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Traders Point online, welcome. Hey, my name is Ryan and I'm one of the pastors around here. We are continuing in our series *Good News*. And I don't know about you, but I can use some good news right about now.

I can use some hope. I can use some encouragement, because maybe now, in this season more than ever, one of the characteristics or ways to describe where we are right now is this word:

stuck

Does anyone feel like that in this season? It felt like we were cruising. We were zooming along, going down the interstate, listening to our favorite song. And then boom, brake lights. And then everything came to a standstill—the brakes where you have to hit them so hard you have to swerve at the last minute so you don't hit the car in front of you. And it felt like we were stuck.

In a lot of ways, it still feels like we are stuck. We can't move. And maybe you are like me. I don't do standing still very well. Like, if I'm in traffic, I will get off the interstate and take side streets all the way home just so I don't have to sit there any longer.

I think one side of being stuck is we can't physically move forward. We can't do the thing we wanted to do. But there is another side of stuck as well. It's more on the side of when our expectations don't meet our reality. So, when we thought we would be somewhere else, but when the time came we could not go there.

For example, right now as of today I was supposed to be on sabbatical. I was going to be on a beach somewhere. As you can see, I am not. It's fine. I am fine. If I look up and squint into the lights, it's almost like I'm on a beach in front of the sun. But we can feel stuck.

And maybe it's easier to see it, and see it played out with kids. If you have kids, you know what I'm talking about. If you have ever told your kids something was going to happen, you were going to do something, and then at the last minute you couldn't, you will see a meltdown happen in front of you.

Like, if you tell your kids at breakfast, "After lunch we're going to go outside and ride bikes." From that moment, if anything changes the world will collapse. So, if you eat lunch and you're getting ready to go outside and you open the door and it is a thunderstorm, you have to tell the kids, "We can't go outside and ride bikes."

No matter what you introduce next, it does not matter, it will be met with, "This is the worst. We can't do anything. We are stuck inside."

I think for a lot of us, we've kind of adopted this persona. Kind of going into this season, it can feel like we are stuck. But I just want to say that today we are not stuck. And maybe just saying

that you are like, “Bro, speak for yourself. I’m stuck. I’m stuck like a bag of Cheetos in a vending machine. Speak for yourself.”

I hear what you are saying. And I’m not even talking about physical things. I’m not talking about external circumstances that we can’t change. I’m talking about stuck being a mindset. I’m talking about being in this space where we don’t have to be stuck with the choices we have.

We actually have some room. We have some decisions we can make. We can approach life differently in this season. The phrase that I’ve heard recently, and it has really kind of stuck with me, is:

I am Stationed not Stuck

That I am stationed not stuck. If you are sitting next to somebody on the couch right now, turn to them and say, “I’m not stuck. I am stationed.” And here is what it is to be stationed:

To be put in a specified place for a particular purpose.

And we can just see off top how that is very different from being stuck. You see, I feel stuck when I can’t move, or even when I can’t get to where I think I should be I feel stuck. Stuck leads to anger, bitterness, and eventually inactivity. But being stationed, that leads to passion, joy, and most importantly purpose.

Right now, as you are taking notes and thinking about this, which word would best describe you in this season? Do you feel stuck, or do you feel like you are stationed?

I also want to add this disclaimer before we move forward. You are never stationed in an abusive relationship. That is not what this is. That’s not this sermon. And if that’s you, that’s a conversation we would love to have. If you are in that kind of relationships, reach out to us. We would love to work through that with you. We are here for you.

Check it out. If you have a Bible or a Bible app, you can flip or scroll and get to Philippians 1. As you get there, I’m just going to give a little bit of context that will make everything we are going to read today make sense.

What we are going to see is that the letter we are reading, Philippians, is actually a letter written from a guy named Paul to a group of people in a city called Philippi. So, who is Paul? Maybe you’re wondering that right now. Who is Paul, and why do we need to know what he is talking about?

Paul is one of the most interesting men in all of history. You see, Paul was this guy who was actually on the other side of Christianity. He was one of the ones who was trying to shut down Christianity before it ever got started.

That was his job. He was there when the first person was martyred. When the first person was killed for their belief in Jesus, he was there. He has this unbelievable story where he was going out, he was going to continue to do his work and he comes face-to-face with Jesus.

He gets this really good news that shapes his life, and it moves him from trying to stop this Jesus movement to being the CEO of this whole thing. So, you can only imagine what it would have been like for Paul to sit down and have conversations with people.

The Christian mixer. "Hey, what is your name?" "Paul." "What did you do before this?" "I did this or that. But that's not important. What is important is what I am doing now."

So, from that moment, that moment that Paul got this good news from Jesus, he begins to go everywhere and to tell everyone everywhere about who Jesus is and what he has done. He gives his life to it.

And that's how he actually goes to start this church in Philippi. This is really personal to Paul. This church is the first church he starts in Europe. And even the way that he gets there is just wild. Take a look at this. This is the backstory of the church in Philippi in Acts 16:9.

*"That night Paul had a vision: A man from Macedonia in northern Greece was standing there, pleading with him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us!' So we decided to leave for Macedonia at once, having concluded that God was calling us to preach the Good News there."*

This is why Paul goes to Philippi. He goes for a very specific purpose. He went to preach the Good News about who Jesus is, what he has done, and what he is looking to do. I think it is important to see that was his purpose.

Now, whatever happened as a result of Paul spreading the Good News is awesome. But that wasn't his concern. He was being sent there, stationed there, for this very specific purpose. To spread the Good News.

For all of us, as followers of Jesus, we may be stationed in different places, both here in Indiana and around the world, but our purpose, the reason we are there is the same reason Paul went to Philippi. To spread the Good News of Jesus.

We get this purpose; it is from Jesus, in Matthew chapter 28. He tells us to, "Go and make disciples of all people. Tell them everything that I've done. Show them how to follow me. Show them what that looks like, to love like me. Baptize them. And then keep going. Continue to spread this Good News."

That is for all of us. That is our specified purpose for why we are stationed where we are stationed. Jesus gave that to us. The way we say it around here is that we exist to remove unnecessary barriers that keep people from Jesus.

That's what we're doing. That's why we are stationed where we are stationed—to remove all of the extra, to remove all of the noise so people can come face-to-face with this Good News.

That's why Paul went to preach the Good News. And, I just want us to see the beginning of the church in Philippi, because it's unbelievable. Obviously, coming from Paul getting a vision from God to go there, it's not surprising. But Paul shows up in this city and starts meeting people.

The first person he meets is this rich woman named Lydia. He shares the Good News with her and she responds. She starts following Jesus and her whole family, her whole house, starts following Jesus.

And then days go by and Paul comes face-to-face with this slave girl, who is actually be exploited and used for her gifts. And Paul, in the name of Jesus, heals this woman. But it doesn't go well. People actually get pretty frustrated at him healing this woman. They thank him by throwing him in prison.

But while he is in prison, he tells the prison guard about who Jesus was. Just think about this. This is the beginning of the church in Philippi, the church we are going to look at today. And it started with a rich woman, a slave girl, and a Roman jailer. It started with the rich, the affluent, the poorest of poor, and the middle class. Everyone in between was there, in this launch team of the church.

From the beginning diversity has been baked into the church. It was one of the things that caused people to stop and stare. It is one of the reasons people joined in on this movement. They had never seen anything like this before.

Who are these people who are loving people who don't look like them? Who are these people who are jumping lines and removing barriers? This is what the church did then, and this is what the world needs to see us do now.

But this is the beginning. This is the beginning of that church in Philippi. Paul eventually gets out of jail there. He goes on, he continues to go throughout the world starting churches, preaching the gospel.

But then years later Paul would find himself in jail again. This time when he is in jail he begins to write letters to other churches he has started, just to send them a little bit of encouragement. And that's what we're going to pick up on today in Philippians 1.

And I want us to see that this letter is personal for Paul. We may not have a name for the slave girl or for the Roman jailer, but Paul does. He knows these people. He knows this city. So, he is writing about them. And it comes right off the page. If you take a look at this, Philippians 1:3, look at what Paul says.

*“Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from*

*the time you first heard it until now. And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.”*

We all need a friend like Paul, someone who just reaches out just to let you know, “Hey, I’m praying for you. Every time I think about you, it makes me smile. I just want you to know I love you.”

I also want us to focus in on this line right here because it is too good to just pass by and not focus on it. This line alone might be why you are tuning in today. It might be why you are watching, because you need to hear this. Even in the season you are in, even when you feel as stuck as you are, look at what Paul says.

He says, *“I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work...”* Can we just say right now, wherever you are, whatever you are going through, that God’s not done? God is at work right where you are in that circumstance, even when it doesn’t feel like it, even when it doesn’t look like it, even when you feel discouraged.

Can we take a moment and celebrate? If you’re still breathing, God is still working. He is encouraging you. He is giving you the power. He is strengthening you right where you are. You are not stuck, you are stationed. And the same God that met you, whether it was last week or years ago, he is not done. He is still working.

God is incredible. But, from the outside looking in Paul realizes that some people might have some doubts. Some people might start questioning. Like Paul, “You are in prison. Are things really going the way we thought they would? Is this really a good sign? Is this slowing things down?”

And Paul, knowing and almost perceiving this is what they are thinking, he says, “I get it. I understand why you would think the way you are thinking. But I want you to know, just off the top, I’m stationed here. I want you to know that where I’m stationed does not take away from my purpose and it does not take away from what God is doing.”

Look at how he shares this with them in verse 12, *“And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ.”*

Paul says, “You may think I’m stuck. And I get that. But I want you know that because I am here, things are happening that never would have happened. Like, because I am here, the whole palace guard knows about Jesus.”

This is Paul’s mindset, and it comes up throughout his writings. He has learned to live in a way that he can be content in any situation, and he knows how to speak wherever he is, which is just an unbelievable lesson.

He says, "I know how to go from any circle that I find myself in. When I show up and I'm with the Jews, I know how to talk to the Jews. When I show up and talk to the Gentiles, anyone who is not a Jew, I know how to talk to them. When I'm in prison, I know how to talk to the prisoners. I know how to talk to the prison guard. I know how to talk to anyone so that I can share this Good News with them.

And he just wants them to know. He says, "Hey, I know from the outside looking in it looks like I'm in chains. It looks like I am chained to this prison. It looks like I am chained to these guards. I want you to know I am stationed here, so I'm not chained to them, they are chained to me.

"Everywhere I go, they have to go. Everything I say, they have to hear. So, I use it as an opportunity to get this Good News out. And I just want you to know, the whole palace guard now knows who Jesus is. Don't pity me. Don't think things are slowing down at all, because God is at work."

But for us, how easy is it to slip into that mindset of just feeling chained to the things around us, to feel stuck with the way things are going? To feel chained to our work? To feel stuck at work? To feel chained to our school, just kind of stuck there in this season?

And we just kind of wait and count the minutes until we can get out of there, or move on to the next season. But what if God is trying to do a work right where we are?

And what if what we are supposed to be doing there is taking a look around and saying, "No, I'm not going to wait or wish this away. What would it look like for me to live with purpose? What would it look like for me to be stationed here? How would things change, if my perspective changed?"

How would it change if we believe we can actually make a difference right where we are? And that's the Good News. As followers of Jesus, we have the power to make a difference. We've been commanded to make a difference.

And if you go back to Matthew there, you'll see that Jesus says, "If you do these things, if you live on mission, you can rest assured I will be with you always until the end of time anywhere you go in the world."

I just want to ask you this:

What opportunities do you have?

Because that's the way Paul approached his situations. Everything was an opportunity to fulfill his purpose. So, what would it look like for you to move in this season, to go from being stuck to stationed where you are, even if nothing else changed? That you are stationed there to bring this Good News.

You see, when COVID hit it changed a lot of things for all of us, even here as a church. For me, as a staff member, it is crazy. We were launched into a world we had never been in before. And in a lot of ways, if I'm being honest, it felt like we were stuck.

That's as plainly as I can say it. All our physical gatherings were suspended. We couldn't move forward the way we had moved forward. We had to move everything online overnight. It felt like we were stuck online.

Then, and I'm telling you, everything shifted. God changed my perspective. I remember praying and talking to God, trying to get him to show me. "What should I do? How do I respond? Help me to understand what I'm supposed to do."

God showed me that I was looking at it all wrong. This is what hit me.

The church isn't stuck online; the church is stationed online.

I'm telling you, I almost lost my mind immediately. Just that quick shift from feeling like I was stuck to saying, "No, I'm here for a specified time for a very particular purpose. That is to get the Good News out."

Stationed not Stuck

The church is not chained to online, online is now chained to the church. Within weeks, the church took over the internet like never before.

We got to see this popup everywhere, not just at Traders. Churches around the world flooded the internet with services, with sermons, with content, with FB pages, with groups, with ways to connect. We began to take over. And I began to see this shift that we are not stuck here, we are stationed here, and God is doing a work.

But I do just want to highlight for all of us to see, because maybe from where you are sitting it is hard to see the good work that God has begun here. But so much has happened. Look at this.

Since we've gone to online, 7,000 more people every single Sunday get to hear about the Good News of Jesus. 7,000 more people, people who couldn't get to a physical location before, people who hadn't heard of our church before but because you guys were spreading invites, sharing the service, now 7,000 more people, every single Sunday, get to hear about Jesus.

In this season, over 400 people have been able to find community, have been able to find relationships online. That has happened, as we went to online because we are stationed here. This is here. People who hadn't been able to reach out, hadn't been able to have connection or relationships with people, now over 400 have been able to find that.



Here is where it just continues to get even more crazy: 146 people have given their lives to Jesus, 146 people, since we've gone online, have heard the Good News and responded by saying, "I want to give everything to Jesus and follow him."

Look at this. As I say this, wherever you are, I want you to celebrate. If you can just picture how big and incredible this is. Just start celebrating right where you are—in the car, in the living room, by yourself in the truck. But look at this. Last week 31 people got baptized.

Can we celebrate all God is doing? That we are not stuck, we are stationed, and God is doing an incredible work. And we can be certain that he is going to finish it. We can be certain he is advancing his kingdom no matter what.

And, if you consider the online campus your home, I just want to put this out there for you if you started tracking with us and maybe you live outside of the Indy area, or you can't get to us here in Indy. We just want you to know that our launch of the online campus is just getting started.

We are hiring a staff. We are doing everything we can to continue to bring Jesus to you so that you can bring Jesus to your community. Be on the lookout for that because we are just getting started.

And this mindset that we're not stuck, but we are stationed, is for us as a church but it's also for us individually. You see, a lot of times we miss opportunities because we're too busy looking for a way out.

We're too busy just holding on, waiting for that next season to show up: from high school to college, from college to that first job, from that job to the job that we really want. Then we can begin to live. Then we can feel stationed. Then we can feel secured.

But what would it look like if we looked around and prayed and said, "God, maybe I'm not stuck here, but if you have called me and stationed me here, how can I make a difference?"

We believe God can use you right where you are. That your co-workers need you. That the students around you need you. That we are here to remove barriers that keep people from Jesus. How? By bringing the love of Jesus to them. To approach this season with this mindset:

You are not stuck at your job; you are stationed at your job. You are not stuck in school; you are stationed in that school. You are not stuck in this season; you are stationed in this season to make a difference and to bring the Good News of Jesus to everyone.

Here is what this looks like. It's in the little moments, the everyday, little decisions that we get to make to stand up and to speak out, to shake the environments around us. The gossip. We need you to stop it. That is a barrier that stands in the way of people to be able to hear Jesus. And when we speak up against it, when you're in the office and you hear someone just rattling nonsense about someone else, stand up. It's not enough to just not gossip yourself, but to step into the gap.



Just ask one question, "Have you said that to the person you're talking about?" Whether it's a person in the office or a Kardashian, or a celeb, whatever it is. Have you said that to them? I'm telling you, nine times out of 10: no. It will shut gossip down in a moment.

But to speak up. The toxic culture, whatever you're stepping into. We need you to stop it. Not to just let it slide or just say, "I'm not adding to it," but how can you stop it? The racism, we need you to shut it down, to stop it.

You see, if we spend our whole lives just not being something, even if we succeed, what did we become? Instead, if everywhere we are, we are stationed to say we are going to shut down things that are not of God in a moment. We need you to speak up and spread the gospel of who Jesus is.

To show the love of Jesus to a culture that desperately needs it. To live and to speak as if this is true, that all people were made in the image of God and all people deserve dignity and respect. We're going to live like it's true so that people can come to know this Jesus who changes everything. We are positioned to make a difference, stationed exactly where we are.

Paul says, "Because I'm where I am, the whole palace guard knows about Jesus. The whole palace is different." Because we are where we are, what is going to be different? Who is going to be different?

Because what we see here in this letter is that when we live like this, on mission, stationed, with a purpose, we not only affect those directly in front of us, but we give those around us the confidence and the boldness to do the same.

Look at this in verse 14, *"And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear."*

Because of his imprisonment. He was thrown in jail to stop him from doing the very thing that he is doing. But it backfired. He said, "I'm going to continue to do what I am doing." As he did that, as he was stationed there, the ripple effects were wild. They just continued to scatter from that prison all the way across the world.

People came to know about this faith. Even though this guy was in jail, he was preaching to everyone. And people around him began to change. This gave them confidence. This gave them boldness. But it was never supposed to happen that way.

But God can do incredible things, even when it feels like we're stuck. God can use our moments of bravery, moments of courage, and use them to lend to our friends and our family so that they can do the same.

This is exactly what was done to Jesus. You see, Jesus is the Son of God who came from heaven to earth to bring Good News, the one who preached a new kingdom, a new way of life,

a life uniting all people. He came to bring this news that there is now a way to be reconciled to God and reconciled to one another.

And he would come preaching this message, proclaiming this Good News. That he was the Son of God, that he was the Messiah. And people started following him by the droves. People started looking to him and listening to his teachings.

And the people, the powers that be, did not like this. So, just like with Paul, the same mindset was put, "We're going to shut this thing down before it goes any further." And they went to throw Jesus in jail. They arrested him.

And they took it a step further. They said, "We're going to make sure this doesn't go any further," and they sentenced him to death. And they hung him on a cross. They tried to frighten the people around them to show that, "This is what happens when you go against us." They tried to make people feel like they were stuck, and they didn't have a move.

And as they took Jesus out onto that cross, and they hung him up there for the whole town to see, pretty much everyone would have looked and seen a man chained to a cross. Jesus wasn't chained to a cross. The cross was chained to him.

Even what we meant to harm him, even what was meant to harm all of us, God used in that moment for all of it. That Jesus wasn't chained to that cross, it was chained to him. And with it was all of our sin. With it was everything that was keeping us from God.

Jesus said, "I'm going to take this with me. I'm going to be stationed here. I'm going to chain it to myself, and I'm going to take care of it once and for all."

And as he breathes his last breath, Jesus dies. His lifeless body thrown into a grave. At first glance, it would look like Jesus was chained to death. But as we know from this story, three days later Jesus would rise. Showing that death was chained to him. What he was doing was getting so close to it so he could vanquish it and deal with it forever, so it didn't have to be something we feared.

And he rose three days later with this Good News saying, "I am who you thought I was. I am the Messiah." And when he did this, when he stepped forward, everything changed. Because at first it looked like their plans were working. The government had shut it down. The Romans had stopped this movement.

Everyone had scattered. Everyone was in hiding. What changed? How did it go from that, to the leader being crucified and everyone hiding and running, to now this being a movement we still talk about 2,000 years later?

They saw a dead man walk. They saw a man killed one day, and then come back to life the next. And because of that, that empowered them. That strengthened them. That gave them everything they needed to go and spread this Good News to everyone they met.

That's how it got to us. We are continuing in this. We are partners in this. Nothing has us down. We are not stuck. Jesus, through his perfect life, defeated sin and death. And now has empowered us to go and make disciples.

Our purpose is to share this Good News, to live like it is true, to shake things up so that people can come to know Jesus. That's what I want to pray for us right now, that starting right now in this moment we are no longer stuck. We are stationed. We are on mission. We have a purpose, and we go from here and bring the Good News with us.

Would you pray with me?

God, we thank you so much for today. God, we thank you for what you do and how you do it. God, even when things seem like they are out of control and it seems like we are in a tough spot and we are stuck, you are working. And we can be confident in this. That you who began a good work in us are going to see it through until it is finished.

You are with us. You are empowering us. You are leading us. God, allow us to be the difference. Allow us to live stationed and not stuck. Allow us to lead out in love. Allow us to remove unnecessary barriers that keep people from Jesus. Allow us to live like your gospel is true.

Jesus, we love you. It's in your perfect name we pray. Amen.