



# The Park Church: Corporate Bible Study

BIBLE JOURNEY: THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS AND PHILEMON

LESSON 2: PHILIPPIANS: SUFFERING & COMMUNITY

LESSON 3: OVERVIEW OF PHILEMON

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# Reflection: Looking Back - Moving Forward

## Looking back:

### Overview of Philippians

Paul writes to a church who is comprised of a mixture of races, cultures, and social classes although mostly poor from its inception. The most prominent theme of the Epistle to the Philippians is joy, specifically the joy of serving Jesus. Other prominent themes include:

- Unity
- Humility
- Perspective
- Community

## Moving Forward:

### ▶ Suffering and Community

- Suffering for the sake of the gospel, follow me as I follow Christ, and the unity of believers

### ▶ Overview of Philemon

- The issue of slavery, reconciliation and reciprocity



**For Studio P ONLY:**

# Getting Started Introduction video

THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS LESSON 2

GETTING STARTED INTRODUCTION [VIDEO]

# To Live is Christ...To Die is Gain

As we delve further into the book of Philippians, we see the Apostle Paul sitting in prison and considering the possibility that he may lose his life for his faith. In his contemplative thought process, he weighs the benefits of life and death:

*“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.”* Philippians 1:21-24 (NIV)

For Paul, death was not something to be feared for he knew who he belonged to and where he was going once his earthly life came to an end. Yet he knew it would be beneficial to the community of believers if he stayed a little while longer as there was still much work to be done for the kingdom.

# To Live is Christ

Either way Paul was at peace for he fully understood the benefits of both outcomes as the chart below outlines for us.

Phrase	Completed phrase	Category
To live is ...	Christ (1:21a)	Life
To die is ...	gain (1:21b)	Death
To go on living in the body [is] ...	fruitful labor (1:22)	Life
To depart and be with Christ is ...	far better (1:23)	Death
[To] remain in the body is ...	more necessary (1:24)	Life

Paul understood however that now it was more needful for the church at Philippi and the other churches under his charge that he stay and continue the work of the ministry-the spreading of the Gospel to the known world at that time. Even though a prisoner Paul knew the message still had to go forth.

# For Studio P ONLY:

THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS LESSON 2

SUFFERING & HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP LECTURE – 3 MIN [VIDEO]

# Suffering & Heavenly Citizenship

Paul knew that staying would cost him. He had paid a significant price for preaching the gospel already (beatings, shipwreck, famine, loneliness, and prison on more than one occasion). Yet he counted it all joy for the sake of suffering for the sake of Christ. As we heard on this past Sunday Paul had learned how to be content in every situation. And he encouraged those he taught to emulate him as he followed Christ.

*<sup>12</sup>Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.*

*<sup>14</sup>Do everything without grumbling or arguing, <sup>15</sup>so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”<sup>[c]</sup> Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky <sup>16</sup>as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. <sup>17</sup>But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.*

*<sup>18</sup>So you too should be glad and rejoice with me. Philippians 2: 12-18 (NIV)*

# Follow Me As I Follow Christ

In his letters, Paul is quick to present himself as an example for imitation. He does this again in Philippians, encouraging the church in Philippi to think and behave like himself. The reason the Philippians should imitate is not really about Paul but about being Christ-like, because Paul is already imitating Christ, as he suggests in the letter:

- ▶ *I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.* Philippians 3:10 (NIV)
- ▶ And Paul also insists on them imitating Jesus directly:
  - ▶ *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.* Philippians 2:5 (NIV)

This goes back to Leviticus and the earliest descriptions of biblical holiness, where God commanded Moses:

- ▶ *Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, “You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.”* Leviticus 19:2 (NASB)

God’s character became visible in a new way in Jesus. Paul continues to reveal it through the life of the Spirit who dwells in him.

# For Studio P ONLY:

THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS LESSON 2

IN FRONT | A FOCUS ON SUFFERING & DEATH

LECTURE – 4 MIN [VIDEO]

# Only What you Do for Christ Will Last

Paul understood this clearly. While well qualified in earthly credentials possessing the equivalent of an undergraduate in religious studies, a masters in divinity and a PHD in theology, he understood that he would not take that to heaven with him and what mattered most was what he did for the sake of Christ.

*<sup>4</sup> though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.*

*<sup>7</sup> But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in<sup>[a]</sup> Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. <sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.*

Philippians 3: 4-11 (NIV)

# Think on This Things

Paul closes his letter by exhorting his fellow believers to do what he started the letter out doing, rejoicing!

*<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is me or. <sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

*<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. <sup>9</sup> Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4: 4-9 (NIV)*

# For Studio P ONLY:

THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS LESSON 2

WRAP UP CONCLUSION – 1 MIN [VIDEO]

# For Studio P ONLY:

THE BOOK OF PHILEMON LESSON 3

GETTING STARTED INTRODUCTION– 37 SEC [VIDEO]

# Forgive and Receive

Paul starts out this letter with a tone of kinship as he addresses Philemon as a dear friend and fellow worker in the gospel ministry. Paul commends him on his love for God's holy people and his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He then offers up prayer for his friend.

# For Studio P ONLY:

THE BOOK OF PHILEMON LESSON 3

WATCH IN | PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING—LECTURE 2 MIN  
[VIDEO]

# THE APPEAL THRU LOVE

He then makes his appeal to Philemon based on love, not a command but love. Your former slave has been a great help to me Paul shares with Philemon. He being a slave did not shrink back at my chains but ministered to me and provided great assistance to me.

# Reconciliation

Paul's aim in this epistle is to reconcile Onesimus to Philemon. it's clear that Onesimus is Philemon's slave and has become estranged from him.

We are not told how Onesimus got separated from Philemon. Perhaps it was he purchased his freedom, or it was redeemed by someone else, or he is still his slave but got separated somehow. We are not given that background. All we know is he came to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ thru Paul's ministry and is assisting Paul in the ministry now. Paul wants to send him back to assist Philemon in ministering to the church meeting at his house temporarily with the hope that Philemon will send him back to Paul.

But don't take him back as he once was Paul advocates but take him back as a free man. Both humanely and spiritually. For he who the Son sets free is free indeed!

# Aspects of Reconciliation

Paul's appeal to Philemon can be categorized as five aspects of reconciliation that should be familiar to us by now. We might chart it something like this:

Aspects of Reconciliation	Texts
Love	I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. I would have liked to keep him with me .... He is very dear to me. (12-16)
Intercession	I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love .... I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. (9-10)
Substitution	If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me .... I will pay it back. (18-19)
Restoration to Favor	Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever. (15)
New Relationship	No longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother .... So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. (16-17)

# Reciprocity

Paul has given Philemon Christ and brought him into the Life of his Body. While Philemon has been the financial and material benefactor of the Christian mission, Paul is also Philemon's benefactor in faith:

*Through the Pauline mission, Philemon has been given life, so that Paul can say to him, "You owe me your very self" (v 19). Paul may owe Philemon monetary recompensation, but Philemon owes Paul much more. Paul thus trumps Philemon in the hierarchy of obligation.*

*Philemon is first honored as a patron for his benefaction of the Christian movement. Paul then subtly reverses the situation so that his returning of Onesimus becomes a form of benefaction for Philemon .... Paul is Philemon's patron and "head" in the Christian household, so he did not have to return the runaway slave. But while Philemon is now the recipient of Paul's benefaction, he can again become the great benefactor of Paul's mission by "giving" him back Onesimus. No wonder Paul can add, "Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say" (21): Paul has utilized the full weight of the social practice of reciprocity, knowing that his own "giving" will necessitate the "giving" of Philemon.*

# Quid Pro Quo

The sequence of reciprocity in Paul's mind looks something like this:

<b>Action / Expectation</b>	<b>Fulfillment</b>
Paul gave ...	life in Christ.
Philemon gave ...	money and resources.
Paul will now give ...	Onesimus back to Philemon.
Philemon is then expected to give ...	Onesimus back to Paul.

# For Studio P ONLY:

THE BOOK OF PHILEMON LESSON 3

WRAP UP CONCLUSION – 1 MIN [VIDEO]