

Philippians
Lesson #2

1. Review of Lesson #1 – background material and founding of the church in Philippi.
2. Philippians as an epistle: Unlike the gospels which were a new literary genre inspired by Christianity, epistles were a well-known literary form. All four standard parts of a first-century epistle appear in Philippians:
 - A. Salutation (1:1-2). The form is “from sender to recipient: greetings.” Paul always identified himself as the author and named the recipient. In place of the conventional word greetings such as wishing the recipient good health, Paul always used “grace and peace.” Grace (the unmerited favor of God) is the Gentile greeting. Peace is the Jewish greeting. By using both, Paul welcomes Gentile and Jewish believers together as one in Jesus Christ. Paul uses this barrier-breaking greeting in ten other letters as well.
 - B. Thanksgiving (1:3-11). This was a prayer directed to God on behalf of the readers.
 - C. Body (1:12-4:20). This obviously was the main point of the letter. Paul typically wrote a doctrinal argument followed by a shorter practical application.
 - D. Farewell (4:21-23). The writer gave greetings and otherwise concluded the document. Paul usually greeted specific individuals and always used the word “grace” in his farewell.

Like most of Paul’s writings, this is a pastoral letter, driven by the occasion and needs of the recipients, rather than a formal treatise.

3. Read Chapter 1 and take note of the following points:
 - A. Who wrote the text? _____
 - B. Who were the recipients/readers? _____
 - C. When was the text written? _____
 - D. Where was the text written? _____
 - E. Why was the text written? _____
 - F. Key Verse/Memory Verse: _____
 - G. Application/Insights:
 1. What Does the Text Mean to You? _____
 2. How will you apply it to your life? _____
4. Chapter 1 Outline:
 - A. Salutation (1:1-2). Notice the mention of Timothy. He probably wrote the letter at Paul’s dictation. He had helped Paul found the Philippian Church. (See Acts 15:36 – 16:12)
 - B. Paul’s Prayer for Them (1:3-11). Notice verse 5, “because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.” This refers to the offerings of money which they had sent him, making them sharers in his work and sharers of his reward. The key verses in this section are verses 9-11, “And this is my prayer: that your love may

- abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.
- C. The Gospel Growing in Rome (1:12-18). Paul’s coming to Rome as a prisoner turned out to be a help rather than a hindrance in making Christ known in the Imperial City. Apparently, he had been given access to official circles, so that he had some converts in Nero’s court. (See Chapter 4:22). Paul saw everything through the lens of his service to Christ. Outwardly, he was a prisoner of Caesar, but inwardly, he considered himself to be a servant of Christ. All that happened to Paul – imprisonments, trials, hardships – served to advance the gospel. Also notice that Paul’s bravery was contagious. Persecution can be productive. (See Acts 8:1-4). Regarding Paul’s adversaries, those who could stir up trouble for Paul while he was in chains were not false teachers – they preached the gospel. But they did so out of envy and rivalry, concerned that their listeners follow them. Paul’s aim was to get people to follow Christ. Finally, notice that the fact that Paul wrote this letter to the church at Philippi from a Roman prison proves that joy is not a product of good circumstances; joy appears when believers are wholly involved in doing the will of God and trusting Him in the midst of their circumstances, good or bad.
- D. Paul’s Conflicting Desires (1:19-26). No doubt there were ever present pains in his scarred and broken body from repeated stonings, and beatings. He was an old man. He knew the churches needed him, but he longed to go home. Although he was conflicted, either way was “OK” for him. In prison or in paradise, Christ was his life and joy. Whether he was to depart or remain was in God’s hands. But, he was hoping to return to Philippi. (See 1:26 and 2:24.)
- E. The Sufferings of the Philippians (1:27-30). It had been about 10 years since the church was founded, and they were still facing persecution. Paul kept his eye on the day of vindication, when tables would be turned, and persecutors would reap what they had sown (1:28). Also, see notes in The Jeremiah Study Bible.

Personal Notes:

Sources:

1. The Jeremiah Study Bible” by Dr. David Jeremiah
2. “Halley’s Bible Handbook” by H.H. Halley
3. “Ultimate Bible Guide: A Complete Walk-Through of All 66 Books of the Bible” from Holman Reference