

Session 1: "A Life of Joy"
Philippians 1:1-11

COMPLETED
LISTENER'S
GUIDE

Author: PAUL, writing during imprisonment in Rome (most likely)

Audience: Philippian church (background found in Acts 16:6-40)

Though not PERFECT the Philippian church was HEALTHY.

Purposes for Writing:

1. THANK-YOU NOTE: Paul had received a gift sent by Epaphroditus (member of Philippian congregation); their support during his imprisonment (social stigma)
2. NEWSLETTER: Epaphroditus had recovered from a serious illness (2:25-30) and was sending him along to them with the hope of sending Timothy for a visit (2:19)
3. ENCOURAGEMENT:
 - a. Continue to make progress in your faith (1:25)
 - b. Follow the example of Jesus Christ, and the earthly examples of Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus.
 - c. Assurance that Paul was still in good spirits through his faith in Christ (1:12-18)

Themes:

1. HUMBLE SERVICE: "Paul and Timothy, SERVANTS of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:1)
 - a. What does it mean to be a servant, or SLAVE of Christ?
 - i. We were bought with a PRICE (Corinthians 6:19-20)
 - ii. Jesus has the absolute AUTHORITY to tell us how to live and what to do (Luke 6:46)
 - b. How is serving Christ different than serving an earthly master?
 - i. God does not DEPEND on me.
 - ii. Our relationship to God and His Son is shaped most decisively by the fact that He works for US, not that we work for HIM.

- iii. God is the **GIVER** in this relationship. We are the **RECEIVERS** and the beneficiaries.

“Only in realizing and trusting and enjoying that he serves us, works for us, are we enabled, fully, to serve him.” –John Piper

- c. How, then, do we serve? And why?
 - i. “Whoever serves, [let him serve] by the strength that God supplies — in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever.” (1 Peter 4:11)
 - ii. When we see ourselves as first served by Jesus decisively, then our service becomes **JOYFUL**, dependent on his service.
 - d. How do we mess this up?
 - i. Serving God as if it **DEPENDS ON ME**.
 - ii. Serving God as if what I do doesn't **MATTER**.
 - iii. Both of those extremes are void of **JOY**. There's either crushing **PRESSURE** or lack of **PURPOSE**—because neither extreme recognizes **CHRIST** as the source of our service, big or small.
- 2. **JOY**: “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with **JOY**...”(v.4)
 - a. Paul's joy is not **CIRCUMSTANTIAL**, but **ETERNAL**.
 - 3. **UNITY**: Paul says that one source of his joy is the Philippian's **PARTNERSHIP** in the gospel (v. 5):
 - a. Partnership: **FINANCIALLY** and their deep **PERSONAL** concern for Paul's well being.
 - b. The first two themes, **HUMILITY** and **JOY**, are the keys to true unity.
 - 4. **SPIRITUAL PROGRESS**: “And I am **SURE** of this, that he who **BEGAN** a good work in you will bring it to **COMPLETION** at the day of Jesus Christ.” (v. 6)

- a. Our spiritual progress is first and foremost dependent upon God's **WORK**.
 - b. All genuine spiritual progress is rooted in what God has **DONE**, is **DOING**, and **WILL DO**.
5. **SUFFERING**: "It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel." (v. 7)
- a. In our suffering, not in **SPITE** of it, but often **BECAUSE** of it, I grow in my understanding and love for Jesus.

Paul's Prayer for the Philippians (v.9-11)

1. Prayer for eternal **SAFETY** and **SECURITY**
2. "Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through **JESUS CHRIST**, to the glory and praise of God." (v. 11)
3. Live your life in a constant state of wonder and joy in Christ, and your behavior, your attitude, the way you talk and serve and live and give, and suffer and face death, will be characterized by this Jesus whom you behold.

Five Ways to "Behold" Jesus:

1. **HEAR**
2. **STUDY**
3. **PRAY**
4. **MEMORIZE**
5. **MEDITATE**

Topics for Discussion:

1. Who do you "light up" for when they walk in the room? Who are you going to commit to "light up" for, and how might this change your relationship?
2. How have you thought of your service to Christ before? As a duty? Responsibility? A chore? A way to prove yourself? Something that doesn't really matter? How does tonight's study of Philippians 1 change your thoughts on serving Christ?
3. Have you ever experienced the pressure brought on by a "killer be?" What's the difference between focusing on our own effort and behavior and focusing on Christ's example and finished work?
4. Paul prays that the Philippians' love will overflow in knowledge and discernment (v.9). How does this idea contrast with the more popular ideas of love?
5. Who will you choose to pray Philippians 1:9-11 for?
6. Of the 5 ways we can "behold" Jesus, which comes most naturally to you? Which do you find the most challenging? Why are they all important?

This Week:

1. Memorize Philippians 1:6
2. Commit to praying Philippians 1:9-11 for one person in your life, 3 times a week throughout this study.
3. Read and study Philippians 1:12-26. Choose a few verses each day. Journal: What do I observe about God? What does it mean? How does it apply to my circumstances?

