

PREPARATION FOR LESSON: Read Philippians 1-4**BACKGROUND**

The Philippians lived in northern Greece (known as Macedonia) in a city located on a military highway. It was the last city in the west linking Rome with the east. Because of this importance, Caesar Augustus made it a Roman colony in 42 B.C. It was a place where his military veterans could retire. All residents had Roman citizenship, exempt from taxes and guaranteed legal rights.

Thru the years the people modeled not only their city, but also their life and actions after Rome. They were arrogant and got what they wanted thru force and power. Because the Roman military were usually anti-Semitic, Jews refused to live there.

Paul first visited Philippi on his 2nd missionary trip. He went in response to a vision of a man in Macedonia asking for help. When Paul and Timothy left a few months later, near the end of 50 AD, a small church had been established. It met in the home of a business woman named Lydia. She, her employees, a young girl freed from evil spirits and the jailer along with his family had all put their faith in Jesus. Luke, who had been with Paul, stayed to be their first pastor.

Four times in the last ten years these church members have helped Paul financially. Now in 60 AD they hear Paul is under house arrest in Rome. Wanting to show their love and concern, they collect another offering and send it by means of their current pastor, Epaphroditus. When he arrives in Rome, he not only delivers their gift, but also stays to help Paul. But then he becomes gravely ill. This news gets back to Philippi and the church becomes concerned lest their pastor die. Epaphroditus gets well, but church members are not convinced. When he hears of their concern, both he and Paul decide he should return to Philippi to reassure them.

Paul uses this opportunity to write the church - both the members and their leaders. There is a closeness and bond that is different from his relationship with other churches. He has 3 reasons for writing them. First, to thank them for their gift and help of their pastor. Then to assure them they will be the first to know the results of his trial. Finally, to gently reprove them for wrong action in the Christian life. When church leaders dealt with false teachers in the church, it created divisions among them. Some leaders thought they handled things better than others. There are arguments and complaints over how things were handled. Some are fearful of what will happen when the false teachers return. Others are fearful of suffering they may go thru.

THEME Reproof of action for not standing firm as one Body**OUTLINE**

Reproof thru praise 1:1-26; 4:10-20

Reproof thru reminders 1:27 – 2:4

Reproof thru examples 2:5 -3:21

- Like Jesus, be humble in ministry and leadership.
- Like Timothy, be concerned for members of the local church.
- Like Epaphroditus, give of yourself for the good of their church.
- Like Paul, desire to be changed by God.

Reproof thru instruction 4

Clear up the personal disagreement vs. 2; live in the joy of your spiritual blessings vs. 4, 8

Be a reasonable person vs 5; stop focusing on the problems; pray with thankfulness vs. 6

Focus on Jesus vs. 8

EXPLANATIONS**Chapter 1**

- **Praise** - Paul begins and ends his letter with thanks for their partnership in Philippi, thruout Greece and Rome. He is confident it will continue.

- **Reproof:** the verb in vs. 27 *conduct* is the Greek word, *politeuo*.

It means *fulfill your responsibility; live up to your position as a citizen*.

The Philippians as Roman citizens had responsibility to other Romans and to Caesar.

The Philippians as heavenly citizens have responsibility to other believers and to Christ.

- **Responsibility:** *striving together as equals on a team, stand firm; do not be afraid to resist false teachers.* vs. 27

Chapter 2

Instead of united resistance, church members are divided about dealing with false teachers. There is pride, complaints, arguments and fear. To help them stand firm as a team against false teaching, Paul reminds them of their spiritual blessings because Christ is Head.

Vss. 1-4 They are in Jesus, assured of God's love. The Holy Spirit has given them a tenderness and compassion for other believers. Church leaders should not be afraid to listen to members who have spiritual gifts and insight from God. Leaders should not just be concerned about themselves, but about the spiritual well-being of everyone in the church.

- 6 The example of Jesus. In His nature He is deity.
In heaven His deity was seen in His power and glory. Angels bowed before Him.
When He came to this earth, He did not insist on coming with the evidence and glory of His deity.
His ministry was done in humility; church leaders should have humility in their ministry.
- 12 We need salvation from wrong attitudes. We are to respond with fear and trembling.
If we do not deal with wrong attitudes, the Holy Spirit will discipline us.
- 13 We can change because God gives us the ability and the desire.
For in fact God is energizing you both in your desire and ability. He does this for His pleasure and so you can please Him.

Chapter 3

- Vs. 2 False teachers are dangerous; *Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil...*
- 10 Paul's goal is spiritual maturity. He knows it involves several steps
Knowing Christ, meaning understanding more of Christ and spiritual things on a deeper level.
Experiencing God's power so he can change and become spiritually mature.
Accepting suffering for doing what is right; being rejected and misunderstood (death of relationship).
- 11 *Attain to the resurrection from being spiritually dead* refers to Paul's new relationship in the Christian life.
God spiritually raised him, seated him with Jesus and declared him holy. Eph. 2:1, 6
This is his legal status. Paul wants his daily life to become closer and closer to his legal status so he really **is** more holy. Paul's major goal is not to start churches or change people, but to let God change him.
- 20-21 Since our resurrection bodies will be like the body of Jesus, we will know each other. We will be able to see and touch each other. This means we can still give and receive hugs. That body will not deteriorate; it will not experience pain or ever die.

Chapter 4

- Vss. 2-3 Euodia and Syntyche were women teacher/leaders in the church.
Contended at my side: a Greek word meaning *equals working together on a team*.
As teacher/leaders, Paul and the women had worked together in giving out the Gospel message.
- 6 *Stop perpetually worrying:* stop going over the situation to create scenarios of what might happen.
Thank God for His spiritual blessings; worship Him for who He is and what He can do.
Ask Him for wisdom to know what to do or not to do.
- 7 *Guard:* mount patrol or set up a wall of peace to protect our thoughts.
- 8 A list of absolutes that refer to Jesus
Our focus needs to stay on Him because He is Head and we are connected to Him.
He knows the situation and has power to change the situation or to change us.

APPLICATION Love must be guided with knowledge and insight so we have discernment. 1:9-10

◆ **In local churches...**

- ...when members and leaders follow God's standards and boundaries, there will be resistance and rebellion.
- ...church leadership needs knowledge and insight to see the difference between a true and false message.
- ...church leaders must stand firm against all that goes against God's Word and His boundaries.



◆ **Church members...**

...need knowledge and insight when church leaders decide to go against God's Word.

...need to know how to oppose it, how long to oppose it and when it is wiser to leave the local church.

◆ The prayer every church leader and church member should be praying...

The prayer we as individuals need as we make decisions that involve family and friends...

May our love increase in knowledge and insight so when there are differences, we have discernment to make wise decisions and not turn people from God. Phil. 1:9-10

