

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (July 16, 2023)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

There are certain chapters in a book, scenes in a movie, lines in a poem or a song, that capture the larger picture, the meaning of the whole. The second chapter of Philippians does just that.

From the earliest years of the Christian church this chapter contained a section (verses 5-11) that many believe was an early hymn sung, or early creed recited, by those who gathered to worship Jesus. These verses summarized their understanding of who Jesus was, and what Jesus had done. That understanding caused unexpected and lasting reversals in their lives. How could it not ... He was One with God in heavenly splendor and yet gave all that up, became like one of us, suffered horribly, died on a Roman cross, did so out of obedience to the will and plan of God, and then was exalted again, receiving the praise, adoration, and acknowledgement of all.

Paul, a prisoner when he wrote this letter, moved, in each chapter, from one grand theme to another. As if to say ... here's who God is and how God loves us, now here's how we respond to what He's done.

During these five weeks, a summer detour from our year-long study in Genesis, it is my hope, our hope, that we see the consistent voice, and character, of God from the earliest days of God's people (Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel, Leah ...) to the people in Philippi who first received this letter from Paul, to those of us hearing the message of Philippians again in Yakima today.

I'm including at the end of these Sermon notes two recommended 10-week Bible studies in the book of Philippians, either for your own study and Christian growth, or for the life group you may be a part of. May we see Jesus more clearly, and love Him, and others, more dearly.

Unexpected Reversals (Philippians 2:1-18)

¹So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death,

even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

¹⁴Do all things without grumbling or questioning, ¹⁵that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. ¹⁷Even if I am to be poured as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me."

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What is Paul saying, hoping for, in the first two verses?
2. What foundational truths are found in verses 5-11?
3. What does this passage tell us about Jesus?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

4. Is it possible to act without selfishness or conceit? Explain.
5. What does it mean to "count others better than yourself"?
6. What do verses 12-13 mean?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

7. To count others better than yourself ... is that how you were raised? What if everyone lived that way?
8. How do you "work out your own salvation" while also believing "God is the one working in you" to accomplish His purposes?
9. What can you do today to gain the mind of Christ? Verse 5.

As you spend time praying remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God to help you believe who He is and what He has done for you. Ask God to help you think more of others than yourself. He loves you and He will help you.

Philippians Bible Study Suggestions

1. "Philippians for Everyone". N.T. Wright
2. "Life Lessons from Philippians: Guide to Joy." Max Lucado