

Introduction To Philippians

Philippians 1:1-18

Message by Michael J. Barnard

May 9, 2010

Lesson Aim: To introduce our new series on the Book of Philippians. To observe how the Apostle Paul responds in adversity and to understand that God can turn our difficult situations around for our good and for His glory when we trust Him.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD'S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: Introduction to the Book of Philippians (Phil. 1:1-2)

1. Who is the city of Philippi named after? (See Commentaries) What was the significance of this city being a Roman Colony? (See Acts 16:12) What was the first church Paul planted in Europe? Why did he go into Macedonia rather than Asia as he desired? (See Acts 16:6-10)
2. According to Acts 16:13, how large of a Jewish population did Philippi have? Why do you think Paul didn't quote any Old Testament passages in the Book of Philippians?
3. What is the major doctrinal highlight of this book? (See Phil. 2:5-11) Philippians, along with the books of Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon are often called "The Prison Epistles". In spite of the fact that Paul was writing while under house arrest in Rome, what theme do we find prevalent throughout this entire book? (See Phil. 1:18,26;2:17,18; 3:1; 4:4,10) Why?

Part II: Paul's remembrances' of and prayer for the Philippians (Phil. 1:3-11)

1. The book of Philippians begins with, "Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ...". Does this introduction indicate that Timothy co-authored the book with Paul? Why, or why not? If not, why is Timothy mentioned together with Paul? (See Acts 16:1-5)
2. What does it mean to be "a bondservant" of Jesus Christ? Have you dedicated yourself to being a bondservant of Jesus Christ for life? If not why not?
3. Philippians is the only one of Paul's epistles that he directs to church officers in the

introduction. What is another title for bishop that we use in our church? (See Commentaries) What is the significance of the offices of bishop and deacon? (See **1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9**) How many times is the word pastor found in the Bible? (See Concordance) Who are the saints mentioned in verse 1?

4. What is Paul's response every time he thinks of the brothers and sisters in Philippi (**vs. 3**)? Why? There was a real sense of fellowship (*working together with a common purpose*) between Paul and the Philippians. According to verse 3, what is their fellowship (*Gk—koinonia*) in. What did the church of Philippi do for Paul that no other church did? (See **Phil. 4:15**) Was their help strictly financial? (See Phil. 2:25-30)
5. Why does it seem unusual to us that Paul would have joyful memories when he thought back to the first day (*early days*) he was with the Philippians (**vv. 4-5**)? (See **Acts 16:16-34**)
6. What was Paul confident of in verse 6? What good work "will God complete in us"? What is meant by "the day of Jesus Christ"? (See **1 Cor. 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Thess. 4:16-20**) Is it different than "the Day of the LORD"? (See **Isa. 13:6,9; 34:8; Jer. 46:10**) If so, how?
7. In what way were the Philippians in Paul's heart (**vs. 7**)? How were the Philippians partakers with Paul in his chains and in his ministry? Affection means a fond, tender feeling (**vs. 8**). Discuss why it is so important for Christians to love and encourage others with the affection of Christ. (See **1 John 4:7-9; Matt. 22:37-40**)
8. Break down Paul's prayer for the Philippians in vv. 9-11 and discuss how each aspect of that prayer applies to our lives today. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness lead to the glory and praise of God. What kind of fruit should the Christian bear (**vs. 11**)? (See **John 15:1-5, 9-12; Gal. 5:22-23; Jam. 3:16-18**)

Part III: Paul's chains in Christ are actually for the furtherance of the gospel (Phil. 1:12-18)

1. Verse 12 finds Paul in prison waiting for a trial by Caesar. Paul is so single focused on his mission as an apostle of Jesus Christ that he can say "*the things which happened to me actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel*". (**vs. 12**). How do you respond to adversity in your own life? Do you find yourself looking for what God is doing in your circumstance, or do you find yourself grumbling about what you are going through? Share a difficult situation in your life that God turned around for good.

2. Paul was likely chained to Roman guards 24 hours a day (**vs. 13**). Do you think Paul was a common criminal? Why or why not? What happened to many of the guards as they got to know Paul better through his testimony and heard his defense of the gospel? Have you ever used your personal testimony to witness to others? How can using your personal testimony become a powerful evangelistic tool for reaching others?

3. What happened to other Christians in Rome as they heard of Paul's testimony and the impact he was making while under house arrest (**vv. 13-14**)? (**See Acts 28:16,30**)? How far did Paul's testimony reach according to **Phil. 4:22**?

4. As in any age of the church, some are preaching with the right motive and others are not (**vs. 15**)? How do the self-seeking preachers of verse 16 relate to some in ministry today? Is this kind of preaching helpful or harmful to the body of Christ? Are these preachers fulfilling Jesus' prayer of unity to the Father in **John 17:20-23**, or are they causing controversy within the body?

5. According to verse 17, what was the motivation behind the godly preachers? Why is this kind of preaching much more effective and more glorifying to God?

6. Does Paul accuse the self-seeking preachers "of preaching another gospel" or of "being false teachers" (**vs. 18**)? Apparently they were preaching the true gospel, but with the wrong motives. How does Paul respond to the added difficulties he had to face because of the hurtful talk of "these Christians"?

7. Have you ever had another Christian hurt you deeply? How should you respond in such a circumstance? Can you rejoice for the victories God allows them to have in ministry?

MINER'S CORNER – *Manna for today!*

- * We should remember the people we've ministered to with thanksgiving and prayer.
- * We can be confident that God will complete the good work in us that He started (*salvation*) and preserve us until the day of Jesus Christ, that great day of eternal blessedness and reward.
- * A Christian's life filled with the fruits of righteousness (*doing what is right in the eyes of the Lord*) will bring glory and praise to God.
- * Difficult circumstances can be a golden opportunity to share the hope of the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ with others! Jesus said, "*Let your light so shine before men, that they*

may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” ~ Matt. 5:16