

From the Garden to Glory

Philippians

Author: Paul the Apostle

Written to: The believers in Philippi

Timeline: c. 61 - 63 A.D. written while in a Roman prison

Theme: Joy in Jesus Christ

Purpose of writing: Paul expressed affection and thanksgiving for the gift he received from the Philippians. He taught them how to live in victory and joy in any circumstance.

Introduction:

The Philippians had heard that Paul was in prison and sent him a gift of money. Paul wrote this personal letter to them to thank them for their gift and their care for him. He encouraged them to seek unity as he had heard of problems within the church body (4:2-3). Paul challenged the Philippians to *stand fast* in the Lord, to walk humbly, to look out for each other's well-being, and to rejoice in the Lord through any circumstance.

As we begin our study of the book of Philippians consider the following questions and write your responses:

1. Read Acts 16:11-40 and make a note of what you learn about Paul, the city of Philippi, and Paul's experiences there.
2. The word *joy* is used nineteen times in the book of Philippians. Look up the word *joy* in a dictionary and write the definition. How does *joy* differ from *happiness*?

3. The theme of the book of Philippians is Joy in Jesus Christ. In what specific way are you experiencing joy in the Lord today?

Joy Triumphs over Suffering

Read Philippians 1:1-30

1. Although Paul was in a Roman prison, he had been praying for those in Philippi. He had a heart for intercession. For whom do *you* intercede? Do you have a schedule by which you pray for others? If so, how do you schedule this time? Take some time today to pray verses 9-11 for someone you love.
2. Summarize verses 12-18. These verses speak of God's providence--He rules and over rules in every area of life for His purposes. How have you experienced God's providence in your own life?
3. Read verse 20. The devotional book, My Utmost for His Highest by Oswald Chambers, is based on this verse. Chambers commented on Paul's words:

Shut out every other consideration and keep yourself before God for this one thing only--my utmost for His highest. I am determined to be absolutely and entirely for Him and Him alone.

This was Paul's aim in life. What does it mean in practical terms to give *your utmost* for the *Lord's highest*? How can you do this today?

Joy in Christ

Read Philippians 2:1-11

1. In verse 1 the word *if* means *since*. Fill in the four presuppositions that Paul mentioned in this verse.

If there is any _____, if any
_____, if any _____
_____, if any _____...

Paul was saying that these things are certainties for Christians. Which of these is the most important to you at this point in your life? Why? Look at verse 2. What should be the believer's response to the Lord's provision?

2. Write out verses 3-4. How does selfish ambition differ from godly ambition?
3. Make a note of everything you learn about the mind of Christ from verses 5-11.

- verse 6

- verse 7

- verse 8

Summarize verses 9-11.

Joy in Salvation

Read Philippians 2:12-30

1. Read verses 12-13 from The Amplified Bible, and then write your response.

Therefore, my dear ones, as you have always obeyed...so now, not only [with the enthusiasm you would show] in my presence but much more because I am absent, work out (cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete) your own salvation with reverence *and* awe and trembling (self-distrust, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ). [Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure *and* satisfaction *and* delight.

2. Look at verses 14-15. What two things did Paul say were to be avoided? Why are these behaviors such an affront to the Lord? How do you avoid these in your own life?
3. What did Paul say all sought in verse 21? What should they have sought? How can you be a woman who seeks the latter rather than the former? Be specific.

Joy in Christ's Righteousness

Read Philippians 3:1-11

1. Look at verse 3. Speaking of circumcision, Paul told the Philippian Christians that they were to *have no confidence in the flesh*. How could a Christian have confidence in the flesh today?
2. In verses 4-7 Paul listed the reasons that he could have had confidence in the flesh. What were they? Look at verses 7-8. How

did Paul consider his former achievements? Can you think of something in which you had confidence before becoming a Christian which now seems worthless?

3. Read verses 9-11 slowly and answer the following questions.

- What does it mean to be *in Him*?
- In what way are you *in Him* today?
- Define righteousness. What did Paul say was the source of righteousness?
- The word *know* in verse 10 means knowledge by experience. In what ways did Paul want to *know* the Lord?
- How do *you* want to *know* the Lord?
- What does it mean to be conformed to the Lord's death?

Joy in Christ's Will

Read Philippians 3:12-21

1. What did Paul say he pressed on to lay hold of in verse 12? What does this mean?

2. Read verses 13-14, and answer the following questions.

- Why is it important to put certain things behind you? How do you do this?

- What is one thing that you are reaching toward?

 - What is your goal? How are you pressing toward it today?
- 3.** In verses 17-21 Paul exhorted the Philippians to be careful to whom they gave positions of influence in their lives. Who were they to follow? Who were they to avoid? Why? Who has been a godly influence in your life? How did this person influence you?

Joy in Conflict

Read Philippians 4:1-9

- 1.** Look at verses 2-3. What problem did Paul address? A secondary theme in Paul's epistle to the Philippians (see also 1:27-30) is that of the danger of conflict in the body of Christ. Why is even the smallest conflict dangerous in a church?
- 2.** Write out verses 6-7. What is one thing you are anxious about today? Follow Paul's instructions and rest in the peace of God which surpasses *all* understanding.
- 3.** Define each of the things on which Paul instructed the Philippians to meditate in verse 8. Write one thing that comes to your mind when you think of each of these.
- true

 - noble

- just

- pure

- lovely

- good report

- virtue

- praiseworthy

Joy in Christ's Provision

Read Philippians 4:10-23

1. Read verses 11-12. What did Paul say? Where was Paul when he wrote this letter? What does it mean to be *content*? Evaluate your own life. In which areas of your life are you content? Are there any areas of discontent? Paul said that he had *learned* to be content. How could a person *learn* to be content?

2. Write out verse 13. How has the Lord strengthened you in the past? Is there an area where you need Him to strengthen you today? If so, rest in His promise!

3. Meditate at verse 19, noting the word *all*. Look up the word *supply* and write the definition. What is your greatest need today? Sit with the Lord and tell Him all about it. (You might want to use Philippians 4:6-7 as a model for your prayer.) Write anything that He impresses on your heart.

Summary

As you conclude your study of the book of Philippians consider the following questions and write your answer:

- 1.** What is the most significant thing that you have learned from your study about the Lord, His character, or His attributes? How does this encourage you? Take a few moments to thank and praise the Lord for the things that you learned about Him.

- 2.** What is the most important lesson or new insight that you have learned from your study of this book? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?