



KING'S CHAPEL

Daily Devotional - Philippians Study

Week 5 - Day 4

Approaching God

Read & Pray briefly through Psalm 119:33-37

Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

Today, as we near completion of our study through the book of Philippians, we are going to read the book one last time in its entirety. Then you will have the chance to summarize the things you've learned and reflected upon over the past 5 weeks through a few discussion questions. Some may have time to answer the questions in one sitting. Others may want to look back over their notes and take extra time tomorrow or this weekend. Now that we have studied this book slowly, (only a few verses at a time) taking the time to read it all at once can be a helpful way of seeing Paul's themes and major headings coming to the surface more clearly. As you read through the letter, be mindful of what verses are standing out to you. Why might the Spirit be directing you to those truths, warnings, or promises from God?

Read Paul's letter to the Philippians in its entirety: (10-15 mins)

I have included a copy of the NIV (1984) translation of Philippians here if you would prefer to read it on your tablet or laptop: [click here to access the book of Philippians](#). (This version is without chapter headings or verses so that you can read through it without thinking about the paragraph divisions or breaks and perhaps pick up the overall flow more naturally.) Or you can just read Philippians in your own bible and answer the questions below.

Philippians Study Summary Questions

Take some time to reflect and journal through the following questions:

- Looking back over your study, what **themes** stood out to you most from Paul's letter?
- What are the biggest things that God taught you about **Himself** through this study?
- What are the biggest things that God taught you about **yourself** through this study?
- What are the biggest things that God taught you about **pursuing a relationship** with Him through your study of Philippians?
- What are the biggest things that God taught you about **ministry and advancing the Gospel** through this study?

The Gospel in Philippians

If there ever was a clarion call to rejoice because of the gospel, it is Paul's epistle to the Philippians. Writing from his jail cell in Rome (1:12–16), Paul calls the Philippian readers to turn their gaze back to the power and joy of the gospel—and particularly their deep fellowship in it—and away from outward circumstances.

By outward appearances, as Paul writes, there is little reason for the Philippian believers to rejoice. Their beloved leader Paul is in jail; they face tremendous opposition from enemies; their church is experiencing rivalry and disunity; one of their key leaders, Epaphroditus, has nearly died twice; and some are subtly teaching confidence in the flesh rather than the cross of Christ. How can they rejoice?

Despite all these circumstances, Paul calls the Philippians to remember the power and joy of the gospel and their secure citizenship in heaven (1:27 [ESV footnote]; 3:20). What matters more than any earthly event is what God is doing as a result of his good news (1:6; 2:9–10). Because of the gospel, and their unity with Christ in it, the Philippians can stand firm (1:27) in the face of opposition. Paul himself, remembering his longstanding gospel partnership with the Philippians (1:7; 3:14–15), rejoices. Seen through the lens of the gospel, his imprisonment and their suffering are actually, counterintuitively, reasons to rejoice. For such hardships, painful as they are, serve to advance the gospel.

Furthermore, the key to retaining proper gospel perspective and avoiding getting caught up in petty conceit and rivalry is to look to Christ himself. If he humbled himself and made himself nothing, and if God has now exalted him above all, how much more should we be willing to humble ourselves as well? Jesus' example sets the model for servant-humility as a normal part of the Christian life.

Paul's own life (1:25–26; 2:17–18; 3:7–17), as well as the lives of Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19–30), follow Christ's servant-model of prioritizing the gospel above all else. This prizing of the heavenly includes discounting the emphasis on "the flesh" (3:1–11) and pressing on to the heavenly prize (3:12–4:1). Two prime marks of standing firm in the gospel are unity (4:2–3) and joy (4:4–7). Paul concludes his letter with further rejoicing and thankfulness for the Philippians' partnership in the gospel (4:10–23).

Several sets of key words help us trace the emphases in Philippians. The most obvious are words related to **joy**, which occur 20 times (1:3–4, 18, 25; 2:2, 9, 17–18, 28–29; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 6, 10). A second key term in Philippians is **fellowship** (Greek *koinonia*), translated as "partnership" or "participation" (1:5, 7; 2:1; 3:10; 4:14–15), which can relate either to other believers (1:5; 4:14–15), the gospel of grace (1:7), or Christ himself (2:1; 3:10). A third key term is **citizenship**, which occurs only twice but is strategically placed (1:27 [ESV footnote]; 3:20). A fourth key expression, "**in Christ**," occurs in some form at least nine times, reflecting the spiritual union that gives us status and resources from the Savior in all of life's circumstances. Finally, of course, are the words for the good news itself: **grace**, which appears three times (1:2, 7; 4:23) and **gospel**, which occurs nine times (1:5, 7, 12, 16, 27 [2x]; 2:22; 4:3, 15).

Our union with and unity in Christ are the basis for joyful, humble service—no matter what the circumstances. Paul calls us to stand firm, rejoice, and humbly serve others even as Christ humbly served us through his redemptive work. May we “strain forward” (see 3:13) for the prize of citizenship with Christ—whom God has exalted for universal praise!

Structure & Outline of Philippians

Section 1: Opening Prayer 1:1-11

This section begins with a greeting and ends with a prayer that introduces Paul’s main themes.

Section 2: Paul’s Imprisonment 1:12-26

Paul picks up the topic of his imprisonment.

Section 3: Following Jesus’ Example 1:27-2:18

Paul turns the focus on how the Philippians should live and calls them to follow Jesus’ example. The section starts with the transition phrase, “Only let your lives be worthy...”

Section 4: Timothy and Epaphroditus 2:19-30

Paul jumps from Jesus to Timothy and Epaphroditus, highlighting them as examples before moving on to another topic.

Section 5: Paul’s Example 3:1-4:1

This section begins with a big transition word, “Finally, my brothers...”

Section 6: Challenge to Live after Paul’s Example 4:2-9

Again, Paul starts a new section with a transition phrase (“Therefore, my brothers...”) and returns to his theme of how they should live as Christians.

Section 7: Closing Thanks 4:10-23

The final section ends with a classic closing benediction, “Greet every saint in Christ Jesus... The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”