

Week one: Joy from Jail? St. Paul wrote this letter from jail to the Church at Philippi

St. Paul (5 BC-67 AD)-Jew, Pharisee, disciple of Gamaliel; from Tarsus (Roman citizen), acquainted with Greek culture and literature; great zeal and persecutor of the Church
Dramatically converted on the road to Damascus;
Apostle to the Gentiles (yet...*gospel for salvation, to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles*, Romans 1:16)
Martyred by the sword in Rome in 67 AD; co-patron of the Roman Catholic Church

Philippi:

Founded in 370 BC; became a Roman city (168 AD)
St. Paul and team left Asia Minor and evangelized Philippi around 50 AD;
He baptized Lydia; also the jailer and his family;
Letter dated probably 56-57 AD; before assumed it was his Roman imprisonment (62 AD); now scholars date it earlier.
They also believe that there were three letters that were rolled into one.

OPENING ADDRESS AND GREETING

First 11 verses highlight one of his themes in the letter, the one we are highlighting also: joy

Joy: in his prayer for the Philippians
Addressed church leadership: episcopoi and diakonoi
His prayer: their love would increase and grow, as would their knowledge of God's will

PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL

Chapter 1: 12-26 (Paul's own circumstances)

This is somewhat autobiographical
Verse 12: "...advance of the gospel...", "...helping, not hurting..."
Verses 13-14: Christ is proclaimed in the praetorium (the Roman jail or the governor's official residence); we know that St. Paul was in jail for a couple of years in Caesarea Maratima (shore of Mediterranean Sea-first stop on our pilgrimage in Israel)
They take courage from Paul's imprisonment
Verses 15-18: St. Paul looks at motives-love of Jesus? Hatred for me? I don't care! As long as Christ is being proclaimed!
When it comes to the gospel:
 St. Paul is hard to offend
 He is loving when others are trying to harm him.
 Verse 18-our theme-joy/rejoicing
Pause: think about St. Paul's heart:
 It is all about knowing Him and making Him known
 Trials are a necessary means to an end
Verses 19-26: St. Paul expects deliverance
 He may die and go to be with Jesus Christ-that's better
 He may gain his freedom and continue service to the Lord.
 "I do not know which I shall choose..."
 Dying better; fruitful service more necessary; expects to be delivered from jail
 This is true hope; not fatalism
Verse 25-26: *continue in the service of all of you for your progress and **joy** in the faith...*
Boasting in Christ Jesus

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Chapter 1:27-30 (Steadfastness in Faith, Fight for the faith)

Shift-Paul directly addresses the community; no longer autobiographical

Purpose:

Sometimes St. Paul is addressing problems

Sometimes he is addressing needs he sees or was made aware of.

Verses 27-30

Conduct yourself in way worthy of the gospel (Act like a Christian!)

Begins to address **unity**-another theme of this letter

Calls them to be fearless in the face of persecution

Called not only to believe

But to suffer for Christ...(not necessarily illness, but especially persecution and being ostracized for Jesus Christ)

Chapter 2:1-11 (Plea for Unity)

St. Paul highlights unity in many of his letters (Romans, I Corinthians, Ephesians, et al)

Unity-fruit of Christ's command: *love one another as I love you*

Verses 1-4

*Any encouragement in Christ...make my **joy** complete...*

Do nothing out of selfishness...look not to your interests...everyone for those of others...

Verses 5-11

v. 5: this was the attitude of Christ (just living teaching, but following his example)

Early Christian hymn?

v. 6: Pre-existence of Jesus Christ...allusion to Genesis 1:26-27, 3:5-6

v. 7: Highlighting the Incarnation; "emptied himself...form of a slave...human likeness...human in appearance..."

v. 8: humbled himself, obedient to death; Isaiah 52:13-53:12 Fourth Servant Song

v. 9: the name "Lord", true nature of Him who humbled himself

v. 10-11: Universal language-*every knee...every tongue...heaven, earth under the earth...*(that covers everything, visible and invisible)

v. 11: glory of God the Father...

Major beliefs of Catholic Christians referenced: *Incarnation, Saving death, Trinity*

Humanity of Jesus Christ-saving sacrifice and imitable person

Chapter 2: 12-18

Verses 12-14: *work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For God is the one who, for his good purpose, works in you both to desire and to work*

Mystery of God's grace; we do our part knowing that it is his power and strength that enables us to do our part

Verses 14-16a: practical exhortation to live a holy life

Verses: 16b-18: St. Paul being autobiographical and highlighting **joy** again.

TRAVEL PLANS OF ST. PAUL'S ASSISTANTS

Chapter 2:19-24 St. Paul's relationship with Timothy

Great affection-Father/child

Master/apprentice

Chapter 2:25-30 St. Paul's relationship to Epaphroditus

Brother, co-worker, fellow soldier...*your* messenger and minister

Had illness, sent back to assure the Philippians

St. Paul's view of his illness; must have prayed for healing, yet seemingly gradual?

St. Paul's view of his work amid sickness

Chapter 3:1 Concluding admonitions? Again...*rejoice...*

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS