

Philippians Study Week 1

Philippians 1:1-20

Every human is searching for that one thing that brings them joy. Unfortunately we often look to things that may bring temporary happiness, but do not bring deep rooted joy. Happiness is fleeting, joy is eternal. Joy is a deep knowledge of our salvation, and a confident hope that God will never leave us or forsake us. The book of Philippians is a letter of joy! Paul's desire is that we know God in such a deep way, that joy becomes a foundational characteristic of our lives.

*****Read Philippians 1:1-20*****

JOY

Paul starts this letter off in familiar fashion. In verse 4, this is the first of almost 20 times Paul uses the word joy. He remembers them with prayer and thanksgiving... why? They were his partners in spreading the good news! The Philippians were open and willing to be used by God in whatever He wanted them to do.

- **With verses 3-4 in mind, what do you think comes to mind when people think about you? Is joy one of the characteristics that would be named? Is your life lived bringing those around you up or down?**
 - Read Romans 1:8, how does this relate?
 - Is your faith being proclaimed to the people in your life?

- **Verse five says they were “partners” in sharing the good news. Think about your life, would you say you are a partner in sharing this good news?**
 - Read the following verses and discuss how they relate.
 - Matthew 28:16-20
 - We partner with God and we go! Whether it's to our next door neighbor or to Africa, we are commissioned to be partners in spreading the good news. Let me be clear, we are all called to participate and we are all called to go!

Read Philippians 1:6, Paul writes one of the most beautiful and confidence instilling things in all of scripture. God began a work in us, and He will finish it. Throughout our life, in the ups and the downs, God will never stop working. Think about this, His work “for us” began on the cross, when He died in our place. His work “In us” begins when we first believe. This is a lifelong process that won't be finished until we see Jesus face to face.

- **Have you ever felt like you were not making progress in your spiritual life? What area in your life do you need the most growth?**

- Be confident in this, find joy in this...When God starts a project, He will always complete it. When we get discouraged and lose hope, we hold onto the fact that God never fails and will never give up on us! We must continue to grow and mindfully not let our current condition or situation rob us from the joy of the journey with Jesus.
- Read the following verses, how do they relate?
 - Psalm 138:8
 - 1 Corinthians 1:8
 - Ephesians 4:12
- God was working, is working and will continue to work in your life. Knowing this brings joy in all circumstances.

Read Philippians 1:9, Note that Paul shares a valuable lesson. One of the best ways to influence and help somebody... pray for them!

- **So how do you pray for people?**

- Read the following verses and discuss how they relate.
 - 1 Thessalonians 3:12
 - Colossians 1:9
- Your prayers affect people's lives! Pray people's relationship with Jesus would grow, pray their hearts would be soft and open, pray their hearts would overflow, pray for breakthrough, pray bold and specific prayers for people!

Read Philippians 1:10-11, Paul's prayer was that we would understand what really matters so we would live pure and blameless lives. He hoped we would be morally strong, and know the difference between good and bad and difference between trivial

and important. Why? We are called to be different, to have different values, to live differently than the world and become like Jesus.

- **Are you living a life that is aware of what really matters? What most distracts you from what really matters? Do you know what really matters?**
 - Why is this important, Read the following verse and discuss
 - Hebrews 5:11-14
 - Psalm 119:15
 - John 13:34-35
 - Mark 12:30-31
 - Psalm 27:4
 - Luke 10:41-42
 - 1 Peter 4:8
 - Matthew 6:33
 - Acts 20:35
 - Looking at verse 11, what are the fruits of salvation?
 - Read Galatians 5:22-23
 - Which fruits do you have? Which do you lack?

THE GOSPEL PREACHED

Read Philippians 1:12-14

Put yourself in Paul's shoes, he was imprisoned, most of us would struggle to survive. Most would lose heart and give up. Not Paul, he saw this as an opportunity to preach the Gospel of Jesus! Life lesson from Paul, he realized his current situation wasn't as important as what God wanted to do through them. We may not be in a jail cell, but there is plenty to be discouraged about. How you act in the situations you face is a reflection of what you believe. Be encouraged and look for situations to demonstrate your faith, your hope of salvation.

- **Verse 14 talks about a bold confidence and sharing Jesus to others without fear. In your life, do you speak about Jesus and the good news without fear? Has your life lived during hard times been an encouragement to others? How?**
 - Read the following verses and discuss how they relate.
 - 2 Timothy 2:8-9

- Acts 4:31
- 2 Corinthians 3:12
- 2 Corinthians 7:4
- Be the light, be an encouragement by the way you live!

Read Philippians 1:15-18

Paul was aware that there were those who were trying to make a name for themselves and build their own reputations. Unfortunately, we face the same problem today, pastors and leaders building their kingdoms and their followers. Paul was so gracious and selfless towards these issues. He didn't focus on their motives, but celebrated that the Gospel was preached! Now we will not condone false motives or teachings, but must learn from Paul's heart. If God uses their messages or churches... Celebrate that the Gospel is preached!

- **When have you been judgemental to a Pastor or leader because of their motives? Was the Gospel preached?**
 - Read the following verses, and discuss how they relate.
 - Colossians 3:13
 - Romans 12:18
 - 2 Peter 3:18

Read Philippians 1:19-20

Paul did not know if he would make it out of prison alive. He said whether he lived or died, he just wanted his life to bring honor to Jesus. His prayer was that he would continue to be bold, even when he would stand trial, be bold in his faith. Paul was unwavering in his desire to be unashamed of the Gospel! His story wasn't finished here, he would be released, only to be arrested again a few years later. Think about all of the adversity... only faith in Jesus could keep him going!

- **What have you faced in your life that has tested your faith? What helped you make it though? If you are currently struggling, share with a trusted friend.**
 - Read the following verse and discuss how they relate.
 - Romans 8:18
 - 1 Peter 4:16

- 1 Corinthians 6:20
- Romans 14:8
- Paul's purpose in life was simply this, to boldly preach the Gospel and become more like Jesus. He didn't fear death, he didn't fear man, he lived life to its fullest!