

# A PHILIPPIANS STUDY

# DISCUSSION

# GUIDE

September 10, 2023

## PHILIPPIANS - Aaron McRae

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you *think more deeply* about the sermon and *engage with others* through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and *allow God to work* in your life as you apply what you discover.

### > CONVERSATION STARTER

**Of all the people you have worked with, who has been a favorite co-worker? Why?**

### > EXPLORATION

This week we begin our sermon series on the New Testament book of Philippians. It was written by Paul while he was in prison for sharing the gospel. This book is a letter of friendship to the Christ-followers in the city of Philippi.

#### ***Philippians 1:1-6 (From your bible, read aloud)***

Paul is writing to God's holy people, the saints of the church and to the overseers and deacons. He wants to make sure everyone who is part of the church knows this letter is for them.

Paul identifies himself as a servant of Christ and begins with a common blessing, "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." He goes on to say, "I thank my God every time I remember you." He then reminds them that he always prays with joy for the church in Philippi

because of their partnership in the gospel. These people are clearly known and loved by Paul.

**Who has encouraged you the most in your faith? Who have you encouraged?**

#### **Questions to Consider:**

- **What is the Gospel?**
- **What is church?**
- **What does it mean to partner in the gospel?**
- **Why does this matter to me? What's my purpose / identity?**

From this list of questions, it may be tempting to start at the bottom, focusing on ourselves and what the book of Philippians is saying about us. However, it is important to start at the top, making sure we keep the focus where it needs to be.

#### **What is the Gospel?**

The word, gospel, means "good news." As seen in Luke 2:10-11, "But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

Take a look at how the "gospel" is referred to in the following verses.

#### ***From your bible, read aloud***

- **Mark 1:15**
- **Romans 1:1-4**
- **Philippians 1:12**
- **Isaiah 52:7**

## **In light of these verses, how would you describe the “gospel?”**

The gospel always has Jesus at the center. This is an important fact and it is something that people from all different denominations and traditions agree upon.

### **What is the Church?**

*Ephesians 3:6 (From your bible, read aloud)*

*Ephesians 3:10-11 (From your bible, read aloud)*

In these verses to the Ephesians, Paul describes the church as members of one body, sharing the promise in Christ Jesus, according to God’s eternal purpose. This is consistent with the message Paul gives to the Philippian church, reminding them that it is his great joy to partner with them for the gospel.

There is agreement among most Christians about what it means to be a church, however, there is a great deal of polarization and strong opinions about how to “do church.” This divisiveness is often lacking the central focus on Jesus!

## **What are some of the practices here at Hillside Community Church that help you draw closer to Jesus?**

### **What does it mean to partner in the gospel?**

- 1 John 1:3 - intimacy with God and others
- Acts 2:42 - devoted to fellowship
- 2 Corinthians 8:4 - financial commitment
- 2 Corinthians 6:14 - committed to the light

When we share in ministry we demonstrate our partnership in the gospel through our time, our talents and our gifts as we serve others. We also share our resources through generous giving.

*2 Corinthians 8:1-2 (From your bible, read aloud)*

### **Why does this matter to me? What’s my purpose/identity?**

It is only after we have a clear understanding that Christ is the center of the gospel and the church that we are able to discover how this applies to our lives.

### ***Philippians 1:27 (From your bible, read aloud)***

Here we see Paul calling the church to stand firm and to strive together to keep Christ in the center of everything. This is how we live out the good news in our day to day lives.

## **What would standing firm for the sake of the gospel look like in your life?**

### ***Philippians 1:1-6 (Read aloud one more time)***

*Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,*

*To all God’s holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:*

*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

## **In light of our conversations, what stands out to you from these verses?**

### **➤ TAKE AWAY**

An invitation for all of us this week:

- Read Philippians Chapter 1
- Watch the Bible Project Summary of Philippians on YouTube
- Give thanks to God for the gospel
- Express your thanks to people in your life who are committed to sharing the gospel

**Take some time to pray for each other, as we joyfully carry the “good news” of Jesus into our week.**