



JOY

A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS



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Gospel Partnership and Peace

WEEK 1 | OVERVIEW

Context

Acts 16 provides the missional context of the letter. Philippi is located in Macedonia, there is a strong paganism and persecution, but a note of joy. Later, they are among the Macedonian churches who partner with Paul to provide for the Jerusalem church (2 Cor 8:1-5) In short, they are absolute legends (See 4:!)

Purpose

They had sent a gift for Paul via Epaphroditus (4:10-20). The letter functions of an encouraging thank you for their partnership in the gospel. He updates them on his plans for Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19ff) and deals with some pastoral concerns (3:2 , 4:2), but overall it's an encouragement to stand firm and rejoice in the gospel as they work together with Paul for the salvation of the lost. A key strategy he uses is to offer models to follow: Christ (2:1-11), Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30) and himself (3:17-4:1).

Structure

Thank you for your partnership (1:1-11)

Christ and his gospel is all that matters (1:12-26)

Continue to live as citizens of heaven - standing firm in the gospel and contending side by side for the gospel (1:27-4:9)

Thanks again (4:10-20)

READ PHILIPPIANS 1-2

What's stood out to you so far?

What are some things you want to look into further?

READ PHILIPPIANS 3-4

What stands out to you in the book as a whole?

What do you want to look into further?

Write down the big idea of the book (seven words limit OR ten if it rhymes)



PRAYER

Decide how you'll choose who gets prayed for each week.
Pray for the first person or couple.

STUDY #1—PHILIPPIANS 1:11

Partnership, Praise and Prayer

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

QUESTIONS

How does he feel about them? Why?

What is Paul confidence in them based on?

Draw a picture/diagram of the church Paul is praying for them to become

How does Paul's prayer map on to our church? What needs work?

Spend some time praising God for the gospel and the gospel partnership it creates

Spend some time praying through the passage (esp 9-11)

Philippians Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for Jesus and for our partnership in the gospel. Please fill us with the joy that flows from righteousness, the love that flows from faith, and the peace that flows from Christ, so that Christ is proclaimed to Port Kembla and beyond.

Amen.

PRAYER

Prayer can be rushed and shallow in group settings. We don't have time to meaningfully listen to and pray for everyone. I suggest we pray for ONE person/couple each week:

Thanks: How has God been at work in your life this week?

Concerns: What challenges are you facing at work, church or family life?

Mission: What about your gospel witness?

Deeper: Was there anything else going on in your Christian walk that you want to share?

Closing Prayer



STUDY 2—PHILIPPIANS 1:12-26

Rejoicing in Gospel Progress

12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16 The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. 20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

QUESTIONS

What things bring you joy in life?

In what ways has the gospel made progress?

Why doesn't he care about peoples motives?

Is gospel proclamation the number one priority in your life? Why? Why not?

How do you deal with the disconnect between the evangelism you want to do and what you actually do? How do you feel about it?

What does Paul want to achieve among them? What does that tell you about life and ministry?

How can we help each other proclaim the gospel without fear?

Pray that Christ (and therefore gospel proclamation) will be your life and that whatever happens you'll rejoice because of him.

PRAYER

Thanks: How has God been at work in your life this week?

Concerns: What challenges are you facing at work, church or family life?

Mission: What about your gospel witness?

Deeper: Was there anything else going on for you Spiritually that you want to share?

Closing Prayer



STUDY 3—PHILIPPIANS 1:27-2:11

A Life Worthy of the Gospel

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.

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

QUESTIONS

What four things will 'living worthy' mean? V.27b-28a

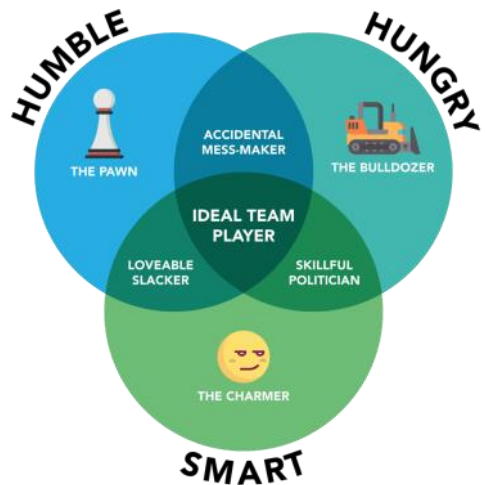
Sometimes we feel like being opposed means we've done evangelism wrong. What does Paul say it means? V.28b-30

Why do you think we are not opposed as we should be? How can we help each other as a group?

How does Paul describe the experience of the Christian? Is this your experience of relationship with Christ? v.1

What is the mind of Christ? How would having the mind of Christ as described here impact relationship dynamics at our church?

How would it impact our evangelism planning and implementation? Consider this diagram:



Who exalted Jesus? Why does that matter? v.9

If we adopt the mind of Christ will we miss out on honour and recognition? V.9-11

How does all of this fit within the context of the letter?

Spend some time rejoicing in who Jesus is

Spend some time asking for his mind

PRAYER

Next person/couple shares about the following and receives prayer...

Thanks: How has God been at work in your life this week?

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Deeper: Was there anything else going on Spiritually that you want to share?

Closing Prayer

Key Theme #2—Heavenly Citizenship

Sadly it's hidden in the English but 'Politeuesthe' translated 'conduct yourself in a manner worthy' (1:27) has strong citizenship connotations. This idea is repeated by 'politeuma' translated citizenship (3:20).

The shape of Christ's story—suffering now, glory in heaven later—shapes our core identity (2:1-11) and lies behind Paul's deliberations in 1:12-26 and his instructions to stand firm, be united and partner with him in proclaiming Christ.



STUDY 4—PHILIPPIANS 2:12-30

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God without fault, even though you live in a warped and crooked generation, in which you shine among them like stars in the sky by holding firmly to the word of life. (Do this) so that I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. 17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 And in the same way you should be glad and rejoice with me.

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. 21 For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23 I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24 And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

25 But for now I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.

26 For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. 27 Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

28 Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. 29 So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, 30 because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

QUESTIONS

Paul's use of 'fear and trembling' in other contexts refers to "awe and reverence in the presence of God". Why are we to take obedience seriously?

How does the reminder that God is at work within us help us to battle against sin?

What are you tempted to grumble or argue about? How does holding firmly to the word of life help you to be different?

Paul had every reason to grumble. What keeps him joyful?

Why does Paul want to send Timothy to them?

Why does Paul want to send Epaphroditus to them?

What are we told about these men that is honourable and worthy of imitation?

Pray that, mindful of God's work among us, we would rejoice in the gospel and live for the advance of the gospel

PRAYER

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Thanks: How has God been at work in your life this week?

Concerns: What challenges are you facing at work, church or family life?

Mission: What about your gospel witness?

Deeper: Was there anything else going on Spiritually that you want to share?

Closing Prayer



FURTHER RESOURCES

COFFEE CATCH UPS

If you'd like help to think through an issue you're facing, or would like to help me think through an issue at church, please get in touch. I'd love catch up, read the bible, pray with you and talk about whatever you'd like.

READING THE BIBLE

On the final day, you will be held responsible for your own growth, but I'll give an account before God too. For that reason, I'm eager to help you establish healthy habits and hold you accountable to them. Nothing beats catching up to read to the bible together but here are a few resources that might help you to get God's word in your life:

Bible Project Reading Plans

<https://bibleproject.com/reading-plans/>

Download the one year reading plan, ask a handful of friends to do it with you, hold each other accountable.



Philippians Playlist

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4Dvosqg20VZESrnHYFZM3q>



Time with God

<https://www.hunterbiblechurch.org/member-resources>

Check out the 'Time with God' bible reading archive. Work through them in your own time or with a mate.



Bible App (YouVersion)

I assume you know about this. Why not use it some time?



STUDY 5—PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

Righteousness

Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.

2 Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

QUESTIONS

Opener: What is the most valuable thing you own?

Would you say rejoicing comes easy? If so, how? If not, why?

What is righteousness? How do we have it?

What is faith? Where is your confidence before God?

What benefits are tied up with being a Hebrew of Hebrews?

How does Christ surpass each of these blessings?

What does knowing Christ mean in practice?

1. Spend some time listing out all the treasures we have in Christ
2. Spend some time sharing your favourite quality of Christ
3. Spend some time praising God and rejoicing that you hit the jackpot in Christ

PRAYER

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Mission: What about your gospel witness?

Deeper: Was there anything else going on Spiritually that you want to share?

Closing Prayer



STUDY 6—PHILIPPIANS 3:12-4:2

Pressing on with Christ

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

15 All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. 16 Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

17 Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. 18 For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. 20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

4 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

QUESTIONS

Why and how does Paul press on towards his heavenly prize?

In whom does Paul press on?

What have we attained already?

What would being mature look like in your life? What needs to change?

What are the citizens of earth like? How does Paul feel about them?

Who are we and what is our future? How does this mindset change your thinking about unbelievers?

About believers? Do you resonate with 4:1?

Spend some time thanking God for his call and ongoing holding of us

Spend time thanking God for brothers and sisters to do life with and praying for the salvation of unbelievers you know

PRAYER

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Concerns: What challenges are you facing at work, church or family life?

Mission: What about your gospel witness?

Deeper: Was there anything else going on Spiritually that you want to share?

Closing Prayer



PHILIPPIANS 4:2-23

Gospel Partnership and Conflict

2 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

10 I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength. 14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving,

except you only; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. 17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. 18 I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

21 Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. 22 All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

QUESTIONS

How does rejoicing in the Lord undermine conflict among believers?

How does prayer undermine conflict among believers?

What is the end result of rejoicing in the common life and faith believers have in Jesus? V.7

What does focusing on good and noble things do in conflict situations?

Paul is thankful for and content with what he has been given. How can you foster greater contentment in your life?

How does Paul's description of their financial giving encourage you to partner with missionaries (like the Rossers)?

What stops us from supporting mission work and how can we overcome these barriers?

How is Paul's closing greetings a joyous and fitting end to the book?

PRAYER

Hear from one person or couple:

Thanks: How has God been at work in your life this week?

Concerns: What challenges are you facing at work, church or family life?

Mission: What about your gospel witness?

Deeper: Was there anything else going on that you want to share?

Closing Prayer



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