

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (July 9, 2023)

For Personal or Group Study

Philippians radiates with joy in the Lord. Philippians is often known as the "Epistle of Joy" because of Paul's attitude in prison. Rejoicing in every circumstance and finding joy amidst trials is a major theme. A main reason for the epistle was to acknowledge a gift of money from the church at Philippi, brought to the apostle by Epaphroditus, one of its members. Paul also addressed other issues in the church at Philippi. This is a tender letter to a group of Christians who were especially close to the heart of Paul. It was written about thirty years after Christ's ascension and about ten years after Paul first preached at Philippi.

Philippians is one of Paul's most personal letters, and as such it has several personal applications to believers. Written during his imprisonment in Rome, Paul exhorts the Philippians to follow his example and be "encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly" even during times of persecution. As we look at chapter one, we will consider the question, "What are you living for?" For Paul, it was Christ. Everything he was, everything he did was Christ. His whole life was wrapped around Christ. The book is about Christ in our life, Christ in our mind, Christ as our goal, Christ as our strength, and joy through suffering. He knew what he was living for. He was living to exalt Christ and to serve others. That attitude will change the way we live our lives. May all of us live to exalt Christ and to serve others so we can confidently and joyfully say, "For me to live is Christ."

"To live is Christ."

SERMON PASSAGE: Philippians 1 (Selected sections only.)

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,
To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons. **2** Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **3** I thank my God every time I remember you. **4** In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, **6** 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. **7** It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. **8** God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. **13** As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. **14** And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. **20** I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. **21** For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. **24** but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. **25** 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, **26** so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me. **27** Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel **28** without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What one word best describes Paul's feeling for the Philippians?
2. What word would describe the feelings you have for your church?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3. What Paul was in prison, but joyful. What difficult circumstance are you dealing with? What is your attitude toward this situation?
4. What happened as a result of his imprisonment?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

5. "For me, to live is _____" Given your priorities and schedule this week, how would you honestly complete that sentence? What would change if you said, "Christ"?
6. Since churches often divide along cultural and theological issues, what would it mean to apply verse 27 in your community?

Notes: _____

