

# A Study of the Book of Philippians

## Theme:

## “OUR PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL!”

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Lesson: 1 Chapter: 1:1-7 Date: 8-11-19

### BIBLE TEXT:



### Greeting

**1:1** Paul and Timothy, servants of **Christ Jesus**, To all the saints in **Christ Jesus** who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

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

### Thanksgiving and Prayer

**3** I thank **my God** in all my remembrance of you, **4** always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, **5** because of **your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.** **6** And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the **day of Jesus Christ**. **7** It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

**8** For **God is my witness**, how I yearn for you all with **the affection of Christ Jesus**. **9** And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, **10** so that you may approve what is excellent, and so 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**.

### The Advance of the Gospel

**12** I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, **13** so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for **Christ**. **14** And most of the brothers, having become confident in **the Lord** by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

**15** Some indeed preach **Christ** from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. **16** The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. **17** The former proclaim **Christ** out of rivalry, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. **18** What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, **Christ** is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

### To Live Is Christ

Yes, and I will rejoice, **19** for I know that through your prayers and the help of **the Spirit of Jesus Christ** this will turn out for my deliverance, **20** as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always **Christ** will be honored 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 live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. **23** I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be **with Christ**, for that is far better. **24** But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. **25** Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, **26** so that in me you may have ample cause to **glory in Christ Jesus**, because of my coming to you again.

**27** Only let your manner of life be worthy of the **gospel of Christ**, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, **28** and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from **God**. **29** For it has been granted to you that for **the sake of Christ** you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, **30** engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

## STUDY NOTES:

- (vv. 1,2) Paul and Timothy (Ac 16:1; 2 Cor 1:1; 1 and 1 Tim)  
-Saints in Christ Jesus (1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Col 1:2,26-28)  
("hahioi – sanctus" = declared holy / set apart through faith in Christ  
as his holiness is credited to our account)  
-Philippi (Acts 16:12; 20:6; 1 Thess 2:2) (in Macedonia)  
-Overseers = Bishops = Pastors (1 Tim 3:1)  
-Deacons = "Elders" today (1 Tim 3:8)
- (vv. 3-7) **-Partnership in the Gospel** - the events in Philippi (Acts 16:11-40)  
-He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ  
(Ps 57:2; 138:8; Mt 26:64; Jn 6:29; 1 Cor 1:8; 1 Th 1:3; 5:24)  
-Paul's imprisonment  
-Tradition considers this one of Paul's prison epistles – written in Rome – 60 A.D.
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- (vv. 8-11) -Fruit of righteousness:  
(Mt 5:20-48; Heb 12:11; James 3:18; Gal 5:22)
- (vv. 12-18) -Chains for the Gospel – (even though Paul was a Roman citizen)  
(Acts 28:14-31)
- (vv. 19-30)  
-to live is Christ (Gal 2:20) more work is to be done on earth  
-to die is gain (2 Cor 5:6-8) then will be with Christ in heaven  
-to suffer for Christ is a gift and privilege  
(Mt 5:11,12; Acts 5:41; James 1:2; 1 Pet 4:14)

## LIFE APPLICATION:

1. How are we in partnership in the Gospel here in this place?
2. Where in the world today are Christians in chains for the Gospel?

## LUTHER - Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians

“In this epistle St. Paul praises and admonishes the Philippians that they abide and carry on in the true faith and increase in love. But since injury is always done to faith by false apostles and teachers of works, he warns them against these men and points out to them many different preachers—some good, some bad—including even himself and his disciples, Timothy and Epaphroditus. This he does in chapters 1 and 2.

In chapter 3 he rejects that human righteousness not based on faith, which is taught and held by the false apostles. He offers himself as an example: he had lived gloriously in this kind of righteousness, and yet now holds it to be nothing, for the sake of the righteousness of Christ. For human righteousness makes the belly its god, and makes men enemies of the cross of Christ.

In chapter 4 he exhorts them to peace and good outward conduct toward each other, and thanks them for the gift they sent him.”

# PHILIPPIANS

## God's Grace in Philippians †

Philippians shows that God's grace is not a "pie in the sky" theory, but it has real results in the life of a Christian and of a congregation. The church at Philippi was a pride and a joy to Paul, for this group of believers put God's grace into practice. For example, they sent Paul financial assistance on several occasions (4:10-19), "putting their money where their mouth was," and were sincerely concerned about the illness of Epaphroditus, who risked his life in service for the gospel (2:25-30).

This letter also exhibits the effect God's grace had on Paul. He writes: "For to me, to live is Christ" (1:21); "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (3:8); "I can do everything through him [Christ] who gives me strength" (4:13).

God's grace involves the humility of Christ Jesus, who left heaven to become a servant of mankind, an act which Paul describes poetically (2:5-11). He encourages the Philippians to follow the example of their Redeemer.

## Luther on Philippians †

"In this epistle St. Paul praises and admonishes the Philippians that they abide and carry on in the true faith and increase in love . . .

" . . . he rejects that human righteousness not based on faith, which is taught and held by the false apostles. (He offers himself as an example; he had lived gloriously in this kind of righteousness, and yet now holds it to be nothing, for the sake of the righteousness of Christ. For human righteousness makes the belly its god, and makes men enemies of the cross of Christ.)

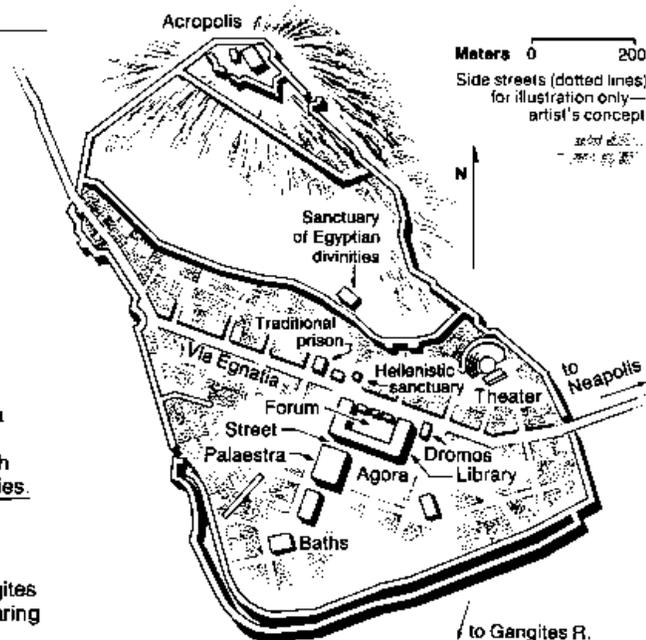
" . . . he exhorts them to peace and good outward conduct toward each other, and thanks them for the gift they sent him" (LW 35:385).

## Philippi in the Time of Paul

The Roman colony of Philippi (*Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis*) was an important city in Macedonia, located on the main highway leading from the eastern provinces to Rome. This road, the Via Egnatia, bisected the city's forum and was the chief cause of its prosperity and political importance. Ten miles distant on the coast was Neapolis, the place where Paul landed after sailing from Troas, in response to the Macedonian vision.

As a prominent city of the gold-producing region of Macedonia, Philippi had a proud history. Named originally after Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great, the city was later honored with the name of Julius Caesar and Augustus. Many Italian settlers from the regions swelled the ranks of citizens and made Philippi vigorous and polyglot. It grew from a small settlement to a city of dignity and privilege. Among its highest honors was the ius italicum, by which it enjoyed rights legally equivalent to those of Italian cities.

Ruins of the theater, the acropolis, the forum, the baths, and the western commemorative arch mentioned as the "gate" of the city in Ac 16:13 have been found. A little farther beyond the arch at the Gangites River is the place where Paul addressed some God-fearing women and where Lydia was converted.



*Author, Date and Place of Writing*

The early church was unanimous in its testimony that Philippians was written by the apostle Paul (see 1:1). Internally the letter reveals the stamp of genuineness. The many personal references of the author fit what we know of Paul from other NT books.

It is evident that Paul wrote the letter from prison (see 1:13-14). Some have argued that this imprisonment took place in Ephesus, perhaps c. A.D. 53-55; others put it in Caesarea c. 57-59. Best evidence, however, favors Rome as the place of origin and the date as c. 61. This fits well with the account of Paul's house arrest in Ac 28:14-31. When he wrote Philippians, he was not in the Mamertine dungeon as he was when he wrote 2 Timothy. He was in his own rented house, where for two years he was free to impart the gospel to all who came to him.

*Purpose*

Paul's primary purpose in writing this letter was to thank the Philippians for the gift they had sent him upon learning of his detention at Rome (1:5; 4:10-19). However, he makes use of this occasion to fulfill several other desires: (1) to report on his own circumstances (1:12-26; 4:10-19); (2) to encourage the Philippians to stand firm in the face of persecution and rejoice regardless of circumstances (1:27-30; 4:4); (3) to exhort them to humility and unity (2:1-11; 4:2-5); (4) to commend Timothy and Epaphroditus to the Philippian church (2:19-30); and (5) to warn the Philippians against the Judaizers (legalists) and antinomians (libertines) among them (ch. 3).

*Recipients*

The city of Philippi was named after King Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great. It was a prosperous Roman colony, which meant that the citizens of Philippi were also citizens of the city of Rome itself. They prided themselves on being Romans (see Ac 16:21), dressed like Romans and often spoke Latin. No doubt this was the background for Paul's reference to the believer's heavenly citizenship (3:20-21). Many of the Philippians were retired military men who had been given land in the vicinity and who in turn served as a military presence in this frontier city. That Philippi was a Roman colony may explain why there were not enough Jews there to permit the establishment of a synagogue and why Paul does not quote the OT in the Philippian letter.

*Characteristics*

1. Philippians contains no OT quotations.
2. It is a missionary thank-you letter in which the missionary reports on the progress of his work.
3. It manifests a particularly vigorous type of Christian living: (1) self-humbling (2:1-4); (2) pressing toward the goal (3:13-14); (3) lack of anxiety (4:6); (4) ability to do all things (4:13).
4. It is outstanding as the NT letter of joy; the word "joy" in its various forms occurs some 16 times.
5. It contains one of the most profound Christological passages in the NT (2:5-11). Yet, profound as it is, Paul includes it mainly for illustrative purposes.

*Outline*

- I. Salutation (1:1-2)
- II. Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Philippians (1:3-11)
- III. Paul's Personal Circumstances (1:12-26)
- IV. Exhortations (1:27-2:18)
  - A. Living a Life Worthy of the Gospel (1:27-30)
  - B. Following the Servant Attitude of Christ (2:1-18)
- V. Paul's Associates in the Gospel (2:19-30)
  - A. Timothy (2:19-24)
  - B. Epaphroditus (2:25-30)
- VI. Warnings against Judaizers and Antinomians (3:1-4:1)
  - A. Against Judaizers or Legalists (3:1-16)
  - B. Against Antinomians or Libertines (3:17-4:1)
- VII. Final Exhortations, Thanks and Conclusion (4:2-23)
  - A. Exhortations concerning Various Aspects of the Christian Life (4:2-9)
  - B. Concluding Testimony and Repeated Thanks (4:10-20)
  - C. Greetings and Benediction (4:21-23)