

Philippians 1 Study notes



Opening Prayer:

Our loving God, we meet here for this time around your written Word. Thank you for this space and opportunity. Guide our discussion and increase our understanding, we pray. May we be open to hearing what you may have for us to learn about ourselves and you so that we may grow in faith and be more open to your Spirit leading us forward as disciples of Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Just a minute:

Each person is to take 1 minute to introduce themselves and 1 thing this 4 week study brings to their mind before they start. (Hope, fear, anxiety, peace??? etc)

Purpose for the Letters (have this read by someone)

The book of Philippians is a beautifully crafted and very intimate letter to one of Paul's most beloved churches. He addresses them with a clear sense of fellowship and affection. It's forthright in calling us not

only to accept our suffering, but to *rejoice* in it. As Christians, we are not exempt from the suffering that's inherent to human existence—but our faith gives us a different, and hopeful, perspective on suffering that other religions and philosophies cannot. Furthermore, persecution on account of the Christian faith is a powerful witness to our God and the suffering that Jesus Christ himself endured.

This letter stands out as one of the most personal that Paul wrote. It is joyful in nature and doesn't harshly rebuke the church. Paul shows his immense gratitude to the church by thanking them for their generous gifts.

Read (have this read by someone)

Philippians 1 and Acts 16: 9-40

Take 10

Discuss the sermon and the readings. What was new, a surprise or a challenge?

Take 2 mins

In quiet reflection, think about people who have had a tough season in their walk with Christ yet have had joy.

Now Share

How you feel reflecting on these people and how their ability to live with joy in a hard season has shaped or encouraged you in your Christian life.

Engaged to serve

V 1-3 has Paul remembering all the good things that God has done in these peoples' lives. It brings him Joy. Does it bring you Joy to see how God is working in you and others and how does that unify us together to serve in ministry and mission.

Society and Culture

Adversity and struggle can be the best promoter of the Gospel. Martyrs and people who have walked through really hard seasons of life seem to have a more comfortable ability to talk of God. Why would this be so?

Church

For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.... Alive, I'm Christ's messenger; dead, I'm his bounty. Life versus even more life! I can't lose.

Read v21-26 Paul dances with the tension of life and death and its pros and cons. How does this challenge your faith and view on your mortality?

Extension:

In the passage we are drawn to Paul's statements about the gospel being preached and how some people do it with the right intentions and others for self-gain. Paul sees both as valid and he doesn't care about the motives as long as the gospel is proclaimed.

We in the church today are always looking for transparency and integrity as hallmarks of good biblical presentation...

How can God be glorified by wrong intentions and false motives?

Why would Paul be comfortable with this?

There has been a number of failed tele-evangelists over the years... and yet how has God used these men and women to bring people to know Him?

Does the end justify the means...should we ignore wrong motives if the Gospel is being preached? How would you address such issues to your church, family and friends?

Encouragement

In V19 Paul talks of how the prayers of the faithful and the help of the Holy Spirit has worked hand in hand to the glory of God in his life. How could you better pray for those in your group, church or community?

For the week ahead

Diary of Joy – Take a moment each day to think of times when God has brought you joy in the past. As you reflect on these times spend time in prayer telling God of what could have been your fears, failures, triumphs and celebrations for these times. Thank God for being faithful.

Write a short testimony on a time when God impacted your life, brought help, answered a prayer... that you could relate to another person.

Read: Philippians 2

Prayer

Gracious God,

Thank you for this time spent together. May what we have read and shared enrich us in the coming week so that we are better able to be your hands, feet and voice in our community and in your world. May we be a blessing to our Christian community and our neighbours. May your kingdom come. In the name of our Lord and Saviour, we pray. Amen.