ingrates?
- Remember the reward at the end is blessings beyond our current comprehension

**Persecution can be Good – if it’s Pursuing God**

- The Greek word for “press on” and “pursue” is the same word Jesus used in “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” (Acts 9:4) and when Paul said “I persecuted this Way to the death” (Acts 22:4)
- Paul’s rap sheet included rejecting Christ, consenting to Stephen’s stoning; and chaining and imprisoning God-fearing men & women - all crimes worthy of him having a millstone tied around his neck and being cast into the sea
  - Most would be paralyzed with fear, regret and remorse after coming to Christ with such sins
  - Paul chose to forget his sinful past as Christ did
  - This doesn’t mean Paul was negligent in seeking forgiveness from those he harmed, but he focused on pursuing his future prize

**CONCLUSION/APPLICATIONS:**

- If we have it rough down here, rejoice in Christ your Savior
- If we have it good down here (and most Americans do), rejoice with what God has given us
- We are so blessed in America we have no excuse for not rejoicing and for not getting the job done – we must be about doing the Lord’s work with fervor while it is still day!

**NEXT WEEK: Philippians 4.** Rejoice always, be anxious for nothing, think on good things, be content, we can do all things through Christ, and God will supply all our needs