

COMMENTARY

PHILIPPIANS

Introduction:

The apostle Paul wrote the letter of Philippians to the church at Philippi. Paul had been there around 50 A.D. and had started the church (Acts 16:12-40). Eleven years later (61 A.D.), Paul writes to the church from prison in Rome. This is one of the 4 Prison Epistles (the others being: Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon).

It is commendable that Paul was able to write a letter such as this from prison. It speaks of joy and rejoicing in all things, along with the glory of being in Christ.

Surely, if Paul could write such a letter in his situation, we should be able to follow it in our lives today.

Chapter 1:

vs. 1-11

Timothy joins in with Paul in sending this letter to the Church and the leaders of the Church in Philippi. Paul reminds them of his prayer and joy for them, because of their relationship to the Lord. Paul is confident that since they share the same faith, the Lord will work and help the Philippians to become mature Christians until Christ's return.

Paul is encouraged because it made no difference to the Philippians whether Paul was out preaching or in prison for the Gospel, they were still faithful. Because of this, Paul loved them, even as Christ loved them.

Paul desired for their love to grow for the Lord. He knew that it would grow as they grew in knowledge and insight and were able to determine what is right and best until Christ returns.

vs. 12-30

Paul encourages the Christians by showing them that even his imprisonment, has helped to spread the message of Jesus. Those in Caesars Palace now knew of Jesus, and realized that Paul was in prison because of his preaching. Others had more courage to speak up for the Lord, because they saw Paul and his commitment.

Paul looks at the motives of those who are preaching. He realizes that some of the motives are not right, but still rejoices for the truth of the matter is: Christ is being proclaimed!

Paul was able to rejoice in prison, for he was convinced that his imprisonment was going to be in his best interests. His concern was that he would be able to remain faithful to Jesus and lift Him up. He felt torn between dying and being with Christ, and living and being with Christians here, who needed him. Persuaded that the Christians needed him, he knew that God would allow him to remain to work and encourage the Christians.

Paul challenges the Philippians to remain faithful, united, and working together to spread the Gospel. He tells them not to fear, but reminds them that it is a privilege to suffer for Christ; and they have been granted that privilege.

COMMENTARY

PHILIPPIANS 2:

vs. 1-11:

Paul reminds them of the blessings that they have found in Christ: comfort, fellowship with God's Spirit, tenderness and compassion. Since they have been so blessed, he challenges them to be united in mind, love, spirit and purpose. All that they do, should be done for others and not for themselves, realizing and considering others to be more important.

Jesus set the example in this area. He considered us so important that He gave up the glory of heaven to become like us and then die on a cross. Because of His attitude, God has exalted Him and all will proclaim His glory and majesty.

vs. 12-18:

Paul encourages the Christians to remain faithful to the Lord, just as they have in the past. God is working in their lives to help them accomplish and perform His will.

He once again gives instructions for Christians living and how they can become the pure and blameless, children of God. They are not to complain or argue about anything that they do! If they will avoid such behavior, they will stick out as they share the message of Jesus Christ and their message will be better accepted. Paul mentions that even if their service, means his giving his life, he is willing; as long as they remain faithful.

vs. 19-30:

Paul expresses his desire and plan to send Timothy to them, to share how Paul is doing, and then report back to Paul on the faithfulness of the Philippians. Timothy is commended by Paul, for his dedication to Jesus Christ and how well he has served in the past. Paul also hopes that he will also be able to come and visit in a short time.

Paul explains why he is sending back one of the Philippians (Epaphroditus), sent to him. Epaphroditus had been very ill, but had recovered and wanted to return and show his friends and family that he was all right. He had served Paul well and Paul encouraged the Philippians to welcome him back with joy and honor because he had almost died in his service to Christ.

COMMENTARY

PHILIPPIANS 3:

vs. 1-11

Paul encourages them again to rejoice in the Lord. He had said it many times before, but is saying it again so that they won't forget.

Paul warns them about the false teachers who wanted them to return to the practices and teachings of the Jews. Paul reminds them that the true people of God are those who worship God through the Holy Spirit and glory in Jesus. Those who try to be God's people through the Jewish rituals have no reason to boast about their position in God's sight, for they are no longer God's people.

Paul reiterates that if anyone would have reason to have confidence and boast about following the Jewish rituals and teachings, it would be he. His background would have been envied by virtually any Jew and Jewish person alive.

Paul shows that all that means nothing to him, because he has come to know Jesus, and that is greater than anything else. In Christ, he now is made righteous through faith and not through his own works. This is the righteousness that comes from God. Paul's goal is to know the power of the resurrection, to share in Jesus' sufferings so that in some way, he too, might be raised from the dead and live eternally.

vs. 12-21

Paul shows that even though he has been faithful and committed to Christ all these years, he still had not become all that God wanted him to be, but he kept on. He kept looking forward to God's will for him, rather than resting on his past accomplishments. His reason was simple, he wanted to inherit eternal life and have a place in Christ's Kingdom. Paul writes, encouraging all Christians to remain faithful and keep moving forward, rather than stopping and taking comfort in what we have already done and being content with that.

Paul reminds them to enjoy the fellowship of Christians. Too many people are living for themselves, with their mind on earthly things and they will perish. The Christians citizenship is in heaven, and that is where their minds should be. They should be eagerly awaiting the return of Jesus Christ, who will change our bodies so that they will become like His.

COMMENTARY

PHILIPPIANS 4:

vs. 1- 9:

The first part of this chapter concludes Paul's discussion, starting in 1:27.

Paul pleads for unity among the believers and for them to help one another.

As he begins his concluding thoughts, he challenges them to always rejoice in the Lord. No matter how bad things might appear, we are not to worry, but simply take it to the Lord in prayer, believing that He will handle the situation. With these requests should be thanksgiving.

Paul instructs them concerning their thought life. He tells them that whatever is: noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy; then those are the things to think about. All that Paul has taught them, they are to put into practice.

, vs. 10-23:

Paul rejoiced that the Philippians had expressed their love and concern for him, by helping out. Paul quickly adds however, that whatever the situation he is in, he has learned to trust the Lord and be content for the Lord gives him the strength.

Paul praises the Philippians for their support, as they had remained faithful to him throughout his ministry. He asks for them to greet all the Christians there and then prays that the grace of the Lord might be with them.

STUDY GUIDE

PHILIPPIANS 1:

1. What was Paul confident about?
2. With what, did Paul long for the Philippians?
3. What was Paul's prayer for them?
4. According to verse 10 why was this his prayer?
5. What had become clear, throughout the whole palace guard?
6. How were the brothers in the Lord affected by this?
7. What is the important thing, concerning the motive of various preachers?
8. What was life and death, in Paul's sight?
9. What was it more necessary for the Philippians, in regard to Paul?
10. What were the Philippians to do, no matter what happened?
11. What did Paul want to know about the Philippians?
12. What had been granted to the Philippians?

BONUS:

1. Why do you think Paul was so concerned about their love abounding? How would this affect their ability to discern?
2. Why do you think people would have more courage to speak up, after they saw Paul arrested and imprisoned because of it?
3. Why is it important for Christians to stand firm in 1 spirit, contending as 1 man for the faith of the gospel?

STUDY GUIDE

PHILIPPIANS 2:

1. How could the Philippians make Paul' joy complete?
2. Whose interests were the Philippians to look out for?
3. What nature did Jesus take on?
4. How did Jesus humble himself?
5. What will happen at the name of Jesus?
6. Why did God work in the Philippians?
7. How were they to do everything?
8. Why were they to do everything in this way?
9. What were the Philippians holding out?
10. Why was Epaphroditus sent to Paul?
11. How were the Philippians to welcome Epaphroditus?
12. What had Epaphroditus done?

BONUS:

1. How do Christians need to be more humble?
2. Explain the importance of verse 14
3. How can Christians in our society help one another?

STUDY GUIDE

PHILIPPIANS 3:

1. Why was it no trouble for Paul to write the same things again?
2. Who are the circumcised?
3. Why could Paul have put confidence in the flesh?
4. What does Paul consider loss for the sake of Christ?
5. What did Paul want to know?
6. What did Paul seek to attain?
7. Why did Paul press on, in verse 12?
8. What is the one thing that Paul did, according to verse 13?
9. What are we to live up to?
10. Who were the Philippians to join with?
11. Where is our citizenship?
12. What will Jesus do to our bodies?

BONUS:

1. What can Christians count as loss, so that they might gain Christ?
2. How do you feel about Paul saying that he had not attained his goal?
3. What does it mean for Christians, that their citizenship is in heaven?

STUDY GUIDE

PHILIPPIANS 4:

1. What did Paul want Euodia and Syntyche to do?
2. What are we to do always? (see vs 4)
3. What is to be evident to all?
4. How are we to present our requests to God?
5. What are we to think about?
6. What were the Philippians to put into practice?
7. What had Paul learned? (see vs. 11)
8. What could Paul do through him who gave him strength?
9. Who shared with Paul in the matter of giving and receiving?
10. What did Paul say about the gifts they had sent?
11. What will God do, according to verse 19?
12. For what time period, is God to be given glory?

BONUS:

1. Why is it so hard to always rejoice? How can we overcome it?
2. Of what value, is verse 8?
4. Is verse 11 applicable today? Explain.

