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Philippians 4:2 - 23

1. What is your impression of the Philippian church and how would you describe Paul's relationship to the Philippians?
2. What reasons did you find for why Paul wrote the letter?
3. What themes did you notice? Any words or phrases that are repeated often?
4. From this first reading of Philippians, is there anything God is challenging you about or encouraging you with?

Through the week...

Read Acts 16 to find out more about the beginnings of the Philippian church.

Study 2: Put The Gospel First

Read 1:1-11

1. What does Paul thank God for?
2. What does he pray for the Philippians?
3. What do these verses tell us about Paul's relationship to the Philippians?

Read 1:12-18a

4. How does Paul view his imprisonment?
5. How does Paul's imprisonment serve to advance the gospel?

Read 1:18b-26

6. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (1:21). Explain what Paul means by this.
7. Suppose that Paul could choose between life and death, what would his choice be? Why? What does this tell us about Paul?

Read 1:27-30

8. What is Paul's desire for the Philippians?

Making it personal...

1. Think about the content of your prayers lately. How do your prayers measure up to Paul's? How does Paul's prayer for the Philippians challenge the way you pray for others?
2. The passage today shows us that Paul always puts the gospel first. Is the gospel the top priority in your life? What does a church that puts the gospel first look like?
3. Paul shows us that it is possible to preach Christ out of wrong motives. Do you see this happening today? How does this passage help us to respond when we see this happening?
4. How does Paul's perspective on suffering (both his own and that of the church) challenge the view that equates God's blessing with comfort?
5. Think of an area in your life where you are not living in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. What can you be doing about it this week?

Through the week...

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain". Pray that this will be your attitude to life and death.

Life = fruitful labour for Christ; for the progress and joy of others.
Death = assurance of being with Christ, which is far better.

Study 3: Put The Interest Of Others First

Read 2:1-11

1. In 2:1, Paul reminds the Philippians of the blessings they have received as Christians. What are they?
2. How should this affect the way that they relate to one another?
3. What is it about Jesus that Paul wants the Philippians to follow?

Read 2:12-18

4. What does it mean to “work out your salvation with fear & trembling”? Do we do this on our own?
5. In 2:14-18, Paul gives an example of what “work out your salvation” looks like in practical terms. What does it involve?

Read 2:19-30

6. What does Paul tell us about Timothy and Epaphroditus, and why are they good examples for us to follow?
 - a. Timothy
 - b. Epaphroditus

Making it personal...

1. Is unity a characteristic of our church? Why do you say so?
2. Have you been doing things out of rivalry and conceit, or looking only to your own interest? Think of practical ways in which you can be looking to the interests of others and counting others more significant than yourself this week.
3. Have you been working out your salvation with fear and trembling? Or have you adopted the attitude of "let go and let God"? What practical steps can you take to work out your salvation? How can we help each other to do so?
4. Are there any Timothy's and Epaphroditus' in our church? Thank God for them and think of how you can be encouraging them as they follow the example of Christ.

Through the week...

Meditate on 2:5-11. May this be our prayer:

May the mind of Christ my Saviour,
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and power controlling,
All I do and say.

Study 4: Put Your Confidence in Christ

Read 3:1-16

1. In 3:2, who does Paul warn the Philippians against? Who are they and why does Paul use such strong language to describe them?
2. What reasons might Paul have had for putting “confidence in the flesh”?
3. How does Paul view the “gain” he had? Why does he view it as such?
4. What is Paul’s goal in life?
5. According to 3:9, where does “righteousness” come from?

Read 3:17-4:1

6. In 3:18-19, who does Paul warn the Philippians against? How does Paul describe them? How does he feel about them?
7. How are the Philippians different from the group of people described in 3:18-19?

8. How are they to live as citizens of heaven, while they await a Saviour from there?

Making it personal...

1. What do people around you tend to put their confidence in? Have you been tempted to put your confidence in something else apart from Christ?

2. Read 3:10 again. How does your goal in life measure up to Paul's?

3. At this point in your life, what seems to be more important to you than the "surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus"?

4. How does Paul's reminder that our "citizenship is in heaven" affect the way that you live your life here on earth?

Through the week...

"That I may know him" (3:10) – Make this your prayer this week and think of practical ways that you can take to grow in your knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Study 5: Put These Things Into Practice

Read 4:2-9

1. What was the issue in the Philippian church that Paul was addressing in 4:2-3?
2. In 4:4-5, what does Paul encourage the Philippians to do? How does knowing that “the Lord is at hand” help the Philippians to do so?
3. Instead of being anxious, what does Paul urge them to do? What would be the result of this?
4. “You are what you think”. Do you agree with this statement? What kind of thoughts are we to have?

Read 4:10-23

5. How did Paul learn to be content? What is his secret of contentment?
6. What are the “all things” Paul is meaning in 4:13?
7. In 1:5, Paul thanks God for the partnership in the gospel that he has with the Philippians. How is this partnership expressed in 4:14-20? In what ways is the Philippian church different from the rest?

Making it personal...

1. Are you aware of any of your relationships which parallel that of Euodia and Syntyche? Is there someone in the church with whom you have been challenged to “agree in the Lord”? What action do you need to take?
2. Why is it possible to rejoice in the Lord ALWAYS? Can you find a reason to rejoice today?
3. Do you often find yourself being anxious? How does the passage today encourage you?
4. Think about what you think about. Are they the kind of thoughts that Paul says we ought to have? What practical steps can we take to promote such thinking?
5. Why do we find it hard to be content?
6. Who are our gospel partners? Think of how you can be supporting and encouraging them this week.

Think back...

We have come to the end of our studies in Philippians. Recall one thing you have been personally challenged or encouraged by, and one thing you think challenges or encourages us as a community. Share with your group and pray about these things.