

# OUTLINE OF PHILIPPIANS

- I. Greeting and Remembrance (1:1-11)
  - A. A blessing of grace upon the saints, bishops, and deacons at Philippi (1:1-2)
  - B. Thankfulness and Prayer for the Philippians' Continued Growth (1:3-11)
- II. Effect and Outcome of Paul's Current Imprisonment (1:12-26)
- III. Instructions for Further Spiritual Development in Paul's Absence: (1:27-2:18)
  - A. Be Bold and Steadfast in the Face of Persecution (1:27-30)
  - B. Esteem Others Better Than Oneself (2:1-4)
  - C. Have the Humble Mind of Jesus (2:5-11)
  - D. Work Out Your Own Salvation (2:12-18)
  - E. Esteem Selfless, Trustworthy Workers for the Lord and Companions of Paul (2:19-30)
    - i. Timothy, A Proven Loyal Servant of Christ, Messenger, and Coworker (2:19-24)
    - ii. Epaphroditus, Selfless Messenger From Philippi and Coworker (2:25-30)
- IV. Rejoice in the Lord – Developing a Heavenly-Minded Attitude (3:1-4:19)  
(Could also be organized to emphasize following Paul's example)
  - A. Beware of and Silencing False Teachers (3:1-6)
  - B. Forsaking Carnal Confidence to Gain Christ (3:7-11)
  - C. Pressing On and Reaching Forward to the Goal (3:12-15)
  - D. Following the Example of Paul and Sharing a Common, Heavenly Mindset (3:16-4:3)
  - E. Developing and Adopting the Heavenly Mindset (4:4-9)
  - F. Spiritual Support: Thanks, Contentment, and Strength (4:10-19)
- V. Closing and Benediction (4:20-23)

**Theme:** *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4 NKJV)*

# LESSON 9 – MAGNIFYING CHRIST IN LIFE OR DEATH

## *Philippians 1:1-30*

### **Brief History and Background**

The Philippian church was the first church established in AD 51-52 by Paul, Silas, and Timothy as they entered into Macedonia, the northern province of Greece, on Paul's second missionary journey. It was established in the midst of Jewish persecution, which had no doubt continued to afflict the church. After his departure, Paul completed his second and third missionary journeys, which resulted in his wrongful capture and imprisonment in Jerusalem by the Romans. His Palestinian imprisonment climaxed in Paul's appeal to Caesar, journey to Rome, and imprisonment there while awaiting trial. During this Roman imprisonment, probably in early AD 63, shortly before Paul's appearance before Nero, Epaphroditus brought some financial support and expression of concern to Paul from the Philippian church. After spending some time laboring with Paul, falling very ill, and finally, graciously recovering, Epaphroditus is returned home by Paul with this joyful epistle in hand.

### **Themes**

Paul's own persecution and imprisonment was clearly a paramount concern, so the theme of rejoicing in the Lord – no matter what – is the primary theme in response. Paul's remarkable example of trust, bravery, selflessness, heavenly mindedness, and sacrifice is another primary theme that demonstrates the way to accomplish the first theme, to always rejoice in the Lord. With the outcome of Paul's trial not being entirely certain, he also admonishes them to – possibly without him – continue growing in love, preference, and service for each other, just as Christ exemplified supremely for us. Unity and steadfastness are also repeatedly emphasized, which is understandable considering the discouraging persecution they were facing, crystallized in the wrongful imprisonment of their beloved apostle. False teachers, the enemies and antagonists of this heavenly mindset, are both silenced and called out in warning. However, the Philippians are to overcome this all with the joy and rejoicing that they have in the Lord, which is the central touchstone of the letter.

### **Chapter 1 Summary**

As in other epistles, after greeting the brethren, Paul immediately expresses his joy and thankfulness for his faithful brethren, the Philippians. He is confident in their continued growth based on the Lord's faithfulness and their demonstrated character. However, continue to grow they must. Next, Paul shifts quickly to what must have been a great concern for them, his imprisonment and related persecution. He explains how his suffering has actually led to the advancement of the gospel, which is a source of joy for him. Concerned about his looming trial, Paul expresses his torn feelings for both staying and leaving, yet he ultimately expects to stay, despite his personal preference. Likewise, the Philippians must continue to strengthen themselves to face the same persecution, while exhibiting steadfast, unified conduct "*worthy of the gospel of Christ*".

### **Bible Reading With Questions**

#### *Greeting – Philippians 1:1-2*

1. Do the works of elder and deacon represent offices, or is it a common work than any Christian can fulfill? How would you answer those who deny that there is an office of elder or deacon?

***Thankfulness and Prayer for the Philippians' Continued Growth – Philippians 1:3-11***

2. What “*fellowship*” did Paul and the Philippians share?
  
3. Assuming Paul’s prayer for the Philippians (1:9-11) extends to us, what can we do to see it realized? What is our part in its fulfillment?

***Effect and Outcome of Paul’s Current Imprisonment – Philippians 1:12-26***

4. What two parties had been affected by Paul’s endurance of his imprisonment, and how had they been affected? Can we expect the same effect from our trials?
  
5. Should we be pleased when people successfully advocate and convert others to a flawed, erroneous gospel, since Paul rejoiced whenever Christ was preached?
  
6. What “*deliverance*” is Paul seeking, for which the Philippians were also praying for Paul?
  
7. How could Jesus be magnified in either Paul’s execution or release from imprisonment?
  
8. What was Paul’s personal preference at this time? Lessons?
  
9. Based on Paul’s anticipated outcome, what can we surmise about the purpose and significance of our own lives?

***Be Bold and Steadfast in the Face of Persecution – Philippians 1:27-30***

10. How would the Philippians’ bravery under persecution offer “*proof of perdition*” for their adversaries, while simultaneously offering proof of their own “*salvation*”?
  
11. How can persecution be considered a “*grant*”, parallel to salvation’s opportunity to believe (1:29)? How could persecution ever be seen as a gift or something favorable?