

REJOICE

THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS



Philippians

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Lesson	Scripture	Page
Getting the Most Out of This Study		1
Lesson 1	Philippians 1:1-9	2
Lesson 2	Philippians 1:7-11	10
Lesson 3	Philippians 1:12-26	17
Lesson 4	Philippians 1:27-30	24
Lesson 5	Philippians 2:1-8	32
Lesson 6	Philippians 2:9-11	39
Lesson 7	Philippians 2:12-18	45
Lesson 8	Philippians 3:1-11	53
Lesson 9	Philippians 3:12-21	60
Lesson 10	Philippians 4:4-7	67
Lesson 11	Philippians 4:8-9	72
Lesson 12	Philippians 4:10-23	79
Appendix: Questions to Ask of Any Passage of Scripture		85

Getting the Most Out of This Study

1. Personal Preparation
 - a. Take time to read the whole letter of Philippians each week.
 - b. Work through the **Personal Bible Study Questions** before your meet with your group. This will lay the foundation for your discussion.
 - c. Listen to the sermon and take notes on the sermon after you have already become familiar with the passage.
 - d. Take time to complete Word Studies: The Holy Spirit reveals truth and helps us understand as we read scripture. However, since English is not the original language of the Bible, it is helpful to look at the original Greek or Hebrew words. We gain insight into the meaning of the text when we study the original meaning of a word. James Strong developed a resource called *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. In this book, almost every word found in the bible is identified by a number. To find these definitions, use the internet. If you want to find the original meaning of the word joy, for example, search Strong's Greek Joy #5479.
2. Group Discussion
 - a. Come prepared each week.
 - b. Discuss the **Group Discussion Questions** with your group when you meet.
 - c. Take time to pray for and with one another. We encourage you to pray scripture for each other. Each lesson gives you suggestions for scriptures that you might pray.

The Book of Philippians

Philippians 1:1-9

Lesson 1

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

4. On the internet, Search "Strong's #1401" to find a definition for *servant*. www.biblehub.com and www.blueletterbible.org are a helpful resources for finding Greek translations of our English words and adding meaning and context to the text.
 - a. Why is it significant that Paul refers to himself and Timothy as servants?
 - b. Read Romans 1:1 and Titus 1:1. Note what is different from the salutation in Philippians 1:1. As you think about the overall message to the Philippians, what might Paul have wanted to model for them in this greeting?
5. Who does Paul address this letter to? (verse 1).
6. Write a definition for the word "saints" (Greek *hagioi*; google *Strong's #40 saints*). Why is this title meaningful to the readers? What does Paul want them to remember about who they are?
7. How does Paul greet them in verse 2?
8. Look up the following words and note why they would be significant to those who received this letter:
 - a. Grace (Strong's Greek #5485)
 - b. Peace (Strong's Greek #1515)

9. Rewrite Paul's greeting (verses 1-2) in your own words. Include what you have learned about the meanings of the words he used to bring clarity and depth to the message.

10. Read Philippians 1:3-9. How does Paul describe these saints?

11. Why is Paul thankful for them?

12. How does he intercede for them?

13. What fills Paul with joy? (verses 4-5)

14. Of what is Paul certain? (verse 6) What impact might these words have had on the ones who heard them?

15. How can you be certain that God is working within you? What does that look like in your daily life? In your relationships with others?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions do you have? What would you like to know more about?
2. Describe the relationship between Paul and the saints in Philippi. What is significant about their relationship? What is unique?
3. Why do you think Paul specifically mentions overseers and deacons in his greeting? What is he modeling to us?
4. As you read through Philippians, you identified some themes. What theme is relevant in your life right now? Why?
5. Paul is filled with thankfulness and joy because of the Philippians "partnership in the gospel". What makes someone a "partner in the gospel"? Contrast that with someone who is a casual church attender? Which are you?
6. Why are gospel partnerships necessary for believers?

7. In Acts 16:16-40, we see the beginning of the church at Philippi as the gospel spreads to that region. Read this passage together. In what ways does this story encourage you? What do you learn about the power of the gospel?

8. How is the Spirit prompting you to respond to these verses in Philippians?

Prayer

- Make a list of your gospel partners.
- Pray Paul's prayer found in Philippians 1:3-11 over them.
- Reach out to them with a note, text, or phone call and let them know you are praying for them with thankfulness.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace,^[a] both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. -Philippians 1:3-11

The Book of Philippians

Philippians 1:7-11

Lesson 2

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Philippians 1-4. What verse or theme stands out to you?

2. Read Philippians 1:7-11.

3. How does Paul feel about the Philippians? (see Philippians 1:7; 1:8; 4:1) Why?

4. What does Paul mean when he says that they are "partakers with me of grace" in verse 7?

5. In verses 9-11, Paul prays for them. Make a list of what he prays for them.

6. Google these words in Strong's Concordance:
 - a. love (Strong's #26)

 - b. discernment (Strong's #144)

 - c. knowledge (Strong's #1922)

7. Paul prays that their love would abound or increase. How would you define love after reading these verses?
 - a. 1 John 3:11-18

 - b. Ephesians 5:2

8. Describe someone whose life is characterized by an increasing or abounding love for the lost? for Christ? for their neighbors? for our city?

9. How is knowledge connected to love and what knowledge is Paul referring to in verse 9?

10. Why is it essential that this love is rooted and grounded in the knowledge of God?

11. Why is it essential that love is paired with discernment?

12. Describe the impact that a love like Paul prays for would have on those who see and experience it (verses 9-11).

13. Do you find it easy or difficult to love like this? If it's difficult, ask the Holy Spirit to help you see the obstacles in your life that get in the way. Pray the words of Paul's prayer for yourself and others.

And it is my prayer, that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the glory that comes through Christ Jesus, to the glory and praise of God. - Philippians 1:9-11.

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions do you have? What would you like to know more about?
2. List categories of people in our church. How might you specifically pray for each of them?
3. List ministries in the church. How might you specifically pray for each ministry?
4. Think of some ways to pray for your Renew Group members.
5. In what ways are you growing in love toward the lost? Christ? Your neighbors? Our City? Where is that growth seen in your life? In what ways has that love for others changed your priorities and impacted the way you live?

6. Is your life characterized by love with knowledge and discernment? If not, which is truer of you: loving, knowledgeable, discerning? What would it look like to become a person who lives a life characterized by love with knowledge and discernment?

7. Imagine that one of your Christian friends is struggling to believe that God is working in their life. What might you say to them to encourage them? Use the truths that Paul told the Philippians in this first part of his letter.

Prayer

Fill in the blanks with your name and the names of your friends/family. Then pray.

For this reason, because I have heard of _____ faith in the Lord Jesus and _____ love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for _____, remembering _____ in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give _____ the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of _____ hearts enlightened, that _____ may know what is the hope to which he has called _____, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward _____ who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

-Galatians 1:15-23

The Book of Philippians

Philippians 1:12-26

Lesson 3

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Philippians 1:12-26.
2. What does Paul “want them to know”?
3. What good has come from his imprisonment?
4. In verses 15-18, Paul contrasts his friends with his rivals. Use these verses to fill out the chart below with what you learn. (Break down the verses into words or phrases)

Verse	Paul's Friends	Paul's Rivals
Verse 15		
Verse 15		
Verse 16-17		
Verse 16-17		
Verse 16-17		
Verse 18		

5. Reflect on the chart above. How would you describe a friend of Paul? How would you describe a rival of Paul? Regardless of motives, what is important? (Verse 18b).

10. Why does he struggle to choose which is best? (verses 24-26)

11. What is the source of Paul's joy?

12. Fill in the blank: *For me to live is* _____.

13. Do you experience the kind of joy that Paul describes? If not, what prevents you from rejoicing?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions do you have? What would you like to know more about?
2. What difficult, or even life threatening, circumstances are you facing? What does Paul want you to know as you face these things?
3. Think about what you might say to a friend whose life is hard right now? How might Paul's story and experience help you to enter into these hard places with them?
4. In what ways do you struggle to understand or agree with Paul's perspective on living and dying?

5. What would it look like for you to live your life committed to other believers' *progress and joy in the faith*? Be specific. What changes are necessary in your life for this to happen? Where do you see this happening now?

6. Where does Paul find joy?

7. Do you experience the kind of joy that Paul describes? If not, what is robbing you of your joy?

Prayer

Pray the words of the psalmist found on Psalm 91. Make it personal.

Those who live in the shelter of the Most High
will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
This I declare about the Lord:
He alone is my refuge, my place of safety;
he is my God, and I trust him.
For he will rescue you from every trap
and protect you from deadly disease.
He will cover you with his feathers.
He will shelter you with his wings.
His faithful promises are your armor and protection.
Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night,
nor the arrow that flies in the day.
Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness,
nor the disaster that strikes at midday.
Though a thousand fall at your side,
though ten thousand are dying around you,
these evils will not touch you.
Just open your eyes,
and see how the wicked are punished.
If you make the Lord your refuge,
if you make the Most High your shelter,
no evil will conquer you;
no plague will come near your home.
For he will order his angels
to protect you wherever you go.
They will hold you up with their hands
so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.
You will trample upon lions and cobras;
you will crush fierce lions and serpents under your feet!
The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me.
I will protect those who trust in my name.
When they call on me, I will answer;
I will be with them in trouble.
I will rescue and honor them.
I will reward them with a long life
and give them my salvation."

The Book of Philippians

Philippians 1:27-30

Lesson 4

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Below you will find Philippians 1:27-30 printed in 4 different translations: ESV, NIV, NLT, and NASB and 1 paraphrase: The Message. Read through each passage several times. As you read, note the transitions, key words, context, and themes in each. Then compare the passages. Where are the similarities? Where are the differences? What message is Paul communicating?

New International Version:

27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. 29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

English Standard Version:

27 Only let your manner of life be worthy^[a] of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, 28 and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. 29 For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, 30 engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

New Living Translation:

27 Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News. 28 Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself. 29 For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him. 30 We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it.

New American Standard Bible:

27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one [a]mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 28 and in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and this too, from God. 29 For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer on His behalf, 30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

The Message:

27-30 Meanwhile, live in such a way that you are a credit to the Message of Christ. Let nothing in your conduct hang on whether I come or not. Your conduct must be the same whether I show up to see things for myself or hear of it from a distance. Stand united, singular in vision, contending for people’s trust in the Message, the good news, not flinching or dodging in the slightest before the opposition. Your courage and unity will show them what they’re up against: defeat for them, victory for you—and both because of God. There’s far more to this life than trusting in Christ. There’s also suffering for him. And the suffering is as much a gift as the trusting. You’re involved in the same kind of struggle you saw me go through, on which you are now getting an updated report in this letter.

Observations:

2. The opening of this portion of the letter is translated *only, meanwhile, above all, whatever happens*. What message do these words convey?

3. To help gain a more complete understanding of the meaning of this letter, it is helpful to remember the context. Philippi was a Roman colony and the people who lived there were Roman citizens, proud of their citizenship. When Paul exhorts them to “conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel”, why is this significant and how might the Philippians’ prior experiences give meaning and understanding to Paul’s message?

4. List the 3 characteristics of one whose life is worthy of the gospel of Christ.

A.

B.

C.

5. Philippians 1:27-28 emphasize unity and teamwork. What is the foundation for these important things?

6. Read Ephesians 4:1-16. How does this passage add to your understanding of the importance of unity and teamwork in the body of Christ?

7. Why do they not need to be afraid of their opponents? What words of hope does Paul give?

8. What 2 "gifts" can believers expect to receive? (verse 29). Why are these "gifts"?

9. Describe the suffering that Paul is talking about in these verses. What is the source of their suffering?

10. When Paul was afraid because he faced opposition in Corinth, how did God encourage him? Read Acts 18:9-10.

11. When Paul was suffering in Ephesus, how did God comfort him? Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-11?

12. How does Paul suggest that Christians respond to suffering and persecution?

13. What comfort do these verses give you?

14. Reflect on Philippians 1. Write a one sentence definition of the mission that drives and motivates Paul.

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions do you have? What would you like to know more about?
2. What is necessary for a unified stand against opposition?
3. How should God's people treat each other? Read Colossians 3:12-17.
4. Is there anything that you need to confess to each other or to God about ways you have not acted as one of "God's chosen ones".
5. This passage uses military language to connect in a meaningful way with the readers. In what ways is the Christian life like a war? What weapons do we have to fight this war?
6. What did Ephesians 4:1-12 and Philippians 1:27-30 teach you about conducting yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel?

Prayer

Pray these words for and with each other.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. -Colossians 3:1-4; 12-17

The Book of Philippians

Philippians 2:1-8

Lesson 5

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Philippians 2:1-8. Why is unity an essential element in a successful mission? (Think about your answer to Lesson 4 Question 14).
2. Philippians 2:1-4 focuses on the internal unity of the church. Verse 1 begins with the preposition "if" which can be translated "since". *Since* therefore we are on this gospel advancement mission together, *then* . . . How does Paul connect the struggle for the gospel with the internal unity of the Philippian church?
3. Paul speaks to the believers from his heart in verses 1-2. What is the foundation of their relationship (verse 1) and how does he say they will complete his joy (verse 2)?
4. Read Philippians 2:3-5 and list the things the Philippians can do to accomplish this unity of purpose.
5. What role does the Spirit play in this unity?
6. One huge threat to unity in the church is pride. How does Paul encourage the Philippians to fight pride?
7. Define humility. (Strong's Greek #5012) Give some real-life examples of humility.

8. As Paul helps the Philippians gain a deeper understanding of what humility is and how to have the "mind of Christ", he points them to Jesus, the supreme example of humility in all the universe. Describe Jesus in light of Philippians 2: 5-8.

9. Read the following verses and record what they say about who Jesus is.
 - a. Matthew 28:18

 - b. John 1:1-4, 14, 18

 - c. John 10:30

 - d. Acts 2:36; Romans 10:9

 - e. Ephesians 1:20-23

 - f. Colossians 2:8,9

10. Why is a proper understanding of Jesus's deity essential to understanding his humiliation?

God is sovereign over all creation, but He is not aloof, far removed from those whom He has created. The incarnation proves this, showing us that we serve a Lord who is not a part of His creation but is nonetheless willing to enter into it for the sake of our salvation. As Paul tells us in Philippians 2, the Son of God took on the form of a servant. He loved us enough to come where we are and save us. Let us praise Him this day for His love and mercy. -R.C Sproul, The Humiliation of Christ

11. Read John 13:1-15. Describe the conversation between Jesus and Simon Peter. How does this interaction between Jesus and his disciples display humility? What does Jesus teach us about the community we belong to as followers of Christ and how it is meant to function?

12. Write a prayer of thanks to Jesus for what he has done for you.

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions do you have? What would you like to know more about?
2. What is the mindset of our unique community of believers? Do we have the mind of Christ? In what specific ways do you see this?
3. How would our community change if we lived out Philippians 2:5-11? What impact might having the mind of Christ have on your relationships?
4. Who speaks truth into your life to encourage you to live as one of God's chosen people, help you see your sin, and come alongside you as you seek to believe?
5. Read Colossians 3:12-17. What are the characteristics of a community of God's chosen ones?

6. How does a thankful heart transform the way you view and respond to others? How does a thankful heart impact your relationship with God?

7. Is your heart thankful? If not, confess your struggles to God and ask him to fill your heart with gratitude.

8. Read Isaiah 53. Reflect on Jesus's humility. What resonates with you? What challenges you?

Prayer

Consider these words of Paul in Philippians 2:5-8. Ask God to give you the same mindset of Christ Jesus.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

-Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV)

The Book of Philippians

Philippians 2:9-11

Lesson 6

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Philippians 2:9-11.
2. Verse 9 begins with *therefore*. Look back to the previous verses to identify the context of this verse? Why is *therefore* there?
3. Who is the subject, or the one taking action, in verse 9? Who is the object of His action?
4. What action is taken and how does this vindicate Jesus?
5. Read Isaiah 45:22-25 and note the similarities between this passage and Philippians 2:9-11.
6. What does Paul tell his readers in Romans 14:10-12 about Jesus's lordship?
7. Skim Isaiah 40-48 and highlight references to the LORD. How do these verses give you hope?

12. Reflect on this quote from John Piper:

What name did Jesus receive after his resurrection that he did not have before? Not "Jesus." Jesus is precisely the name of the humble Servant who went to Calvary. In Acts 2:36 Peter says, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." It was his lordship and Messiahship - his messianic lordship - that was bestowed on him at his exaltation. Not that he wasn't Messiah and Lord before his resurrection. He was. But he had not fulfilled the mission of Messiah until he had died for our sin and risen again. And therefore, before his death and resurrection, the lordship of Christ over the world had not been brought to full actuality. The rebel forces were yet undefeated, and the power of darkness held the world in its grip. In order to be acclaimed Messiah and Lord, the Son of God had to come, defeat the enemy, and lead his people out of bondage into triumph over sin and Satan and death. And that he did on Good Friday and Easter . . . The name that is above every name, therefore is Lord - the Lord victorious over all his enemies; the Lord who has purchased a people from every tribe and tongue and nation. John Piper "And All the Earth Shall Own Him Lord" -Desiring God, October 24, 1982

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions do you have? What would you like to know more about?

2. Reflect on the passages from Isaiah. Is Jesus your only hope today?

3. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, your citizenship is not of this world, it is in heaven. How does 1 Peter 2:9-12 challenge you to life in light of this identity today?
 - a. How does Peter describe believers?
 - b. What is the shared work of God's chosen ones?
 - c. Why does Peter urge us (Christians) to view ourselves as exiles, sojourners, or foreigners in this world?
 - d. How should God's people live?

4. One day all creation will bow their knee and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. To get a picture of what this day will be like, read Revelation 21:1-8.

5. Think of someone in your life who does not yet call Jesus Lord. What might you say or do to share Jesus with that friend?

Prayer

Read the question and answer to the Heidelberg Catechism: Lord's Day 1 found below. Thank God for the comfort, hope, and joy that is yours because of what Jesus Christ did on your behalf

Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A. That I am not my own,¹ but belong—body and soul, in life and in death²—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.³

He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood,⁴ and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.⁵ He also watches over me in such a way⁶ that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven;⁷ in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.⁸

Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life⁹ and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.¹⁰

The Heidelberg Catechism; Lord's Day 1

Spend some time reflecting on these verses together.

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father - Philippians 2:9-11

The Book of Philippians

Philippians 2:12-18

Lesson 7

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Philippians 2:12-18.
2. How does Paul begin this section of the letter and what does he want the Philippians to remember? (What is "therefore" there for?) Remember Philippians 1:27.
3. Paul refers to the Philippians as *my dear friends*. What inferences can you make about their relationship and their receptivity to Paul's exhortation?

Paul commands the Philippians to live out the implications of the gospel individually and corporately. To help them understand what this looks like, Paul makes three connections:

- a. Working out your salvation *and* God's work in you (verses 12-13)
 - b. Grumbling and arguing caused by disunity *and* shining like stars in a dark world (verses 14-16)
 - c. Living life as a living sacrifice *and* rejoicing in the Lord (verses 16-18)
4. Define *justification*. (Strong's #1344)
 5. Define *salvation*. (Strong's #4991)
 6. Compare and contrast these definitions.

7. When Paul tells them to work out their salvation, does this mean that they are the initiators and completers of their salvation? What insight do these verses give you as you answer this question?

- a. Romans 4:5

- b. Romans 11:6

- c. I Corinthians 6:11

- d. Romans 5:1

- e. Romans 8:29-30

- f. 2 Peter 1:10-11

Although the Philippians must work out their salvation, their salvation does not come at their own initiative. They should work out their salvation with a seriousness appropriate to those who look forward to salvation on the final day, but they should remember at all times that the whole process leading to their acquittal on that Day is there neither to initiate nor to complete. It is God's from first to last. Thielman, NIV Commentary, page 138.

8. In verse 14, Paul tells them to do everything without _____ and _____, so that _____.

9. What is at stake if they fail to heed Paul's words?

10. Can you think of another example in scripture where God's people were grumbling and complaining?

The word Paul uses in Phil 2:14 is the same word used by Moses when he described the attitude of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness. Read more of this story in these passages:

g. Exodus 16:2-9; 17:3

h. Numbers 11:1; 14:2, 26; 17:5-25

Paul is helping the new believers in the Philippian Church make connections to God's people in the Old Testament. It is important for them to know that they are all God's people and the new believers might learn from the mistakes of those who came before. Modern day Christians can also learn from the past. When tempted to complain, what does Paul want us to remember?

11. Why do the Philippians need to stop the dissension and disunity? (verses 14-16)

12. How might the disunity and disputes among them have threatened Paul's ministry?

13. Take time to ponder a few more sweet connections to God's people in the Old Testament. What connection to this passage do you see in Deuteronomy 32:4-5? Remember that Deuteronomy 31:30-32:37 is the song that Moses sang about the generation of Israelites whom God freed from slavery to the Egyptians.

14. How do we see the fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah (Isaiah 42:6-7; 49:6) come to fruition as we consider the lives of the Philippian believers?

15. Why does Paul rejoice?

16. How did viewing himself as a drink offering, or a living sacrifice, shape Paul's ministry to others?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions do you have? What would you like to know more about?
2. Why were Paul's admonitions to the church in Philippians 1:1 and 1:27 necessary for their community to hear?
3. What is at the root of our disunity? When we live our lives in pursuit of our own selfish ambitions, what effect does this have on others, ourselves, the Church, and the watching world?
4. When tempted to complain, what might you replace the complaining and grumbling with?
5. How does infighting (quarreling and complaining) affect the people of the church?

6. Take time to consider your thoughts, words, and actions this past week. Identify times when you have sinned against God or another person. Confess this sin to God. Repent and believe that God is able to forgive you. If you have sinned against another person, go to them and ask them to forgive you.

7. Why does Paul rejoice?

8. How does viewing yourself as a drink offering, or a living sacrifice, shape your ministry to others?

Prayer (from Psalm 51)

Have mercy on me, O God,

because of your unfailing love.

Because of your great compassion,

blot out the stain of my sins.

Wash me clean from my guilt.

Purify me from my sin.

For I recognize my rebellion;

it haunts me day and night.

Against you, and you alone, have I sinned;

I have done what is evil in your sight.

You will be proved right in what you say,

and your judgment against me is just.

Oh, give me back my joy again;

you have broken me—

now let me rejoice.

Create in me a clean heart, O God.

Renew a loyal spirit within me.

Do not banish me from your presence,

and don't take your Holy Spirit[d] from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,

and make me willing to obey you.

Then I will teach your ways to rebels,

and they will return to you.

The Book of Philippians

Philippians 3:1-11

Lesson 8

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Philippians 3:1-11.
2. Write out the first sentence in verse 1. In the verses that follow, Paul gives the Philippians a stern and graphic warning. Describe the attitude of Paul's heart (verse 1) as he gives this warning (verse 2). What might we learn from this example?

3. Who does Paul tell them to "look out" for? Who are these people?

4. How would you characterize the words Paul calls them? Why does he give such a graphic warning?

Note: "Dogs" was the term that the Jews used for Gentiles. Think about how this adds dimension to the warning that Paul gives. Paul is calling the Judaizers dogs.

5. How would the message of these false teachers be destructive to those who were rejoicing? see Galatians 2:2-9 and Galatians 5:7-12

6. What types of questions might they have asked them? What doubt might they have placed in their hearts and minds? How did they distort the truth of the gospel?

7. What is circumcision and what spiritual significance did it have for the Jews? See Genesis 17:9-14.

8. What does Paul mean when he says *we are the true circumcision*?

9. Paul compares the Judaizers (dogs, mutilators of the flesh) with authentic believers. How are they different? Where does each place their confidence?

10. How would these verses answer the question: *Is God more concerned with circumcision of the flesh or circumcision of the heart*?
 - a. Jeremiah 4:4; 9:25

 - b. Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6

 - c. Romans 2:25-29

 - d. Galatians 5:6; 6:15

 - e. Colossians 2:11-12

11. Summarize what you learned from the verses above.

12. List the false confidences that Paul warns against in Philippians 3:5-6.

13. How does this comparison (verses 4-11) Paul makes with the Pre-Christian Paul and the Judaizers provide a theological rationale for rejecting their position on circumcision?

14. The danger that Paul warns against is adding to the gospel, or creating a "gospel plus" theology. In this case, the Judaizers were teaching that in order to be saved, you needed to have faith in Christ and be circumcised. How does Paul warn against this in Galatians 1:6-10?

15. When Paul says that he wants to know Christ, share in his sufferings, and attain the resurrection of the dead, what does he mean?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions do you have? What would you like to know more about?
2. On what grounds will a believer stand before God on the final day?
3. Why do we need Christ's righteousness? What does it mean to glory in Christ Jesus?
4. Why does adding rites and rituals to the work of Christ destroy the work he has done on our behalf?
5. In verse 1, Paul says that it's no trouble for him to write the same things to the Philippians again. Repetition. What words, ideas, or themes have been repeated so far in this Epistle? Why is this repetition important?
6. What does Paul say about people who are concerned about outward rituals?

7. What does it mean to put no confidence in the flesh and why is putting confidence in the flesh worthless?

8. After reading this chapter in Philippians, how would you describe a Christian?

9. Where are you placing your confidence, hope, and trust?

The Good News is not do your best. The Good News is that your best is not good enough". Alistair Begg

Prayer

To you, O Lord, I cry,

and to the Lord I plead for mercy:

“What profit is there in my death,

if I go down to the pit?

Will the dust praise you?

Will it tell of your faithfulness?

Hear, O Lord, and be merciful to me!

O Lord, be my helper!”

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;

you have loosed my sackcloth

and clothed me with gladness,

that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent.

O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!

Psalm 30:8-12

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. -1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

The Book of Philippians

Philippians 3:12-21

Lesson 9

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Philippians 3:12-21.
2. Identify the 2 main concerns that Paul shares in these verses.
3. Paul makes it clear that he is not perfect and that he has not yet attained spiritual perfection. In light of that understanding, where has he placed his focus and energy?
4. Read and reflect on these accounts from Acts that describe the time that Christ “took hold of Paul” or “made Paul his own”.
 - a. Acts 9:1-19
 - b. Acts 22:3-16
 - c. Acts 26:9-18
5. What imagery does Paul use as he describes his perspective and attitude as a follower of Christ?

6. Is Paul resting on his past successes for his spiritual growth? Why or why not? How do these verses explain this?
 - a. Philippians 1:10; 2:14-18

 - b. I Corinthians 1:8

 - c. I Thessalonians 3:13

 - d. I Thessalonians 5:23

7. What is the *one thing* (verse 13) that Paul does? How does he do this?

8. Think of the "prize" that Paul presses toward. Why is this "call" both a reminder and a source of hope to believers in the past and believers today?
 - a. I Corinthians 1:26-31

 - b. I Thessalonians 2:12

 - c. Galatians 1:6

 - d. Ephesians 1:15-18; Ephesians 4:4-5

9. Philippians 3:15 refers to those in Christ who are mature, or perfect. "When Paul applies this word to believers, it has the connotation not of perfection in the ultimate sense but of a maturity necessary to distinguish the wisdom of God from the wisdom of the world and to use spiritual gifts appropriately." (Thielman, The NIV Application Commentary, page 196).

(see I Corinthians 2:6; Colossians 1:28; I Corinthians 14:20, Ephesians 4:11-13).

Why is this important for the Philippians to understand?

10. How should "those of us who are mature" think? Refer to verses 12-14.

11. What is Paul referring to in verse 16?

12. How does Paul describe the enemies of the cross that the believers need to guard against? Where are their minds set?

13. What are some indicators that someone who claims to be a Christian isn't? How can believers identify them?

14. How does he tell the believers to guard against them?

15. List the hope and assurance that believers have found in Philippians 3:20-21.

16. Which of these truths is most meaningful to you?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions do you have? What would you like to know more about?
2. Are you a *one thing* person, like Paul was? Name some things in your life that keep you from focusing on *one thing*.
3. What would it look like for you to pursue the *one thing* that matters in life?
4. Compare the enemies of Christ (verse 19) with the disciples of Christ (verses 20-21).
5. Do you ever grow weary? Do you ever get tired of pressing on toward the prize? Read Hebrews 12:1-3 and share the words of encouragement that you find there.
6. How might you *press on toward the goal* of knowing Christ and becoming more like him this week? Be specific.

Prayer

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints . . . -Ephesians 1:15-18

The Book of Philippians

Philippians 4:4-7

Lesson 10

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Philippians 4:4-7.
2. How does Paul begin this section?
3. *When* are we to rejoice?
4. Where does he find joy?
5. Identify the four admonitions that Paul gives in verses 4-7.
 - a. Verse 4:
 - b. Verse 5:
 - c. Verse 6:
 - d. Verse 7:
6. Write the definitions of the following words:
 - a. Rejoice (Strong's #5012)
 - b. Reasonableness (ESV); gentleness (NIV) (Strong's #1933)
 - c. Anxious (Strong's #3309)
 - d. Peace (Strong's 1515)

7. Why might Paul have written these words to the Philippians? Think about their background and their life situations.

8. Why were they anxious?

9. How does Paul address their heart attitudes and the lens through which they view life?
 - a. Romans 12:17-21

 - b. I Peter 2:23; 3:8-9

 - c. Isaiah 53:7-9

 - d. I Peter 5:6-7

10. What do they need to remember? Philippians 4:5 Why would this truth be a comfort?

11. What is the peace of God? See 2 Corinthians 1:3-11.

12. Read Matthew 6:25-34 - How does the Good Shepherd speak into our anxious souls? What does he want us to know?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions do you have? What would you like to know more about?
2. Describe a time when you experienced the peace of God.
3. How would you explain the “peace of God” to another person?
4. What happens to our joy when we live a life filled with anxiety?
5. Make a list of everything you are anxious about this week, or today.
6. What does God want you to know about your list?
7. What is the antidote to an anxious heart?

Prayer

As you read these verses, prayerfully consider the truths that God wants you to know.

The Lord is my light and my salvation;

whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life;

of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm 27:1

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.

The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:4-7

Fear not, for I am with you;

be not dismayed, for I am your God;

I will strengthen you, I will help you,

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

-Isaiah 41:10

The Book of Philippians

Philippians 4:8-9

Lesson 11

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Philippians 4:8-9.
2. What thoughts fill your mind? Are they the virtues that Paul lists in verse 8?
3. List and define the virtues that Paul exhorts the Philippians to think on.
 - a. Whatever is

 - b. Whatever is

 - c. Whatever is

 - d. Whatever is

 - e. Whatever is

 - f. Whatever is

 - g. If anything is or
4. How far reaching is Paul when he uses the word "whatever"? Is he implying that these virtues are only found within the context of Christianity? Why or why not?

5. Having the mind of Christ, or growing in likeness to Jesus, means that our minds are renewed. We think differently. How do the following verses describe this?
 - a. Romans 12:1-2

 - b. Ephesians 4:20-23

 - c. Psalm 139:23-24

 - d. 2 Corinthians 10:15

6. How does the Word of God renew our minds?

7. Paul tells the Philippians to imitate him (verse 9). Why imitate Paul? What shapes his example and teaching?
 - a. 1 Corinthians 4:17

 - b. 1 Corinthians 11:1

8. In Philippians 4:9, Paul uses four verbs that reflect the relationship Paul has established with them and the ways he has taught them. Identify these four verbs.

9. Give a specific example of something the Philippians learned from Paul.

10. Give a specific example of something they received from Paul.

11. Give a specific example of something they heard from Paul.

12. Give a specific example of something they saw in Paul.

13. What are the Philippians to do with these things and what will be the result?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions do you have? What would you like to know more about?

2. To help us understand what we need to fill our minds with, it is helpful to think about what not to think about. For example, if we are to think about what is *true*, then we want to avoid thinking about what is *false*.

Identify the opposites of the remainder of the virtues:

Honorable -

Just -

Pure-

Lovely -

Commendable -

Excellent -

Worthy of Praise -

3. How might understanding what we are to think, reflect, and mediate on reshape our minds, attitudes, and even actions?

Prayer

Pray this prayer for one another.

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant.^[a] He is a faithful minister of Christ on your^[b] behalf and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you^[a] to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

-Colossians 1:3-14

The Book of Philippians

Philippians 4:10-23

Lesson 12

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Philippians 4:10-23.
2. Philippians 4:10-23 and Philippians 1:3-11 are bookends to Paul's Epistle communicating and reinforcing similar messages. Compare these passages, looking for any similarities or parallels.
3. How does Paul begin this section of the letter in Philippians 4:10?
4. What is Paul thanking them for?
5. In verses 11-13, Paul talks about contentment. What does he teach about contentment?
6. Who is Paul's ultimate provider?
7. Who is his ultimate source of joy?
8. From where does contentment flow?
9. What is the difference between "self-sufficiency" and "Christ-sufficiency"?
10. How do the Philippians share Paul's troubles? Verse 14
 - a. Acts 16-17
 - b. 2 Corinthians 11:9

11. What are the benefits of a gospel partnership?

12. How does Paul communicate that fruitful and sacrificial giving has spiritual and eternal significance?

13. Read the following passages and note what Jesus says about faithfulness and fruitful giving.
 - a. Matthew 6:19-24

 - b. Luke 12:32-24

14. Where does Paul encourage the Philippians to place their trust in verse 19-20?

15. How does Paul expound on this idea in 2 Corinthians 9:6-16?

16. What strikes you about Paul's final greeting in verse 21-23?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions do you have? What would you like to know more about?
2. Paul recognizes what the Philippian church did for him and he is not only filled with joy (rejoices), but he takes time to thank them. What can we learn from his example?
3. Where does Paul say true contentment is found? see Philippians 4:13
4. Read 1 Timothy 6:6-12. Summarize Paul's main points in these verses?
5. How is your contentment affected when you live for something that "you can't take with you"?
6. What robs us of contentment?

7. Do you love Jesus more than you love the things of this earth? Ask God to give you this kind of love - where you desire Christ more than anything this world has to offer.

8. As our study of Philippians comes to a close, take time to reflect on what God has shown you through His word. What would it look like for you to live your life in light of these truths? Share your reflections with your group. Ask them to hold you accountable to live out your faith in these areas.

Prayer

Let's go back to the prayer Paul prayed for the Philippians at the beginning of his letter. End your time together, praying this prayer for one another.

*I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, **so** that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, **filled** with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. -Philippians 1: 3-11*

APPENDIX

Questions to Ask of Any Passage of Scripture

- Make a list of what you have learned about God in this passage. Write what you have learned about his attributes, his commands, his promises, his view of relationships.
- In light of what the people/the prophet in this passage did, how does that change your feelings about them? About God? What might they have been feeling as they faced the circumstances around them?
- How does what you have learned in this passage attack your idols? Use the **Idols List** in the Appendix to spur your thinking on this.
- Describe the restorative hope that is found in this passage. How does this hope of restoration bring comfort to your soul?
- Fill in the blank: The truth that God is _____ reminds me that I _____.
- How will I live out my faith in light of the truths I have learned in this passage? How does this change my relationships?

Preaching the Gospel to Yourself Every Day

The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself. You must say to your soul: "Why are you cast down" - what business have you to be disquieted? . . . And then you must go on to remind yourself of God, Who God is, and what God is and what God has done, and what God has pledged Himself to do. Then having done that, end on this great note: defy yourself, and defy other people, and defy the devil and the whole world, and say with this man: "I shall yet praise Him."

D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, *Spiritual Depressions: Its Cause and Cure* (1965, repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 21.

When we are tempted to believe that God does not care about us or that his arm is too short to save, we need to know how to handle ourselves. We need to take our soul in hand, sit ourselves down, and preach a good sermon to our hearts. That sermon cannot be about us. It does not help you to preach to yourself about your past successes in order to encourage you or to shame yourself about your past failures. That works for a little while, but pride and fear are never good long-term motivators for change. We need a different sermon altogether.

The only sermon we need has three points. It's the one that Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones preached to his congregation:

- *Who is your God?*
- *What has he already done for you?*
- *What has he pledged, by the blood of his beloved Son, to continue doing for you?*

Our God is King of all and is our loving Father. He has already broken the chains of sin and defeated death for us. He has pledged to continue the good work he began in us, and he has promised to never leave us or forsake us. The blood of his Son proves that this is true. For he is the Lord, and he has spoken - and what he speaks will surely come to pass. . . .

Preach this sermon in the face of your doubts, in the darkness of your fears, in the middle of the brokenness of your story . . . Glorify the One who is on your side, giving him your trust and loving obedience. Don't wait until everything is resolved in this life to learn to trust him.

Yell the truth of who God is and the surety of his promises to the devil when he tries to accuse you! Rehearse in your heart over and over again who your God is! Preach this sermon until you see him face-to-face.

-Abby Ross Hutto, God for Us: Discovering the Heart of the Father through the Life of the Son (New Jersey, P&R, 2019), 203-204.

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