

Survey of Philippians

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Introduction

1. Paul is the writer of this letter (1:1) and Timothy is the scribe. The church was established by Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:9-13).
2. The Philippian church began when a man named Paul preached at a woman's prayer meeting and that woman, Lydia, received salvation from the Lord (Acts 16:11-40).
3. Paul wrote this letter from his Roman prison (1:12) about 62 AD and the Philippians were some of those who sent Paul assistance while he was in prison (Phil.4:18; 2 Cor.11:8ff).
4. Philippians provides the three primary reasons for reading: for pleasure, perspective, and to pursue knowledge about a certain matter or specific lifestyle.

Outline

Joy in difficult circumstances (1)

Joy in serving (2)

Joy in the face of opposition (3)

Joy in Christian fellowship (4)

Main Points and Application

1. THE LETTER FOR GODLY PLEASURE. Philippians is widely known as the letter of joy. No book of the Bible is better known for its pleasure than the book of Philippians. Consequently, it has become an extremely popular book. It maintains its popularity because it speaks not of shallow joy but of substantive pleasure built on godly principles. Let us consider briefly each of these ingredients to Philippians, its pleasure, popularity and principles.
 - a. **A letter of pleasure.** Paul speaks of joy in his letter to the Philippians some sixteen times: 1:18, 2:17,18 and 4:4 (other references 1:4, 25,26, 2:2, 28,29, 3:1, 4:1,10).
 - b. **A letter of popularity.** Those who have worked through Bible memory verse systems know that from the book of Philippians there are always some popular verses which are included.

"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).

"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (Phil. 3:10).

"Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am" (Phil. 4:11).

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

"And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

- c. **A letter of principles.** Some of the greatest principles which make up the Christian system of belief are found in the letter to the Philippians. Consider 1:6 and the principle of God's sovereignty and faithfulness. Consider 2:5-11, perhaps the greatest doctrinal statement in the Bible concerning Christ's deity, glory, incarnation, humility, death, resurrection, return, and kingdom rule. Consider 3:20, 21 which speaks to our present status as citizens of heaven and our future resurrected bodies.
2. **THE LEADER FOR GODLY PERSPECTIVES.** The founder and leader of the Philippian church was the apostle Paul. Let us look at his circumstances while he was writing the letter to the Philippians and at his relationship with Christ during this time. This reveals much about how we can live like Paul with godly perspective.
 - a. **Paul's circumstances.** A brief survey of Paul's circumstances while writing the Philippian letter can be found through the following passages: Acts 28:11-16, 30, 31; 2Tim.1:16,17; Phil.1:13,15-17. He responds by saying something like "it's all worth it" (Phil.2:17).
 - b. **Paul's Christ.** By looking at Paul's relationship with Christ we find the secret to his continued drive for ministry and life of joy. For Paul, Christ was his all and all. Christ was in everything he thought and did. In 1:1, Paul claims to be sold out to Christ.

How is it that the apostle Paul can write the Philippian letter and mention joy sixteen times in such a short letter? He mentions Christ forty times. The Philippian letter is full of joy only because the Philippian leader is full of Christ. Consider Psalm 16:11.

3. **THE LISTENERS FOR GODLY PURSUITS.** Their stories begins in Acts 16 and let us notice the kind of people they were before they heard Paul's message and the kind of people they were after hearing Paul's message.
 - a. **Good-centered people.** The city of Philippi was one the leading Roman colonies. It was filled with many good people. Let us consider two of its leading citizens. First of all there was a lady by the name of Lydia (Acts 16:9-15). What do we know about her goodness? Consider also the Philippian jailer in Acts 16:16-34, especially verses 27-34. What do we know of his goodness?
 - b. **God-centered people.** After salvation the Philippians no longer work for the good of man but for the honor of God. The difference is they cease being good-centered and become God-centered. Consider the following examples: Phil.1:5; 4:15,16 (2 Cor. 11:9, 8:1-5); 4:18.

Pearls from Philippians:

1. Embracing biblical doctrine is a prerequisite to experiencing biblical joy.
2. Living for others for Christ, then life is worth it. We will not be easily distressed.
3. Being full of Christ is the secret to continued drive and perseverance with feelings of significance even in old age.
4. Being good-centered pleases us and others, but being God-centered pleases God.