

PHILIPPIANS

Author: Paul

Date: A.D. 60 - 62

Philippians is a letter of joy and encouragement in the midst of troubling circumstances. The Apostle Paul writes this letter from prison in Rome to a church he started in Philippi some ten years earlier on his second missionary journey. (See Acts 16:11-40.) Paul expresses his fond affection for the Philippian Christians, commends their consistent testimony and support, and lovingly urges them to center their actions and thoughts on the person and power of Christ.

The church in Philippi was the first Christian church in Europe. Philippi was a city in eastern Macedonia named after Philip II, father of Alexander the Great. It was a very prosperous Roman colony which meant the Philippians were also citizens of Rome. The people were very proud of their Roman citizenship, dressed as Romans and often spoke Latin. Paul reminds them that the believer's citizenship is in heaven.

This is one of Paul's most personal letters. He shares his own experiences with Christ, and his struggle over whether to prefer dying to be with Christ or living to serve Christ. Philippians focuses on Paul's account of his present circumstances (ch. 1), Paul's appeal to have the mind of Christ (ch. 2), his appeal to have the knowledge of Christ (ch. 3), and his appeal to have the peace of Christ (ch. 4).

Theme: The prominent theme is Christian joy. The words "joy" or "rejoice" appear 16 times in this short letter. Paul explains how a believer can have joy despite the circumstances. He talks about joy in suffering, serving, believing and giving. The true secret of joy and peace comes from imitating Christ and serving others.

Key verses: "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice!" (4:4). "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," (4:13).

OUTLINE

- I. Paul's Present Circumstance (Joy in Suffering) – (1:1-30)
 - A. Prayer of Thanksgiving (1:1-11)
 - B. Paul's Present Afflictions (1:12-30)
- II. Paul's Appeal to Have the Mind of Christ (Joy in Serving) – (2:1-30)
 - A. Paul's Exhortation to Humility (2:1-4)
 - B. Christ's Example of Humility (2:5-16)
 - C. Examples of Humility (Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus) (2:17-30)
- III. Paul's Appeal to Have the Knowledge of Christ (Joy in Believing) – (3:1-21)
 - A. Warnings against Confidence in the Flesh (3:1-9)
 - B. Exhortation to Know Christ (3:10-16)
 - C. Warning against Living for the Flesh (3:17-21)
- IV. Paul's Appeal to Have the Peace of Christ (Joy in Giving) – (4:1-23)
 - A. Peace with Believers (4:1-3)
 - B. Peace with Christ (4:4-9)
 - C. Peace in All Circumstances (4:10-19)
 - D. Conclusion (4:20-23)

Philippians 1-2

Philippians 1

Comprehension: (In other words, what does it say?)

Who is writing? Where is he? To whom is he writing? Tone of the letter?

Interpretation: (In other words, what does it mean?)

How does Paul view his circumstances? What has come out of his circumstances?

What are the two different ways Christ was being preached? Explain Paul's attitude toward each:

Paul uses the word joy/rejoice 5 times in this chapter, list the different reasons he gives to have joy or rejoice? How does joy differ from happiness?

Application: (In other words, how do I apply this to my life?)

What is your attitude of your past/current/ongoing circumstances?

How do you interpret and apply verse 21-24? Does it even apply to you or just to Paul?

At what times should you conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel? And what exactly does that involve?

Philippians 2

Comprehension: (In other words, what does it say?)

What are the main topics in chapter 2?

Interpretation: (In other words, what does it mean?)

Paul describes how to make 'his joy complete' by imitating Christ, what are the ways?

Explain what it means to 'continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling':

What can make us shine like a star?

Describe Timothy:

What type of person does Paul call us to honor?

Application: (In other words, how do I apply this to my life?)

What is your response to being united with Christ, in fellowship with the Spirit? How can you emulate Paul?