

Two Year Bible Trek
Week 98
Philippians

Key Concepts: The key concept is that our lives are to reflect that of Jesus; lives of humility and service.

Background: This is Paul's most cordial letter. It is written to a church that he had established and with which he had maintained a very good relationship. Paul is in prison when he writes this letter so many people suspect this may be the letter he writes from Rome, which is referred to in Acts.

Brief Summary: Greetings and Thanksgiving (1:1-1-11) Paul opens with the usual letter writing style; a statement of who is writing (Paul and Timothy), to whom it is written (the church at Philippi, and its bishops and deacons), and a blessing. This is followed by an outpouring of Paul's love for the people in the church at Philippi. *"I thank God in all my remembrances of you...making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now."* He continues that he yearns for them with great affection. He prays that they will continue to be filled with the fruits of their relationship with Christ.

Paul's Current Situation (1:12-1-26) The Apostle makes it clear that he is in prison because of Jesus and that this is known even to the Praetorian Guard. In addition his imprisonment has encouraged, rather than discouraged, other Christians. Some of those who preach do it out of love for Christ and Paul while others do so intending to afflict Paul. Nonetheless Paul will rejoice. He will do so because he knows that he is being prayed for by the Philippians. Paul does not know if he will be freed or executed, but either is fine with him. To live is to serve. To die is to be with God.

How should the Philippians Live? (1:27-2-18) Paul challenges the Philippians to let the manner of their lives be worthy of the message they have received. They are to stand firm, working side by side for the Gospel. At this juncture (2:1) Paul launches into one of the most studied and meaning-filled passages in all of his letters. This is where he again challenges the church not only to be united in the same mind, but that they are to have the same mind as did Jesus when he willingly left heaven and became a human being, a servant, and became obedient unto death on a cross. This humility led to Jesus being raised from the dead and given a place of honor. The Philippians are then to *"work out their own salvation with fear and trembling"* (meaning they are to do their best to imitate Jesus).

More Travel Plans (2:19-2-30) Paul tells the Philippians that he is sending Timothy to them in order that Timothy gather good news and report back to Paul. At the same time Paul is sending Epaphroditus back to the church because Epaphroditus misses his friends at Philippi.

Warning and Encouragement (3:1-4-7) Paul first warns the Philippians to watch out for those who try to draw them back to the Law as a means of salvation. He reminds them that even though he is a very good Jew, only his faith in Jesus saves him. He then invites them to join in imitating him and his fellow Apostles. Paul finishes this section with a call to always rejoice in the Lord because the Lord is near.

Closing Challenge (4:8-4-23) In this closing section Paul tells the Philippians what ought to be in the front of their minds. They are to think on whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious, filled with excellence, or worthy of praise. Finally Paul states that he can do (bear up through) all things because Christ strengthens him. He closes with thanks for the gifts that the church has shared with him.

1. How would you describe your relationship with your church?
2. What does it mean to you to have the same mind as Christ?
3. How does your faith in Christ strengthen you?