

Philippians: Lesson #41: Philippians Introduction
Notes for Parents to Study with Their Children
For Sunday, Sept. 28th

Read Phil. 1:1-26; 2:19-30 (a simplified explanation of the text is supplied at the end of these notes).

Memory Verse: Phil. 1:21 “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

Paul Writes to the Church at Philippi

- Both Paul and Timothy were together in prison when they wrote the letter to the saints at Philippi.
- Notice that the church at Philippi had two groups of workers helping them: bishops and deacons.
- The word for “bishops” means overseers, those who helped manage the work of the church. This is just another Bible word to describe elders. Elders are appointed to lead the church.
- The second group was called “deacons”. The word “deacons” means servants, and is talking about those men who are appointed to serve the church.

Paul Was Thankful to God for the Philippian Church

- Most of what Paul says about the church at Philippi is good because they seem to really care about serving God.
- The church there had repeatedly sent Paul money to help him as he preached the gospel. Paul thanks them over and over again for doing that. When we give our money at church part of it goes to help men preach the gospel. Even if we don't do the preaching, we can still play a part in spreading God's Word.

Praying to Abound in Love and Knowledge of God's Word

- Paul prayed that the Philippians would have a love that overflows. Think about that idea of pouring something in a glass and it gets so full that it overflows. That's how much love there should be in our hearts for God and for others.
- Paul also prayed that the Philippian church would grow in their knowledge and understanding of God's Word. Understanding what God's Word says will help us be more righteous, it can help us make better choices in our life that please God more, and it will help us go to heaven.
- That's a good reason to always study your lesson and try to learn the memory verse.

Paul was in Chains, But the Gospel was Still Winning Souls

- As we said earlier, Paul and Timothy were in prison. They had been put there because they preached the gospel. Some people hated the gospel and didn't want it preached. But Paul kept right on doing it, and finally was arrested.
- Paul said that his imprisonment had actually helped teach even more people the gospel. One example of that was a group of Roman soldiers called the Praetorian

Guard. They were a special group of very important soldiers. Some of them guarded Paul, in fact, Paul was evidently chained to one of these soldiers all the time.

- Paul was able to teach some of these soldiers about Jesus. Some of them may have even started believing in Jesus and following Him. Paul said the whole Praetorian Guard knew about why he was in prison.
- That shows that no one can stop God's Word. God will still use people like Paul to get into other people's hearts.

Living for Christ

- Paul wanted to live his life to serve Jesus. But Paul knew that one day he might die for Jesus. He might be put to death because someone wanted to stop him from preaching the gospel. Years later, Paul evidently did die for Jesus.
- But during this time Paul wasn't sure whether he would live or die. Most people might be afraid if they thought they were about to die. We shouldn't go around dwelling on death all the time, but it is good to know what Paul said about death.
- Paul teaches us that if a faithful Christian dies, they won't lose. Instead they will gain. To go be with Christ would be far better. We all need to keep serving Jesus and try not to let death worry us.
- Paul also said that even though we would gain so much if we were to die and be with Christ, still there is so much we need to do while we live. We shouldn't want to end our lives. We should enjoy all the time God gives us on earth. And most important of all we should use it wisely to serve the Lord.

Christians Should Work Together

- Paul reminds Christians that they should always act worthy of the gospel. That means we shouldn't ever do anything that would be an embarrassment to God.
- Christians should never fight and argue with each other. They can discuss differences, but they should make sure that they keep a good attitude. Our job is to work together and stand fast in one spirit and on mind for the gospel.

Paul is Sending Men to Philippi

- Paul explains that he had already sent one of the men that helped preach to the Philippians. This man's name was Epaphroditus. It is possible that he was the one who carried this letter to Philippi.
- Paul also says that he wants to send Timothy to them as soon as possible.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

Paul Writes to the Philippians

Phil. 1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with those who oversee the church and the deacons:

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

He Was Grateful for All They Had Done to Help Him

3 As I think back on my memories of you, I always give thanks to my God.

4-5 Always making requests to God for you and doing so with joy for how you've taken part in the gospel from the first day until now.

6 I am convinced of this, that the God who began a good work in you will finish and accomplish it until the day of Jesus Christ.

7 Now its appropriate for me to think this about all of you, having you in my heart, for both in my imprisonment and in my efforts to defend and confirm the gospel, you all have taken part in my grace.

8 God is my witness, what a great longing I have for all of you with the deep affection of Jesus Christ.

A Prayer that They Would Continue to Increase in Knowledge

9-10 And my prayer is that your love may overflow more and more in a full knowledge and in a full ability to make good decisions so that you can properly test and see what are the right choices.

11 I pray that you can be filled with the fruits of righteousness which come from Jesus and are meant to glorify and praise God.

Even in Prison, Paul Had Successfully Spread the Gospel

12 Now, brethren, I want you to know that my imprisonment has brought about even greater progress for the spread of the gospel.

13 In fact, it has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and among others, that my imprisonment is for the cause of Christ.

14 And because of my imprisonment, many brethren in the Lord have become even more courageous and fearless about speaking the Word of God.

15-17 Of course, it's true that some of these are preaching Christ because they are filled with envy and strife. These preach Christ, but the truth is their motives aren't pure. They are just trying to promote themselves like a politician trying to get elected. They think they can cause even more troubles for me while I am in chains.

Some, however, preach Christ sincerely with good motives. They preach out of love knowing that I have been appointed to defend the gospel.

18 So what about all that? Either way, whether they preach insincerely or whether they really mean it, at least Christ is being preached. I can rejoice in that much, and I will rejoice.

19 And the reason I can rejoice is because I know that through your prayers and through what the Spirit supplies, will result in my deliverance.

To Live is Christ, to Die is Gain

20 It is my eager expectation and hope that I will never do anything to bring me shame, but instead, no matter what happens to me, whether I live or die, I will always openly honor Christ in my life.

21 Because to me living is about Christ, and dying would only mean that I will gain even more.

22 If, however, I do continue to live in the flesh it will mean that I can bear more fruit for God. So I really don't know which I would choose.

23 Really, I'm caught between the two, having a longing to leave this life and be with Christ, which is much better state.

24 But to go on living in the flesh is more necessary for me to be able to help you.
25 So being convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue on with you for your progress and joy of faith.
26 That way you can rejoice even more in Jesus Christ in me when I come to you again.

Timothy and Epaphroditus

2:19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I can be comforted, too, when I know about you.
20 For no one else but Timothy thinks like I do in a genuine concern about your welfare.
21 It seems like everyone else is looking out for their own interests, and not the things Jesus wants them to do.
22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself. He has served beside me in regard to the gospel like a son would serve his father.
23 So I hope to be sending him just as soon as I see how things go for me.
24 But I am still trusting the Lord that I, too, will come real soon.
25 For now, however, I will send back your messenger, Epaphroditus, a man who is not only my brother, but also my fellow-worker, and one who has served me in regard to things that I've needed.
26 For he has been longing to come back to you. When you heard that he was sick and expressed concern, it troubled him because you were worried.
27 He really was sick, so sick he almost died, but God had mercy on him sparing his life. But in allowing Epaphroditus to live, God not only showed mercy on him, but also on me since it would have caused me sorrow on top of all my other sorrows.
28 So I sent him right away so that when you see him again you can rejoice. Then I'll be less sorrowful knowing he is back there helping you.
29-30 Be sure to welcome him back joyfully in the Lord and always honor and appreciate people like him because he almost died working for Christ. He never thought about his own life, but was just trying to complete the unfinished work you wanted him to do for me.