

Seven Bible Studies 2017

Epistles

June 25: Philippians 1-2 (Ryan Ingle)

Sunday, June 25 ~ Philippians 1 - 2

Paul starts the letter out with a prayer of thanksgiving. Paul had helped start this church in Philippi on his second mission trip for the Gentile people. Paul is writing to them as he is concerned with the amount of chastisement they are receiving and wants to encourage them on their walk for Christ.

“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.” (1:9-11) - Paul has a way with words in his prayers! He had a very close connection with Christ obviously!!

Paul is encouraged that he is in chains as it has helped spread the gospel even more. His influence and refusal to back down from preaching and teaching Christ's message has emboldened other Christians to also take confidence in spreading the word as well.

Paul knows there are some preaching the message out of envy and rivalry towards Paul while other preach out of love for Paul to help him in spreading the word. Paul here emphasizes it doesn't trouble him the motives behind the preaching. He is just excited Christ's message is being taught to unbelievers.

Paul is unshaken from his preaching of the gospel and is convinced all his trials and sufferings will be rewarded through God in the end. Paul's example in all these letters weren't just an example to those he wrote the letters to, but as well for us as he was very devoted to spreading Christ's message to all even though the Jews did not like it. Paul was more than willing to die for Christ's sake as he knew where he would be going...do you know with certainty where you will end up?

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.” (21-26)

Even with his confidence in his future, he was still willing to stay here on earth to continue helping others in their walk with Christ. Paul was a truly humble man!

Paul encourages them to stay true to the gospel...keep yourselves clean and true to God so whether Paul sees or hears about them in the near future, he will know they are suffering for the gospel as well. “For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.” (1:29-30)

Ch 2

Paul starts of in the 2nd chapter by telling them to put aside your self ambitions and to put on Christ's humility. “then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.” (2:2)

He encourages them to put others before themselves...to be humble. "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (5-8) Christ's example here was to be humble and place himself last...then God raised him to the highest place! This is not an easy challenge Paul places in front of them but he tries to get them in the correct mindset to be servants of Christ

"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain."
(2:12-16)

When we don't keep ourselves humbled properly, that is usually when we complain/grumble about our current situation. Stop! Put yourself back in proper perspective. Remember, we are servants for God. Put others need before ours! Remember the children's song, J.O.Y.? Paul concludes this chapter by saying he is eager to send Epaphroditus back to the Philippine people. He highly praises his work and thanks them for sending him to help. Paul states, "But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs." (2:25) He tries to relieve them of their concern for him as he almost gave his life in service for Christ.

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:
Thank you, Ryan!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
Thanks, Ryan Ingle! I'm so thankful to have this letter. It's full of encouragement to stand firm in the face of persecution and to rejoice regardless of circumstance. Paul is a great example of this to us. No king self. Christ came not to be served but TO serve. Christians should have an attitude of self-sacrificing humility and love for others. As you referenced:JOY.

July 2: Philippians 3-4 (Ryan Ingle)

Sunday, July 2 ~ Philippians 3 & 4

Paul starts out by warning them of these false teachers who were trying to mix the old law with the new law. Paul mentions the various "proofs" he has for his own faith in verses 5 - 6. This is Paul's way of saying, they think they are righteous in what they have done, I have a 'more qualified resume.'

Paul goes on to state, I put all that former life, all of what I used to be, aside. It is not important. I am following Christ wholeheartedly now!! He no longer is concerned about the old law as Christ changed everything. We live by faith (and works) for God now.

"I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead." (3:10-11)

Paul admits he has not attained his goal for Christ but that he is well on his way. He has put the past behind him, as much as he could, and is only looking forward. We all know Paul struggled a lot from reflecting on his former sins in writings but Paul here really is trying to show his dedication for Christ.

Paul believes they are doing a good job but wants to encourage them as it is needed again to stay with following Christ the true way. Don't follow those who choose the "easy way" or false teachings way. Stick with his teachings about Christ (keep your blinders on so you stay focused on Christ).

"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." (3:20-21)

Chapter 4

Paul ends this letter with his true and earnest showing of love towards them. He encourages them to remain strong in continue in the ways Christ has established for them.

Paul makes clear mention of Euodia and Syntyche here as special women who have helped him in his dealings with the gospel. It would seem that either they were in disagreement with each other. I don't find any other information regarding them

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." (4:4-9)

Very much true living words for a Christian to live by and help shape your children in like manner.

It is so easy as Christians, as human beings, to worry about different things happening in life. It is at that time where we should remember where our true strength lies...in prayer! God wants us to give him our burdens, our worries. It is what keeps us as Christians humble. To realize we, as mere humans, need God's help!!

Vs 4 reminds me of the song, "Rejoice in the Lord".

Paul again share his appreciation for them and their concern for him. However, Paul truly shows them and us that his strength comes through the Lord. No matter if he is going through good times or bad, he finds his strength where we should as well.

"I can do all this through him who gives me strength." (13)

As Paul ends his letter by thanking them for the gifts they sent him, he states they were the only ones who really helped him out from Macedonia. Paul has a real true connection with them for the grace they have shown to him.

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, brother Ryan!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Ryan! Love this "thank you epistle!" Paul wonderfully expresses joy in Christ as he encourages believers to rejoice in the Lord. It is important for us to be good stewards so we can help brethren like the Philippians church did with Paul. "They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God!" (4:18) And when we are recipients we should be well grounded in prayer and thanksgiving giving praise to God and His Church for the many provisions we are blessed with. "My God shall supply all your needs" (4:19)