

A STUDY FROM JERSEY CHURCH



# FOR THE KINGDOM

A STUDY IN PHILIPPIANS

**PART 2**



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## For the Kingdom

A Study in Philippians - Part 2

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# **DEVOTIONALS**

## **FRIENDS OF THE KINGDOM**

## DAY 1

Proverbs 17:17

*A friend loves at all times,  
and a brother is born for a difficult time.*

Solomon described a friend as someone who loves at all times, including when things are difficult. It is easy to find people who are supportive when life is rolling along smoothly. Those relationships can be based on convenience or comfort while this type of friendship described in Scripture feels more like a covenant. A true friendship doesn't depend on circumstance and isn't scared to show up when it's hard, scary, or uncomfortable.

In our culture that often views relationships as disposable or optional, Proverbs reminds us that godly friendships are worth pursuing and investing in. Godly friendships strengthen, comfort, support, and sustain us through the ups and downs of life. God often uses friends as a means of His grace in our lives. Friendship matters because God designed us to need and interact with others. Friends are not just an addition to your life, but part of God's daily provision.

- **Who has been a Proverbs 17:17 friend in your life?**
  
- **Thank the Lord for the friends He has blessed you with. Ask for discernment to see how you can be a better friend to those around you as a means of His grace.**

## DAY 2

### Philippians 2:3-4

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others.*

Humility is essential for relationships to thrive. Without humility, friendships can turn competitive, transactional, or self-protective. These are all things the world conditions us to focus on and arenas like social media perpetuate. Godly humility turns relationships from obligation or transaction into the living-giving connections.

Humility doesn't mean living as a doormat. It isn't about thinking less of yourself but simply thinking of yourself less. Humility frees us from constantly comparing, defending, impressing, or proving. When we are not focused on ourselves, we gain space to actually see others. Kingdom people approach friendship with the mindset of asking what the other person needs instead of focusing only on what can be gained. That posture reflects Christ and opens the door for kindness, encouragement, grace, listening, and sacrifice. Jesus lived this way perfectly. Strong, godly friendships don't happen accidentally. They are cultivated in the soil of humility and the foundation of the Word of God. Following the guidance of Scripture is key to having and being the type of friend that is both wanted and needed.

- **What might considering others as more important than yourself look like for you this week?**
- **Confess the ways you have not been humble in your relationships. Ask God to teach you how to follow His Word and reflect Jesus to the people around you.**

## **DAY 3**

Hebrews 10:24–25

*And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.*

The writer of Hebrews instructs believers in the daily practice of encouragement. God uses encouragement to sustain believers through trials, discouragement, and difficult waiting periods. Friendships deepen through shared experiences - both celebratory and challenging. It has been said no one has ever been too encouraged and this is true whether outside the church or in.

Words can build up or tear down. They can redirect someone's day, inspire new ideas, restore confidence, and ignite hope. Godly encouragement pushes back against the voice of the enemy as he continually whispers lies about inadequacy, unworthiness, fear, and defeat. Think about the times you have been bolstered by the words of someone else speaking truth into your life. Encouragement is a small but strategic step that God uses to open hearts, strengthen relationships, and prepare the way for the gospel.

- **Who do you know that is in need of encouragement?**
- **Ask the Lord to use you to encourage others today.**

## DAY 4

Acts 18:24–26

*Now a Jew named Apollos, a native Alexandrian, an eloquent man who was competent in the use of the Scriptures, arrived in Ephesus. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately about Jesus, although he knew only John's baptism. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. After Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately.*

There are numerous examples of mentor-type relationships in Scripture. In Acts 18, we see Priscilla and Aquila took note of a young preacher named Apollos. He was gifted, passionate, and knowledgeable but he had gaps in his spiritual education. Instead of criticizing him publicly or dismissing him silently, they took him aside and explained the way of God more accurately. This is a beautiful picture of strategic friendship and gospel partnership. This was not mere social connection or networking, but spiritual investment. These two believers helped Apollos grow in wisdom and usefulness to the kingdom of God. Their encouragement shaped Apollos as a leader and affected future generations.

Kingdom friendships sharpen, strengthen, and send as they promote the mission of God in the world. We can ask meaningful questions, call out gifts, speak truth, challenge for growth, and encourage others toward God's calling.

- **Who has been part of shaping your faith in this way? Who has God placed in your life that you can do the same for?**
- **Thank God for people who have informally mentored you over the years. Ask Him to use your relationships for kingdom purposes and to give you opportunities to lift**

## DAY 5

Genesis 12:1–3

*The Lord said to Abram:*

*Go from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*

When God called Abraham, He promised to bless Him but also to make him a blessing. God's blessing was never meant to stop with Abraham but was always meant to continue through him to others. Kingdom friendships operate in the same manner. Though we are blessed by God, it is not for our benefit alone. God blesses us to bless others. We are to act more like a funnel of His grace and goodness than a well. Our presence, prayers, generosity, love, encouragement, and hospitality are meant to be conduits of God's goodness.

Our church doesn't gather just to be blessed, though we do receive blessing through the gathering of God's people. We gather to glorify God and consider how we can bless others in our community, city, and the world. God invites each of us to join His mission to bless others through relationships that glorify and honor Him in Jesus's name.

- **How has God blessed you through others and how does He want to use you as a channel of His blessing to others?**
- **Ask God to make you a blessing to the world around you through your friendships, words, and resources.**

# FRIENDS OF THE KINGDOM

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

MARCH 1, 2026

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## MAIN POINT

Christians seek to know who Jesus is and strive to emulate His way of thinking and acting about all things, including others around us.

## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.*

Most people can think of a time when a friend showed up at just the right moment. Whether it is a crisis, difficulty, move, or even a celebration, friendship makes a difference. Paul understood this in his ministry. His work, travel, joy, challenges, and mission were not experienced alone. He continually surrounded himself with fellow laborers, encouragers, and friends who sought to push the gospel forward with him. Philippians 2 reminds us of the characteristics we should seek in kingdom relationships, modeled on the perfect example of Christ.

- **Who has been a meaningful friend to you and why?**
- **How have you seen friendships daily make life richer and more meaningful?**

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

**> Have a volunteer read *Philippians 2:1-11*.**

The way Christians interact with each other is extremely important. Paul offered instruction and encouragement to those in Philippi on this subject. The world is watching the way Christ followers live out their daily lives, so it matters a great deal both now and for eternity.

- **Why does it matter how believers live in daily life? What do you know about what Jesus said on this subject?**
  
- **Why is the way we treat others an important part of this daily living?**

Using a series of rhetorical questions, Paul exhorted toward the need for unity, humility, and love among believers. He encouraged the Philippians to dwell on the consolation, comfort, love, and fellowship they had received in Christ as the motivation to obey this exhortation. Kingdom friendship requires intentionality that is often counter to the world.

- **How does common purpose support friendships? How have Christians been given the most common purpose to support relationships?**

- **Which of Paul's questions stands out to you most?**
  
- **What does it look like to value others above yourself daily?**

Jesus is our model and standard for all of life. Paul said we need to think like Jesus about everything. We are to have the same mind and thoughts Jesus had. We can never live perfectly as Jesus did, but by His Spirit we are empowered and called to pursue living like Him daily.

- **What does it mean to have the same mind and thoughts as Jesus?**
  
- **What needs to change now to align your thoughts with Christ in various areas? What about specifically in your relationships?**

Jesus was God but He became human and emptied Himself for our sake and was obedient unto death on the cross. Jesus is proof there is no limit to what God will do to show His love and saving power to mankind. In response, God the Father highly exalted His Son Jesus and declared the name of Jesus above every name. The more you know Jesus, the more you want to have the same mind and thoughts as Him.

- **What of Paul's description of Jesus's humility and exaltation stands out to you most? Why?**

- **The end of this passage says one day every knee will bow to Jesus. Why is it important to willingly submit to Jesus now instead of waiting until His return?**

At Jersey, we believe people are worth investing in because that is exactly what Jesus did. Over the next few weeks, we will be offering opportunities to bless others through prayer, living sent, and giving. Whether you've been here for a long time, a short while, or are brand new, we are glad you're here and invite you to lean in. Come and experience all that God has for you in our body.

- **How can friendships become a blessing to others? How can godly friendships give opportunity to tell others about Jesus and what He's done in our lives?**

## APPLICATION

*Offer the following action steps for the application of God's Word.*

- **How does understanding more about who Jesus is help you pursue the mind of Christ?**
- **Reflect on your life. Where are you not pursuing humility with others in the way Jesus did? What needs to change?**
- **Who is God calling you to share Jesus with this week? How will you respond?**

## PRAY

Thank God for giving Jesus for our sins and ask Him to lead you to live more like Him each day.

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**PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11**

2:1–2 Four if statements in these verses form the basis of Paul’s appeal. These phrases express conditions that are assumed for the sake of argument. Both Paul and his readers will be inclined to believe the truth of these conditions. Make my joy complete, not “make Paul happy,” reminded them that their steadfastness completed God’s call on his life. Four actions on the Philippians’ part explain what Paul meant. Two verbs translate the Greek word *phroneō*—thinking and being intent on. Beyond mere “thinking,” this addresses values. The Philippians were to value the same way and with one purpose. Between these two, Paul included shared love and spirit.

2:3–4 Selfish ambition or conceit recalls the problem Paul condemned (1:15, 17). Humility, the antidote for wrong attitudes, results in considering others as more important. Additionally, humility considers the interests of others. Proper relationships include the contrast “not only, but also.” Personal responsibilities demand consideration, but the concerns of others are equally important.

2:5–11 This passage has prompted various (Gk) *kenosis* (lit “emptying”) theories attempting to describe what Jesus gave up in coming to earth. The text illustrates Christian humility. Because of its rhythmic character, it is often considered an early hymn, including two stanzas—vv. 6–8 (on Christian humility) and vv. 9–11 (on Jesus’s ascension).

2:5 The phrase adopt the same attitude commands the church to value Christ’s character as a model.

2:6 The key thought of this verse is that Jesus did not consider (cp. v. 3) his own interests, thus allowing them to dominate his actions. Existing: The idea is “although existing,” since it pres-

ents an apparent obstacle for Jesus to overcome in becoming human. Form (Gk *morphē*) suggests his complete deity. Equality with God indicates his coequality with God and separate personality (the second person of the Trinity). To be exploited is capable of two connotations. It can mean “to grasp” (steal), but because of Jesus’s deity it probably means “to clutch” (hang on to at all costs).

2:7–8 The phrase he emptied is much debated. Theologians ponder what Jesus emptied himself of. It is certain that he did not divest himself of deity or its attributes. Two statements accompany the verb. First, by assuming the form of a servant indicates that God the Son came to demonstrate true servanthood. Second, the likeness of humanity explains both emptying and servanthood. Two further statements explain the second verb humbled (cp. v. 3). First, when he had come as a man provides the time of his humility. “As a man” contrasts with the “form of God” (v. 6). Jesus was more than human, though he came to earth in the form of a man. Second, Jesus’s humility came through becoming obedient. Servants obey; Jesus obeyed God, even to the point of dying on a cross.

2:9–11 God is described as acting in these verses. Again, two verbs organize the thought. First, God highly exalted him (“super-exalted,” occurring only here) suggests that God gave Jesus a new position, although some take it as superlative (“to the highest”). Second, God gave him the name. This name that is above every name is Lord (*kurios* = Yahweh). Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess state one result of God’s exaltation. The posture and the confession imply submissive reverence. “Every” includes spatial dimensions: heaven ... earth, and under the earth. Together they indicate the living and the dead (blessed and condemned). All bring glory to God. This teaches that Jesus mediates between God and humans. He is the focus of worship (Lord) and the administrator of God’s will on earth.

# **DEVOTIONALS**

## **PRAY FOR THE KINGDOM**

## DAY 1

Psalm 116:1-2

*I love the LORD because he has heard  
my appeal for mercy.*

*Because he has turned his ear to me,  
I will call out to him as long as I live.*

The psalmist reminds us that we don't pray out of obligation, but because God is listening. God's attentiveness is foundational for kingdom prayer. If God didn't listen, then our petitions for our friends, relatives, and neighbors would be pointless. But because He hears us, prayer becomes the most powerful means to move His mission forward.

Starting Monday, March 8th, as Jersey begins a week of prayer, remember that prayer isn't just a task to check off your list. It is a privilege to enjoy, and the way we seek the Spirit of God at work. Kingdom movements can take place when ordinary people believe Scripture and call on the Lord to do His work and will in our lives and the world. If we want to experience the hand of the Lord in our mission, we start with confident prayer, knowing that He is listening. As the psalmist reminds us, this is a worthwhile effort for our entire lives.

- **How would your prayer life change if you confidently believed God is listening? What gets in your way of this now?**
- **Thank the Lord for hearing your prayers. Ask Him to teach you how to pray and believe that He hears you and is working.**

## DAY 2

Matthew 6:9-10

*“Therefore, you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”*

In Matthew 6, Jesus taught the disciples how to pray by doing so Himself. Prayer begins with understanding who you are talking to. Christians are praying to “Our Father.” This title is both personal and respectful. We approach the Lord as His children. We have open access to Him because of our position in Christ.

Having acknowledged God’s authority, we are to pray with right priorities. Powerful prayers are anchored in the right priorities. If we only pray about our immediate concerns, needs, or wants, our prayers can shrink into something small. This doesn’t mean God doesn’t care about our needs, but as we focus on His kingdom priorities, He will give us the things we need (Matthew 6:33). God brings His kingdom to earth as He draws near to those who don’t yet know Him and need redemption. And most amazing of all, He uses us in this process, as we seek His will and walk in His way.

- **What makes it a challenge to keep focused on the priorities of God over your own priorities?**
- **Ask God to align your prayers with His priorities and to teach you to pray according to His will.**

## DAY 3

Luke 18:1-8

*Now he told them a parable on the need for them to pray always and not give up. "There was a judge in a certain town who didn't fear God or respect people. And a widow in that town kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' "For a while he was unwilling, but later he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or respect people, yet because this widow keeps pestering me, I will give her justice, so that she doesn't wear me out[b] by her persistent coming.'" Then the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. Will not God grant justice to his elect who cry out to him day and night? Will he delay helping them? I tell you that he will swiftly grant them justice. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"*

Jesus told a parable about a widow who would not give up before a worldly judge. Luke said Jesus told the parable so we would pray and not give up. Persistence in prayer is not about wearing God down. Jesus was using a "lesser to greater" line of reasoning. If a worldly judge with no fear of God or respect for people will respond this way, how much more will God respond to His children, whom He loves?

When we persist in prayer, it trains our hearts to rely on God rather than ourselves. As Jersey prepares for a week of prayer, persistence matters. We don't want to simply pray once for the lost, missionaries, the broken to be healed, or for our city. We want to keep praying. God calls us to persevere and He loves to respond. Praying together can keep us from giving up and help us to hold onto God's promises collectively.

- **Where do you feel God has called you to pray always and not give up?**
- **Ask the Lord to strengthen you to persist in prayer, trusting His timing and will.**

## DAY 4

Isaiah 26:3-4

*You will keep the mind that is dependent on you in perfect peace, for it is trusting in you. Trust in the LORD forever, because in the LORD, the LORD himself, is an everlasting rock!*

The prophet Isaiah gave the recipe for peace: a mind that is dependent on God. Peace doesn't come from ignoring problems or solving them all. It comes from focusing on our God who rules over everything.

The world trains people to look inward to analyze, strategize, and generally try to control more of the situation. Scripture teaches us to pray and train ourselves to look upward so our trust and surrender grows and we rest in God. Kingdom prayer promotes the peace the world needs and thrives in peace as our hearts rest in God.

God is calling each of us to His mission in the marketplace, the ballfields, the schools, and the streets of our community. Isaiah reminds us that trust in God is not passive but calls us to action based on the conviction that God is completely steady and reliable in our uncertain world.

- **Where does anxiety hinder you from experiencing peace and living in obedience to the call of God?**
- **Ask the Lord to keep your mind anchored on Him. Thank Him for offering you His perfect peace. Confess any ways you have allowed anxiety to control your faith instead of focusing your eyes on Him.**

## DAY 5

Luke 10:1-2

*After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two others, and he sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."*

A farmer will tell you that when the harvest is ripe, it must be gathered. There is a window of time in which workers must get into the field and pick whatever is being grown before it is no longer good. Jesus sent out seventy-two disciples, but first He made sure they understood the urgency of their mission. Jesus pointed out that there was no shortage of need, only a shortage of willing workers.

This reality has not changed. God is working and preparing hearts to receive the truth about Him and He calls us, as His people, to go into the fields and bring in the harvest that He has prepared. Jesus said first to pray for more workers. The mission starts with prayer. The harvest is ready. It's time for the workers to pray and obey.

- **What would it look like to persistently pray for workers for the mission of God? What does it look like to pray toward being one of those workers yourself?**
- **Ask the Lord to raise up more workers for the harvest. Pray to see how you can best serve Him and thank Him for the privilege of joining in His work.**

# PRAY FOR THE KINGDOM

PHILIPPIANS 4:2-9

MARCH 8, 2026

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## MAIN POINT

Prayer is the essential for believers. The world needs Christians with powerful prayer lives focused on spreading the gospel with boldness.

## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.*

Think about a project that requires “all hands on deck.” It could be sandbagging to prepare for a flood, disaster relief in some fashion, gathering items for helping families at Christmas, or a team preparing for a championship game where every player has a certain role. Powerful movements often depend on people coming together for a common purpose to achieve big things. The church is God’s chosen community for the most important movement: advancing the kingdom of God for eternity. Like all kingdom movements, this one begins with prayer.

- **What is something big you’ve been a part of that required everyone working together for a common purpose?**
- **Why is it important to recognize the need for collective effort in these moments? What happens if there isn’t overall buy-in and participation?**

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

> ***Have a volunteer read *Philippians 4:2-9*.***

Paul had been informed about a situation that led to disagreement between two women. Instead of taking sides and focusing on who was in the right and who was in the wrong, Paul implored them to be of like mind. These women needed the reminder that they were on the same team and trying to accomplish the same goal. Paul challenged them to refocus on the main thing.

- **How does keeping the gospel the main thing help us avoid potential pitfalls of conflict in the church?**
  
- **How do arguments and disagreements disrupt what God wants to do through His people?**

It is the responsibility of every believer to promote unity among the church. Even those who serve and minister can find themselves distracted by an unfortunate dispute or conflict. We are called to be on guard against these kinds of situations.

- **How can conflict become a disruption in the church?**

Repeating a major theme of this letter, Paul reiterated the need to rejoice in the Lord. This kind of joy is not based on circumstances but flows out of confidence in the Lord and a solid relationship with Him. This kind of rejoicing sustains through any season as illustrated by Paul who wrote these words from prison.

- **How is it possible to rejoice in the Lord when life is hard? What makes this a challenge?**

Paul said we are not to be anxious, but to pray about everything. When we choose to pray about our circumstances, we can release the burden of stress and anxiety.

- **How can prayer reduce anxiety in your life? How have you experienced this personally?**

Paul also said to pray about everything. Too many limit their prayers to certain topics and issues instead of taking everything to the Lord. Further, God invites us to participate in His mission through prayer with thanksgiving. Our gratitude toward the Lord not only acknowledges Him, but also expresses thanks for His activity, protection, and provision.

- **What are some things you have deemed too small or too big to pray about? How can you take those to the Lord today?**

- **What place does gratitude have in your prayer life?**

When we pray as Paul instructed, the peace of God that passes understanding will guard our hearts and minds from the attacks of the enemy and the world.

Finally, Paul instructed Christians to focus their minds on the things of God and put Paul's instruction into practice. Knowing how we are to pray does little good if we don't actively pursue it.

- **How are you challenged in prayer by this passage?**

## **APPLICATION**

*Offer the following action steps for the application of God's Word.*

- **How does prayer prepare you to obey God's will in the future and to seek His activity every day?**
- **How can we support one another in praying in the way Paul taught in these verses?**
- **Who are you praying for to come to know Christ? How is God calling you to pursue them this week?**

## **PRAY**

Thank God for letting you bring your requests to Him. Confess the ways that you have limited your prayers and pray with thanksgiving, seeking to join in the kingdom movement of God at Jersey.

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**PHILIPPIANS 4:2-9**

4:2 Euodia and Syntyche were influential, like many women in the Philippian church (Ac 16). There is no evidence that they held offices. Urge occurs twice, once with each name, avoiding favoritism. Agree translates the Greek word *phroneō*, found so often in this epistle (esp. 2:1–11). This disunity may not have been a significant problem since Paul saved his exhortation for the end of the letter. It was not moral or theological.

4:3 Ask is less authoritative than “urge” (v. 2). True partner is singular. Someone in authority (the pastor) would be the mediator. “Partner” elsewhere is translated “fellowship.” This is the yokefellow, one co-yoked in the work. Paul provided reasons to help these women. First, they contended with Paul (an athletic term). Second, they worked alongside Clement (unknown) and Paul’s coworkers. The book of life, mentioned rarely in the NT (cp. Rv 3:5; 20:15; 21:27), refers to those listed among the saved.

4:4–9 In this section Paul approached peace from two perspectives—peace within troublesome circumstances (vv. 4–7) and constructing an environment of peace (vv. 8–9).

4:5 Graciousness implies selflessness and respect for others (cp. 2:1–4). Seldom mentioned in Paul’s writings, graciousness is expected of believers and Christian leaders (cp. 1Tm 3:3; Ti 3:2). Be known indicates it is part of the church’s reputation. The Lord is near reminded the Philippian believers of Christ’s unseen presence. It also reminded them of his return.

4:6–7 Worry is anxiety (Mt 6:25–34). Prayer is the antidote for worry. Three words express different aspects of prayer: prayer, a worshipful attitude; petition, a need; and requests, the specific concern. Thanksgiving shapes prayers with gratitude. In

response, the peace of God brings power to endure. The peace surpasses knowledge, calming a troubling situation when explanations fail. Further, peace guards by keeping anxieties from hearts (choices) and minds (attitudes).

4:8–9 Minds focused on these seven qualities experience the peace of God. True is ethical “truthfulness.” Honorable is “noble,” to be respected. Just is giving people what they deserve. Pure is holy in relation to God. Lovely, mentioned only here in the NT, is attractive. Commendable, also used only here in the NT, is praiseworthy. The God of peace complements “the peace of God” (v. 7) in that life with these characteristics encourages God’s presence.

# **DEVOTIONALS**

## **SENDING FOR THE KINGDOM**

## DAY 1

### Isaiah 6:1-8

*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphim were standing above him; they each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another:*

*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Armies; his glory fills the whole earth. The foundations of the doorways shook at the sound of their voices, and the temple was filled with smoke. Then I said: Woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Armies. Then one of the seraphim flew to me, and in his hand was a glowing coal that he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said:*

*Now that this has touched your lips, your iniquity is removed and your sin is atoned for. Then I heard the voice of the Lord asking: Who will I send? Who will go for us? I said: Here I am. Send me.*

Isaiah encountered God's holiness, and it made him deeply aware of his own inadequacies. Even when encountering a person of notoriety or importance, we may be at a loss for words. How much greater is it to encounter the true and living God!? No person can stand in light of God's holiness. So, God cleansed Isaiah before He sent him. Mission starts with transformation, not qualification.

Then God asked, "Whom shall I send?" - a simple but weighty question. God didn't force Isaiah. He invited him. It was an open call with a personal response and that is still the way that God calls us to join His mission today. In response, Isaiah offered his whole self. Without knowing where, how, or even when, He was confident in the One who was calling. God is still calling His people today and we can respond with the same faith and confidence.

- **How open do you feel to God's calling in your life? How might that grow?**
- **Thank God for His call to join His mission. Ask Him to give you confidence and courage to say yes as gospel opportunities come your way.**

## DAY 2

Luke 16:10

*Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and whoever is unrighteous in very little is also unrighteous in much.*

It is tempting to chase big and exciting opportunities over small chances for faithfulness. Many of us want big assignments from God even as we avoid smaller opportunities. Yet, faithfulness is built quietly and consistently.

Jesus taught that faithfulness in small things reveals readiness for greater responsibilities. God often prepares people slowly for the greater calling on their lives. He values character over charisma. What looks ordinary today may be preparation for extraordinary obedience tomorrow. Small acts of obedience in serving, listening, praying, and caring all work to shape your heart. Daily faithfulness teaches humility, dependence, and endurance as we depend on God even when no one else sees.

We are sent on mission as we step faithfully into where God directs us next. That isn't always going to be into a spotlight or platform, but it will always be with a purpose that matters beyond what you may imagine.

- **Where is God asking you to be faithful right now? How are you responding?**
- **Ask the Lord to help you be faithful where you are. Ask for boldness to respond in obedience and that He will prepare you for where He will lead in the future.**

## DAY 3

### Esther 4:12–16

*Esther's response was reported to Mordecai. Mordecai told the messenger to reply to Esther, "Don't think that you will escape the fate of all the Jews because you are in the king's palace. If you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jewish people from another place, but you and your father's family will be destroyed. Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position for such a time as this." Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: "Go and assemble all the Jews who can be found in Susa and fast for me. Don't eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my female servants will also fast in the same way. After that, I will go to the king even if it is against the law. If I perish, I perish."*

Esther faced a moment of decision that would move her back into comfort or forward into risk. Staying silent was safer while obeying meant speaking up and putting everything at risk. Her relative Mordecai reminded her she was given influence for a moment like this. God's calling and greater purposes often intersect with risk.

Choosing obedience in the face of fear doesn't eliminate fear, but it refuses to let fear dictate our actions. Esther stepped forward and trusted God with her uncertain outcome. Kingdom mission carries risk, but it also includes God's presence, which makes the ultimate difference.

God doesn't promise comfort or ease. He does promise Himself and what we need to obey regardless of what fear tells us. As sending Sunday approaches, God may be asking you to trust Him more than you listen to your fear, just as Esther did.

- **What area of risk feels most intimidating when you think about God's mission? Why?**
- **Confess the times you have allowed fear to keep you from obedience. Praise God for the promise of His presence and commit to trusting Him over fear.**

## DAY 4

Romans 10:14-15

*How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: **How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.***

Advancing God's Kingdom isn't a solo effort. There are those who go, those who support, those who give, and those who pray. Effectively carrying out God's mission for His people requires widespread participation. The kingdom advances through cooperation and falters in isolation. Sending increases partnership as those who go are strengthened by the faithful who support them.

Churches thrive when they view sending as shared obedience. And godly obedience tends to be contagious. Often those who witness the faithfulness of others stepping out in faith also feel challenged to do the same. A sending church will celebrate both those who go and those who sustain the work.

We should respond in obedience when God calls us to go. But even if He doesn't say, "Go," He is still calling you to prayer, generosity, and encouragement. We are to all be participants in His mission in different ways.

- **What role might God be inviting you to play in joining His mission?**
  
- **Ask the Lord to show you how you can participate in His mission whether going, sending, praying, encouraging, or giving. Thank Him for making every role useful to His kingdom work.**

## DAY 5

Matthew 28:18-20

*Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Jesus ended His earthly ministry with the command to go and make disciples. The Great Commission is not just for the select few, it is for every Christ follower as the mission of the church. Jesus anchored His command in His authority and presence. This is not a solo endeavor; we go with Him and other brothers and sisters. The promise of His presence gives us the boldness for obedience.

For some the reality of sending Sunday may feel like confirmation of something you've felt God stirring in you. For others, it may be the beginning of God stirring in your heart. Though you may not see the big picture all at once, you can still obey, trust, and be available. The rest will unfold in His timing. As you prepare for Sunday, the most important thing is openness to His call.

- **What would it look like for you to say yes to whatever God asks of you?**
- **Ask the Lord to prepare your heart for whatever He calls you toward. Thank Him for what He has already done in your life and what He is going to do.**

# SENDING FOR THE KINGDOM

PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30

MARCH 15, 2026

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## MAIN POINT

All believers are called to join in equipping the church to go and being willing to go for the sake of the gospel.

## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.*

Do you consider yourself an encouraging person? Most of us are so caught up in our own concerns, it is easy to miss opportunities to encourage others, even those who are serving selflessly for the gospel. Think about how your life and faith have been affected by encouragement from others. How can you help equip or encourage others to willingly go? Or, where might God be calling you to go for His purposes?

- **Who do you know who has sacrificed for the sake of the gospel advancement by going to a foreign location? What are you grateful for about this person?**
  
- **What is challenging about “going” for the sake of the gospel?**

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

**> Have a volunteer read *Philippians 2:19-30*.**

Paul revealed his heart for the church at Philippi and for his protégé Timothy. Paul wrote to encourage churches but also sent other workers to minister in their midst. As the church today, we should also prioritize sending people out for the sake of gospel advancement and being willing to go personally.

- **How might churches equip people to go and serve for the sake of the gospel today?**
  
- **Why is it important that this is an ongoing focus?**

The Lord's timing was more important than Paul's own plans or desires. He continued praying and trusted God would work everything out in the best way possible. We can trust God to orchestrate the right people at the right places at the right time. Paul knew Timothy had a pastor's heart and would care well for the Philippians. It is easy to stay focused on our own plans, desires, and needs but we are to be equally concerned with the needs of those of those God has called us to minister to.

- **When have you experienced the perfect timing of the Lord?**

- **Why is it important for Christians to continually have an eye on the needs of others for the sake of ministry?**

Paul moved on to another messenger, Epaphroditus, who had sacrificed much for the sake of the gospel. Epaphroditus was dear to Paul and Paul commended him before the church.

It is possible that because Epaphroditus became ill he felt like he failed in some way on the mission. Paul expressed his gratitude for Epaphroditus and urged the church to receive him in the same way.

- **What are some ways we can express gratitude for those sacrificing for the sake of gospel mission today?**
  
- **Why is it important we also be willing to sacrifice?**

We can trust that when God sends someone that He also orchestrates the mission. Epaphroditus went above and beyond the call of duty and Paul wanted the Philippians to recognize this. Although he was only the messenger, Epaphroditus was steadfast in his role in spreading the gospel message. All service in God's economy is vital and valuable.

- **When have you needed to know that your role was important no matter how large or small it seems? What makes this hard to believe at times?**

Epaphroditus's faithfulness almost led to him losing his life to sickness. Epaphroditus was willing to risk it all for the sake of the gospel. Can we say the same?

- **What are you willing to risk for the sake of the gospel? What feels too risky? How can you submit this to the Lord?**

## **APPLICATION**

*Offer the following action steps for the application of God's Word.*

- **Who can you encourage as they seek to serve the Lord?**
- **How can we, as a group, spur one another on towards gospel mission?**
- **How might encouraging others give you opportunity to share the gospel?**

## **PRAY**

Thank God for opportunities to serve Him and the people He has called you to pursue with the gospel. Ask for eyes to see the opportunities you have for sharing the gospel.

**PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30**

Paul was willing to sacrifice himself in service for the church at Philippi and warmly commended his coworkers, Timothy and Epaphroditus, for their humble and sacrificial service as well. He told of his plan to send Timothy to them when there was further news for him to give. Also he offered an explanation for Epaphroditus's return to them. Paul wanted to be sure the Philippians did not think that Epaphroditus failed in his task to serve Paul.



# **DEVOTIONALS**

## **GIVING FOR THE KINGDOM**

## DAY 1

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

*Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts. 10 For if either falls, his companion can lift him up; but pity the one who falls without another to lift him up. Also, if two lie down together, they can keep warm; but how can one person alone keep warm? And if someone overpowers one person, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not easily broken.*

The writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us that God designed us for relationship and partnership. Throughout Scripture, we see various examples of people who worked together to accomplish kingdom work.

Consider the ways you've seen and experienced that partnership multiplies impact. One person can do good, but when many come together, even greater impact can be had. This principle applies spiritually as well. God invites us to join in what He is doing along with fellow believers so our collective efforts will have an exponential effect.

Giving is one of the most obvious ways we witness this effect. When we give, we join hands with others in advancing the gospel. Giving supports the mission of the church, both locally and around the world. The beauty of partnership is it allows different people with different gifts, resources, and abilities to contribute toward a shared purpose and multiplies our individual offerings for greater kingdom impact.

- **Where have you seen the power of gospel partnership have a large impact?**
- **Thank the Lord for His plans to use you alongside other believers to impact the world with the gospel. Ask for wisdom to see opportunities for giving in His name.**

## DAY 2

### 2 Corinthians 9:6–8

*The point is this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously. Each person should do as he has decided in his heart - not reluctantly or out of compulsion, since God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.*

Paul said giving is more than a financial transaction. It is an act of worship. God loves a cheerful giver because it demonstrates trust, faith, gratitude, and joy. Giving reveals what we believe about God beyond mere words. When we believe that He is generous, faithful, and sufficient, then our natural response is generosity. When we live in fear of scarcity, we are less likely to be generous.

Scripture tells us repeatedly that God will supply all our needs. Giving doesn't inhibit our needs being met; it positions us to experience God's grace and provision more deeply. When we give generously and willingly, we align our hearts with God's purposes. God doesn't measure our gifts by size, but by obedience, attitude, and faith.

The more you grow in a relationship with God, the more generosity shapes your priorities and relaxes your grip on material things. Over time, we learn to depend on God rather than our possessions. Our giving is a visible act of worship that honors God and fuels kingdom work.

- **In what area of life do you most struggle to be generous?**
- **Ask God to shape you into a generous giver as you grow in trust and faith that He can and will provide for your needs. Pray for your giving to be an act of worship that honors Him.**

## DAY 3

Hebrews 13:5-6

*Keep your life free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for he himself has said, I will never leave you or abandon you. Therefore, we may boldly say,*

*The Lord is my helper;*

*I will not be afraid.*

*What can man do to me?*

This world is full of ads promising that if you buy their product, you will be satisfied and content. Many of us have chased these promises only to be left wanting. In reality, the contentment we desire is never going to be found in material things or the accumulation of wealth. Some of the most discontent people in the world have the most possessions.

Hebrews reminds us that true contentment is found in God's presence, not in our possessions. The Lord's promise that He will never leave us or forsake us is the foundation for the peace and satisfaction we desire. Paul's contentment in every circumstance was based on Christ and not on Paul's easy or hard situations.

Contentment is also not found in comparison. Our world constantly offers up other people's lives to compare with our own. When comparison takes root, discontentment grows. We look at others and believe their lives are easier, richer, or better than ours. That mindset eats away at gratitude and faith, and it limits generosity.

Instead, God calls us to gratitude and trust because He is faithful, not because of our circumstances. And a grateful heart leads to further faith and generosity.

- **Where does comparison threaten your sense of contentment?**
- **Ask God to teach you to be content in Him and to guard your heart from comparison. Commit to trusting Him to supply all your needs.**

## DAY 4

Matthew 6:19–21,33

*“Don’t store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don’t break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

*“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.”*

On their own, possessions are not evil, but they are unreliable. Earthly security is temporary, as evidenced by when our alarm systems fail, the policy doesn’t cover replacement costs, or the stock market crashes, and our portfolio dwindles. By contrast, God’s provision is eternal. When we learn to trust Him over things of the world, we will finally receive the security we crave.

When Jesus said to seek His kingdom first, He called us to trust God with our outcomes. Instead of trying to control the details of life, we can have faith that God can be trusted with every detail and every situation we might face. Giving displays trust that God will take care of us as we prioritize His kingdom work. Kingdom giving shifts our focus from accumulation to impact. Instead of asking what we can keep, we consider what God does with what we have. Giving stretches and grows our faith as it reminds us that our lives are sustained by the Lord, not money. As we approach Giving Sunday, consider where your treasure is and what that reveals about your trust.

- **How might trusting God more change your view of your resources?**
  
- **Thank the Lord for being your trustworthy provider. Ask Him to teach you to seek His kingdom first and rely on Him for security.**

## DAY 5

Acts 20:35

*“In every way I’ve shown you that it is necessary to help the weak by laboring like this and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, because he said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”*

Recall a time your generosity brought unexpected joy to someone. Maybe it was taking food, supporting a cause, serving at a mission project, or blessing a family in some other way. Those moments are as powerful for those who receive as those who give.

Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive. We don’t give for the recognition that might follow. True generosity in giving brings joy as it aligns our hearts with God’s. The early church understood this truth and gave sacrificially so the gospel would spread, needs could be met, and lives transformed.

When we give for the kingdom, we participate in stories we may never see fully this side of eternity. As we give, our hearts grow and become more like God’s. We develop a love and vision for His mission and for the lost. As we prepare for Sunday’s focus, think about how God is challenging your approach to giving. Every act of generosity, small or large, matters in the kingdom of God.

- **How might God use your generosity to advance the kingdom? How does that bless you also?**
  
- **Thank God for the opportunities you have to participate in kingdom work. Ask Him to align your heart with His and to grow your generosity so your giving reflects your faith in Him.**

# GIVING FOR THE KINGDOM

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-20

MARCH 22, 2026

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## MAIN POINT

Christians recognize the importance of commitment to godly giving and partnership, both locally and around the world, so the gospel may reach the lost.

## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.*

What do the following have in common? Bonnie and Clyde, Venus and Serena Williams, Marlin and Dory, Batman and Robin, Lone Ranger and Tonto, Thelma and Louise, Buzz and Woody. You likely recognize some or all of these famous duos. By partnering together, these people and characters have made history or become well-known as a team. As part of our Kingdom focus series, we are studying the importance of partnering together, whether praying, caring, or giving, as a church family. When we partner together, our impact for the kingdom is multiplied.

- **What is your favorite famous partnership and why?**
  
- **What is a good partnership you've been involved in and how did it have a greater impact than you could alone?**

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

**> Have a volunteer read *Philippians 4:10-20*.**

Paul expressed his gratitude for the support of the Philippians and that their circumstances had enabled them to give even more. Christians should recognize the importance of contributing to the cause of Christ through the local church. The ability to give is an opportunity to join in what God is doing both locally and around the world. One way the Philippians showed their love and support of Paul was through giving.

- **How does giving support the cause of Christ, locally and around the world?**

Paul was grateful for the giving of the Philippians and for the impact it had on them as much as him. Living generously and sacrificially models the heart of Christ toward others. Giving blesses others but it also blesses us as it teaches us further dependence and trust in the Lord.

- **How is the one who gives impacted through their own sacrificial generosity?**
  
- **When have you experienced the benefit of giving?**

Even though Paul was in need, he was content in his circumstances, even as he was in a Roman prison at the time. When our own circumstances might be difficult, can we say the same as Paul—that we are content?

- **What drives your contentment? How much is your daily contentment determined by your circumstances?**
  
- **How might we seek to grow further into daily contentment in Christ?**

Paul said he learned how to be content in any situation, not that it was a natural byproduct of his temperament or personality. We are to be intentional about seeking contentment in Christ no matter our situation. Some of the most discontent people are the ones who have no financial worries and some of the most content are those with the least worldly possessions. The things of the world will never truly satisfy. Paul emphasized Jesus as the key to being content. When our hope is in Christ, we can say with Paul that we are content in any circumstances.

- **How do we seek contentment in Jesus daily? What makes this challenging?**

It was a blessing for Paul to receive from others in his troubles, but it was also a benefit to the Philippians. The same is true today. Think about ways you have been blessed when you have given in the way that Scripture commands. No matter the size of the gift, Paul reminds us that partnering in any way is immeasurably important and we should never negate a gift when prompted by the Lord.

- **Paul encouraged the Philippians that their giving served to build up the church. Why is it important to encourage one another as we give and receive for the sake of the gospel?**

God is not limited in any way. Paul said the needs of the Philippians would be supplied according to God's riches. Some translations describe the supply of God as "glorious riches." Regardless of the words used, the intention is the same: There is no end to God's supply, and He gives His people everything they need and more.

- **How does recognizing that God's riches are unlimited affect your ability to trust Him with your resources?**

## **APPLICATION**

*Offer the following action steps for the application of God's Word.*

- **How do you need to seek growth in giving for the sake of the gospel? How might this be tied to your regular sense of contentment?**
- **How might we encourage one another toward daily contentment in Christ over being driven by circumstances?**
- **How might living content in Christ give us opportunity to share the hope of Christ with others?**

## **PRAY**

Thank the Lord for giving you opportunities to be part of His work around the world. Praise Him for all the blessings you have received through godly giving.

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**PHILIPPIANS 4:10-20**

4:10 Once again indicates that some time had elapsed between the Philippian believers' previous gifts to Paul (cp. 2Co 8) and their sending Epaphroditus to him in Rome (2:25–30). Since Paul had no need, they lacked the opportunity to give.

4:11 Learned (Greek perfect tense) implies a lesson resulting in better knowledge. Content (lit "self-reliant") is self-sufficiency that grows out of trust in Christ.

4:12 I know results from evaluating various circumstances. The difficult circumstances are to make do with little, to be hungry, and to be in need. The contrasting good are to make do with a lot, to be well fed, and to be in abundance. Together these taught Paul how to be content.

4:13 All things refers to the economic fluctuations of life (v. 12). Through him who strengthens me teaches that Christ empowers believers to live in God's will. Paradoxically, Paul was strong when he was weak; independent only when dependent. Such is the life of a disciple.

4:14 Partnering is the word for "fellowship" (1:5). Hardship is "tribulations." Real partners share difficulties.

4:15 The early days of the gospel refers to Paul's leaving Philippi to continue witnessing in Europe. Shared is, again, "fellowship" (v. 14; 1:5). Others had a one-way relationship, receiving but not giving. You alone reveals one reason why Paul loved the Philippian church. They did what others did not.

4:16 Paul entered Thessalonica after leaving Philippi, and the Philippian believers' gifts to him began immediately and continued consistently (several times).

4:17 With contentment (v. 11) and adaptability (v. 12), Paul did not seek the gift. That would abuse his converts and compromise servanthood. With a higher, spiritual motivation, Paul sought the profit that is increasing to your account. Using financial terms, Paul declared this “profit” accrued from an action. “Increasing” is the interest it would bear to the account of the Philippian believers. Giving, a physical and material act, is a spiritual transaction.

4:18 Continuing financial language, Paul had received everything in full. Any responsibility to him was paid. What Epaphroditus embodied was an abundance. Their material support was a fragrant offering and an acceptable sacrifice because it met Paul’s needs and was pleasing to God (cp. Rm 12:1–2). Giving always benefits those who give more than those who receive.

4:19–20 God bountifully blesses those who give with glorious provision in accord with his glory and for his purposes. Paul’s doxology is based on the ultimate purpose of life to bring glory to God now and forever.

# **DEVOTIONALS**

## **CELEBRATING THE KINGDOM**

## DAY 1

Psalm 103:1–5

*My soul, bless the LORD,  
and all that is within me, bless his holy name.  
My soul, bless the LORD,  
and do not forget all his benefits.  
He forgives all your iniquity;  
he heals all your diseases.  
He redeems your life from the Pit;  
he crowns you with faithful love and compassion.  
He satisfies you with good things;  
your youth is renewed like the eagle.*

Gratitude doesn't always happen automatically. Rather, it is something that must be chosen intentionally. When we forget, joy fades, but expressing gratitude brings God glory. The adage that hindsight is 20/20 rings true in the spiritual sense also. Looking back, we often recognize healing, forgiveness, provision, and refreshing that may not have been as obvious while we were in the moment.

Palm Sunday is a day of celebration as we remember Jesus's triumphant entry into Jerusalem at the start of His final week on earth. We focus on the King who came humbly riding into town on a donkey, fulfilling God's promises in unexpected ways. Paul's gratitude in Philippians reflects this posture as he celebrated God's work by remembering people and moments shaped by grace. As this week begins, we prepare our hearts for celebration by remembering all God has done and who He really is.

- **How does remembering God's faithfulness shape your worship?**
  
- **Thank the Lord for His activity in your life. Praise Him for who He is and the ways that He has forgiven, restored, and healed you over the years. Ask forgiveness for the ways you have neglected to show gratitude.**

## DAY 2

### 1 Corinthians 3:6–9

*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So, then, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's coworkers. You are God's field, God's building.*

Kingdom work is always a shared effort. Some plant, others water, but only God brings the growth. No one role is more important than others because the power comes from God and not from people. Christian celebration isn't primarily focused on personalities, positions, or platforms. Our celebrations should be centered on God's work through faithful partnerships like those found in Paul's life.

We are coworkers of the Lord's and each Christ follower has a role to play in important kingdom work. When we understand partnership this way, the temptation to compare diminishes and gratitude grows. We can rejoice in what God is doing through others without feeling the need for comparison and the insecurity that often follows. When we remember that we are God's coworkers, brought in by grace, then we accept the responsibility of our role and celebrate what only God can grow.

- **How does knowing that God brings spiritual growth free you from comparing yourself to others?**
- **Ask the Lord to help you stay faithful to where He has you and to resist the temptation to compare yourself to others. Commit to being joyful and grateful as you serve Him and celebrate the work only He can do.**

## DAY 3

Colossians 3:12–14

*Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a grievance against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive. Above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.*

In Colossians, Paul reminds us godly love binds everything together in perfect harmony. Without love, harmony suffers and celebration becomes empty. Life in Christ is meant to demonstrate the characteristics Paul listed in this passage. Jesus's journey to the cross was fueled by His love for humanity and the Father. When love grows, celebration grows richer and reflects the heart of God. Growing love requires patience, kindness, compassion, and the other traits Paul included here.

Just as you wouldn't leave in the morning without getting dressed, we must take on the qualities of godliness daily. These characteristics aren't natural but are dependent on the Lord's work in us. The more we seek to put on His characteristics, the more His love shines through us and makes an impact in the world. As Paul reminded us here, love is the "overcoat" that is included in and through all these traits that model godliness for the world. Love binds us together in perfect unity.

- **How can you be intentional about seeking godliness daily?**
- **Ask the Lord to show you where you need to grow in godliness and for His strength as you pursue that growth.**

## DAY 4

Isaiah 55:10–11

*“For just as rain and snow fall from heaven  
and do not return there  
without saturating the earth  
and making it germinate and sprout,  
and providing seed to sow  
and food to eat,  
so my word that comes from my mouth  
will not return to me empty,  
but it will accomplish what I please  
and will prosper in what I send it to do.”*

Being heard and seen matters. Knowing that your efforts will have a return matters. People can be overlooked and their work can go unnoticed, but this is never the case with God.

His Word never returns empty. It always produces results and makes a difference. Even when the process seems slow, we can be sure God is working and His purposes will unfold in His timing. On Palm Sunday, the people celebrated Jesus without knowing that the cross was to come. To human eyes, God’s work may look incomplete before it looks glorious.

Faith believes God’s promises even when they are yet to come. Confidence in the Lord allows us to fully rejoice without fear since He never fails. This unusual confidence grows our faith in God, whose Word never returns empty.

- **Where do you struggle to trust God’s promises for the future?**
- **Confess the ways you struggle to trust God is working. Ask for confidence in His promises that serve to grow your faith in Him on an ongoing basis.**

## DAY 5

Zechariah 9:9

*Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!  
Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem!  
Look, your King is coming to you;  
he is righteous and victorious,  
humble and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

When was a time you had expectations that went unmet? When expectations and reality don't line up, disappointment often follows and shapes our reactions.

Zechariah foretold of a humble King riding on a donkey. Palm Sunday celebrates the fulfillment of this prophecy of Jesus coming as a servant king. Picture the scene as the crowd celebrated His arrival, though they misunderstood His mission. They wanted and expected immediate victory instead of sacrificial love. But we are called to focus on who Jesus really is and not merely who we want or expect Him to be.

Palm Sunday invites us to align our expectations with God's purposes as our celebration is rooted in truth. Instead of being distracted by circumstances or our own desires, let's stay grounded in His Word and base our expectations on who He really is and not who we selfishly want Him to be. Expectations matter.

- **How do your expectations need to adjust so your worship of Jesus is aligned with the reality of who He is?**
  
- **Praise Jesus for who He is. Ask Him to align your heart with His purposes so you are rooted in truth.**

# CELEBRATING THE KINGDOM

PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11

MARCH 29, 2026

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## MAIN POINT

God brings people into our lives as a spiritual blessing. We celebrate this by thanking Him in prayer.

## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.*

Palm Sunday is a unique celebration. The crowds celebrated Jesus with palm branches and shouts of praise though they didn't fully understand who He was. Their celebration was real, but it was incomplete and brief.

Paul's words in Philippians show us a deeper form of celebration that focuses on gratitude for partnership in pursuing the call of God. Paul reminded us of the importance of having a plan to guide us in not only thanking God for those in our lives who have blessed us but also to pray for them specifically.

- **How often are your prayers aimed at gratitude for others?**
- **How does praying for others with gratitude help nurture those relationships and help you recognize other ways you can be grateful for those around you?**

## UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

**> Have a volunteer read *Philippians 1:3-11*.**

The Philippians had been generous to support Paul's ministry and travels. He was grateful to them, but he also recognized it was ultimately the Lord who had worked such kindness through them. When the Philippians came to mind, Paul thanked the Lord. Paul specifically thanked God for the Philippians' partnership in the gospel. These brothers and sisters supported Paul from the start and he was grateful.

- **Who do you thank God for placing in your life?**
  
- **What do these verses reveal about the depth of Paul's relationship with the Philippians?**

Paul expressed his confidence that God was going to continue working through the Philippians until His work was complete. We have this same promise in Jesus. God is not going to give up on us and will see His purposes fulfilled in our lives. This is reason for great confidence and joy.

- **How would this reminder encourage the Philippians to stay the course? How can it encourage us toward the same today?**

- **Paul knew one of the primary ways to love and support these brothers and sisters was through prayer. How important is prayer in your relationships? How might this grow?**

Paul knew the best thing he could do for his friends and fellow Christians was to pray and to let them know he was praying. He called them fellow partakers of grace. Christians are not alone as we face the trials and difficulties of this life. Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians from prison, giving even more weight to his words of gratitude and appreciation. They were separated physically but united in the bond of love in Christ. Though he knew the Philippian believers were with him in spirit, Paul stated his desire to be reunited with them in person.

- **How does it help us to persevere in following Christ when we remember we are not alone but are united to Christian brothers and sisters?**
  
- **Who comes to your mind when you think about those with you in spirit, even if not in person?**

Acknowledging the Philippians' great love, Paul encouraged them to strive for even more. There is no shortage of ungodly and deceitful teachings that come our way to distract and deceive us from the true message of the gospel. Paul knew the Philippians needed godly love tied to discernment and knowledge, and the same is true for believers today.

- **Where do you need discernment and knowledge from God?**

The Philippians had supported Paul through a lot and weathered some very difficult days with him. Paul responded through his prayers and these letters of encouragement. He also spoke words of confidence over them and shared how they specifically brought him joy. Paul assured these believers that the result of their faithfulness would be their righteousness and Christ's glory.

- **How can you express gratitude to those who have blessed your life? How can you do this in prayer?**

## **APPLICATION**

*Offer the following action steps for the application of God's Word.*

- **Write a note, text, or email to express your gratitude to someone who has blessed your life in Christ. Pray for these individuals specifically and let them know you are doing so.**
- **How can you be encouraging and supportive of the ministry of others like the Philippians were with Paul?**
- **How does living this way with one another give us opportunity to share our hope with others?**

## **PRAY**

Thank God that you are not intended to face life alone, but alongside brothers and sisters who also call Him Father. Pray specifically for individuals you have gratitude for today.

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**PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11**

1:3–4 When a church embraced the Lord and the gospel message as enthusiastically as the Philippians did, it was cause for great thanksgiving, even if there was cause for concern over unity.

1:5 Partnership (lit “fellowship”) expresses participation, including giving (4:10–20) and sending Epaphroditus (2:25). From the first day shows Paul’s continued joy in these believers, in spite of his initial difficulty in the city of Philippi (Ac 16).

1:6–8 Paul’s confidence in prayer resulted from the principle that God finishes what he begins, and the fact that the Philippians demonstrated their Christian character by joining in the support of the gospel work.

1:9–10 Paul prayed two petitions: a growing love (v. 9) and complete character (v. 10). Love (Gk agape-) is selfless action for another person. Knowledge and discernment together foster mature love. “Knowledge” is both intellectual and experiential. “Discernment” occurs only here in the NT and connotes moral sensitivity. Love enriched by knowledge and moral discernment leads believers to experience what really matters. The word pure emphasizes personal integrity; blameless means good character that survives all accusations.

1:11 The phrase filled with the fruit of righteousness expresses how a person attains purity and blamelessness. Righteousness is the character of those whom God declares righteous.

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