

Paul Writes Philippians



When: *The winter of A.D. 62 or spring of A.D. 63*
From Where: Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:30-31)

Synopsis

- One of four epistles written by Paul while in his first Roman imprisonment
- Addressed to a local church that was very special to Paul
 - Early converts were Lydia, the city jailer, and their households (**Acts 16**)
 - The church in Philippi had been in fellowship with Paul from the outset after he departed from Macedonia on his 2nd journey (**4:15-16**)
 - Luke apparently stayed behind in Philippi when Paul left them on his 2nd journey, and remained there until Paul picked him back up when coming through on his 3rd journey (**Acts 16:40; 20:5-6**)
 - While he was there, Luke must have been a tremendous help to this church
 - Now, almost 10 years later, as Paul was in a Roman prison, they have again shown their love and affection for the apostle
 - They sent a “gift” by Epaphroditus for his needs (**2:25-30; 4:10-14, 18**)
 - Most likely, this letter written by Paul afterwards was carried back to Philippi by the one who brought their “gift” => Epaphroditus (**2:25, 28**)
 - This letter was carried separately from the other 3 “prison epistles” => **Ephesians, Colossians, & Philemon** were carried to Asia by Tychicus and Onesimus
- Three times Paul refers to himself as a “prisoner” (**1:7, 13-14, 17**)
 - Two statements in this epistle prove this was written during the 2 years in Roman imprisonment, not when he was imprisoned in Caesarea (**1:13; 4:22**)
- Paul also wanted to know how the Philippian Christians had fared since he last saw them on the 3rd journey
 - Apart from sending Epaphroditus with the letter, Paul also dispatched Timothy to Philippi to find out about their condition and welfare (**2:19-23**)
- Paul had expectations of being released from Roman imprisonment (**1:19-20, 25-26; 2:23-24**)
 - Similar sentiments were expressed in his letter to Philemon (v. 22)
- Overall, the epistle can be viewed as a “thank you” letter to people who had done a lot for Paul
 - Personal expressions of gratitude for all they did as a group of Christians
 - Various exhortations for them to live faithfully in Christ

The Two Treatises

Lesson 62

Outline

Paul sends his opening greetings & expressions of gratitude for the Philippians (1:1-11)

- He always thanked God for them when he remembered them in prayer (v. 3)
- He "...Who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." (v. 6)
- He "had them in his heart" and saw them as "fellow partakers of grace" (v. 7)
- God was his witness => he "...longed for them all with the affection of Christ Jesus" (v. 8)

Paul discusses his present condition in Rome & its impact upon the gospel (1:12-26)

- His imprisonment had not only not hindered the gospel, but actually had helped (vv. 12-20)
 - Even the whole praetorian guard was aware of the reasons for his imprisonment
 - Brethren who knew of Paul's imprisonment had become emboldened to "...speak the word of God without fear"
 - More were preaching the gospel because of what had happened to Paul => he didn't even care whether they preached "out of envy" or from "good will"
 - "Whether by life or by death, Christ may be exalted in my body."
- However his circumstances worked out, the results would be victory either for him personally or for the saints in Philippi (vv. 21-26)
 - "For me, to live is Christ...do die is gain."

Paul gives 3 main exhortations to the Philippians (1:27 – 2:18)

- "Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ..." (1:27-30)
 - Whether Paul came to Philippi or not, they needed to "...stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
- "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus..." (2:1-11)
 - Humility needed in serving others, thinking of their needs instead of your own
 - Christ is the perfect example
 - Only after such service does exaltation come from God
- "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (2:12-18)
 - It is God's will to work through His people
 - Saints must be "blameless children of God in a crooked world" and "shine as lights"

Paul reveals his personal plans in sending Timothy & Epaphroditus to Philippi (2:19-30)

- Timothy was being sent so that Paul could learn of the Philippians' condition (vv. 19-24)
 - Paul trusted him like no other helper...the Philippians also knew of his character
- Epaphroditus was being sent to express Paul's gratitude for the Philippians' gift (vv. 25-30)
 - He had been "...sick to the point of death", and Paul wanted the Philippian saints to know of his recovery and rejoice that he had not died

The Two Treatises

Lesson 62

Outline (cont.)

Paul warns of the dangers of false Judaizing teachers (3:1 – 4:1)

- *“Beware of dogs...evil workers...those of the false circumcision”* (3:2)
- N.T. saints are the “true circumcision” and they “...put no confidence in the flesh” (3:3)
- If “fleshly credentials” mattered, Paul’s “pedigree” could stand up against anybody (3:4-6)
- Yet, Paul considered all that “loss for the sake of Christ” and “pressed on” for that which was truly and eternally meaningful (3:7-14)
 - Paul had “walked away” from something tremendously valuable on earth
- *“Follow my example...”* and *“...stand firm in the Lord”* (3:15 – 4:1)
 - False teachers are the “enemies of the cross of Christ” and they only serve themselves... their *“god is their belly”*
 - Christians have a “citizenship in heaven”

Paul gives his final personal exhortations & closing words of gratitude (4:2-23)

- An appeal for 2 sisters (Euodia & Syntyche) to be reconciled, and for some unknown brother to aid in this reconciliation (vv. 2-3)
- *“Rejoice always in the Lord...”* (vv. 4-5)
- *“Be anxious for nothing, but...in prayer let your requests be made known to God”* (vv. 6-7)
- *“Meditate”* on things that should fill the mind of the N.T. Christian (vv. 8-9)
- Final gratitude for the Philippians sending their gift to Paul through Epaphroditus (vv. 10-20)
 - Paul was not thankful that he had finally received something...he had learned contentment
 - He was grateful for the “fruit that would increase” to the Philippians’ account
- The saints with Paul greeted the Philippians, especially *“...those of Caesar’s household”* (vv. 21-23)