

**True Joy – The Wisdom of Philippians**  
*Introduction to Philippians (Acts 16:11-40)*  
**9-20-09**

**Why preach the Bible book-by-book, chapter-by chapter, verse-by-verse?**

Distinctives of TWE Worship service...

- mixture of music styles with an emphasis on God-centered singing
- corporate testimony and prayer time
- *God-centered preaching primarily book-by-book through the Bible*
- opportunity to respond and be ministered to at the end

5 reasons to preach the Bible book by book

1) It's ALL GOOD!

**a. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)**

<sup>16</sup> *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,* <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**b. Luke 24:25-45 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" <sup>27</sup> *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself...*

<sup>44</sup> Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that *everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.*" <sup>45</sup> *Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,*

**c. Acts 20:26-27 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, <sup>27</sup> *for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.*

- 2) It helps people to read and understand the Bible for themselves.
- 3) It helps keep things in context.
- 4) It ensures we emphasize what God emphasizes.
- 5) It helps us not to avoid difficult to interpret or controversial issues.
  - a. The prophetic passages of Daniel 7-12
  - b. Homosexuality in Romans 1

### **Getting started in Philippians**

Two key questions to ask if you want to correctly interpret and apply the Bible

- 1) What did it mean then?
- 2) How does it apply today?

Two other key questions to ask as you begin the interpretation process

- 1) What literary genre am I dealing with?
- 2) What is the historical context?

Genre – epistle (letter) specifically a letter of friendship, exhortation and encouragement, and thanksgiving

- Read it like a letter, all the way through. Get the big picture before you begin to analyze the specific parts.
- Who wrote it and to whom?

### **Philippians 1:1-2 (NIV)**

*<sup>1</sup> Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:*

*<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Historical Context – In this case, what was the date and occasion of the letter?

- The historical context must be determined primarily from the letter itself along with evidence found elsewhere in the Bible. In this case, the evidence found elsewhere would include Acts 16 and other letters from Paul that mention the Philippians specifically or Macedonian churches of which the church in Philippi was one. 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 is a good example of on such letter.

Reconstructing the historical context of Paul's letter to the Philippians – What was his relationship with them and why did he write?

- Founded the church in 49 BC on his second missionary journey when he was called by God to preach the Gospel in Macedonia though he hadn't planned to.
  - **Acts 16:6-10 (NIV)**
    - <sup>6</sup> Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.
    - <sup>7</sup> When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.
    - <sup>8</sup> So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.
    - <sup>9</sup> During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."
    - <sup>10</sup> After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, *concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.*
- Philippi was the first city Paul entered in Macedonia
  - **Acts 16:11-12 (NIV)**
    - <sup>11</sup> From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis.
    - <sup>12</sup> *From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.*
      - 8.5 miles from Aegean Sea, on the north eastern tip of modern day Greece
      - Roman colony and leading city of that district will be important later on
- The Philippians church was a diverse group of mostly Gentile converts
  - Lydia and her household, slave girl, jailer and his family
- Paul had a very close, loving, relationship with the Philippians
  - **Philippians 1:3-8 (NIV)**
    - <sup>3</sup> I thank my God every time I remember you.
    - <sup>4</sup> In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy
    - <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,
    - <sup>6</sup> being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you

will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

<sup>7</sup> It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.

<sup>8</sup> God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

- Wrote to them from prison in Rome (61 AD just four years before his execution in 65 AD)
  - **Philippians 1:12-13 (NIV)**

<sup>12</sup> Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.

<sup>13</sup> As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.
  - **Philippians 4:21-22 (NIV)**

<sup>21</sup> Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send greetings.

<sup>22</sup> All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.
- Wrote to thank them for a gift they'd sent him in prison and to encourage them as they were facing some difficulties
  - **Philippians 4:18 (NIV)**

<sup>18</sup> I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.
- The difficulties they were facing included...
  - Opposition from outside the church (probably persecution from the Roman state)
    - **Philippians 1:28 (NIV)**

<sup>28</sup> *without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.* This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved--and that by God.
  - False teaching (Judizers)
    - **Philippians 3:2-3 (NIV)**

<sup>2</sup> Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh.

<sup>3</sup> For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship

- by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—
- Disunity, selfishness, grumbling and questioning, discouragement, and temptation not to press on and continue in the faith in light of the difficulties, within the church
    - **Philippians 4:2 (NIV)**  
<sup>2</sup> I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord.
    - **Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV)**  
<sup>3</sup> Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.  
<sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.
    - **Philippians 2:14-15 (ESV)**  
<sup>14</sup> Do all things without grumbling or questioning,  
<sup>15</sup> that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,
    - **Philippians 4:1 (NIV)**  
<sup>1</sup> Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!

**Paul seeks to encourage the Philippians in their time of need by reminding them of who they are, fellow *saints in Christ Jesus and servants of Christ Jesus*, called by God to join together to do the most important thing in the world - spread the good news about Him.**

- Paul begins sounding this encouraging note in verse one and continues to sound it throughout the rest of his letter.
  - **Philippians 1:1-2 (NIV)**  
<sup>1</sup> Paul and Timothy, *servants of Christ Jesus*, To all the saints in *Christ Jesus* at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Like Paul, Timothy, Lydia and her household, the slave girl, the Philippians jailer and his household, and all the other members of the Philippian church, if you have believed in the Lord Jesus and been saved then you too are both a saint in Christ and a servant of Christ.
- So what does this mean and why is it so encouraging?
  - To be a *saint in Christ* means you are one of “God’s holy people” (the preferable translation) specially chosen, set apart, and called to a *servant of Christ*.
  - It is obvious that being a saint in Christ is an AWESOME THING!!!
  - But the amazing thing is that being a “servant,” or more literally a “slave” of Christ, is an AWESOME THING too.
    - This doesn’t make sense to us, and it keeps a lot of people from following, and sometimes even looking into, Jesus.
    - They like the idea of being a saint in Christ but not the idea of being a servant of Christ.
    - Because they realize that the two things go hand in hand and cannot be separated they pass on Jesus all together.
  - But Paul didn’t see being a servant of Christ as a bad thing at all. In fact, he saw it as an AWESOME THING!!! Though this comes out clearly throughout Philippians I want to illustrate it with the theme text of our church, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. My hope is that some of you will hear this differently today than you did six months ago.
    - **2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (ESV)**
      - <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
      - <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;
      - <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to

himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

<sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

<sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- Being a saint in Christ and a servant of Christ (aka and ambassador for Him) should PUMP US UP!!! Some NEAT recent examples from TWE...
  - An e-mail from a pumped up saint in Christ and servant of Christ who has been attending TWE since March. “Thank you for providing the opportunity for us to voice our praises and prayers on Sundays, I have truly grown in my walk because of the things I have heard. *I also wanted to say how honored and excited I am that I will have an opportunity to serve with childcare this fall.* I am really looking forward to getting to know all of the children and parents of the Water’s Edge, and I pray that I will seize this opportunity to honor God, and create an environment for the children to feel loved and safe while they are at church”
  - A family, who had not been regular church attenders in the past, has been coming faithfully since March 15<sup>th</sup> and said last week with joy that despite having a young family they want to get even more involved and be even more dedicated.
  - Another family that has been coming to TWE for the past few months checked almost every box on the communication card last Sunday. When I followed up with them they said we just want to help out in whatever way we can.
  - I talked to young lady just yesterday who, though she is very busy and already very involved at church, is considering cutting back her hours at work in order to

free up some extra time to better minister to those around her in whose lives God is working.

- I talked to another young lady just yesterday in whom God has done a powerful work in the past year is experiencing the freedom and joy of being more bold and outward with her faith.
  - And I talked to a young man last week, who though he is going through a very hard time in his life, is exploring a possible call to ministry.
- I feel like this is a timely reminder for us as a church 6 months in (almost a year for some) since I think we are facing some of the same difficulties the Philippians were facing.
    - Hopefully you are facing more opposition/persecution from without than ever before because you are aggressively (yet lovingly) sharing your faith. If you're not, then you need to pick up the pace.
      - **2 Timothy 3:12 (NIV)**  
<sup>12</sup>In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,
    - False teaching and teachers all around us (2012 end of the world prediction)
    - I see *hints* of disunity, selfishness, grumbling and questioning, discouragement, and temptation not to press on and continue in the faith in light of the difficulties, within our church.
  - There is nothing thrilling, rewarding, and satisfying in life than banning together with a group of people you love, working your tails off, and accomplishing something great.
    - Ex. The dance group Diversity who upset Susan Boyle to win Britain's Got Talent
  - We have an infinitely greater opportunity than this as saints in Christ and servants of Christ at The Water's Edge.
    - **Philippians 1:27-30 (NIV)**  
<sup>27</sup>Whatever happens, *conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ*. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, *I will know that you stand firm*

*in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel*  
<sup>28</sup> without being frightened in any way by those who oppose  
you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that  
you will be saved--and that by God.

<sup>29</sup> *For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to  
believe on him, but also to suffer for him,*

<sup>30</sup> since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had,  
and now hear that I still have.

## Praise and Prayer

- Women's Prayer Retreat (emphasize new comers welcome)
- New Comer's Dessert
- Men's Battle for Purity
  - Last week
  - Lost a few. Still hoping for 20.
  - Stats from website (last week's sermon)
  - 5 reasons to sign-up...
    - 1) We all struggle (Mt 5:27-30, 1 Tim 5:2, Eph 5:3, 1 Cor 10:12)
    - 2) It will kill your relationship with God (1 Jn 1:6, Mt 5:27-30)
      - a. **1 John 1:6 (NIV)**  
<sup>6</sup>If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.
    - 3) It will kill your relationship with your wife (Heb 13:4)
    - 4) To help each other (Ja 5:19-20)
      - a. **James 5:19-20 (NIV)**  
<sup>19</sup>My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, <sup>20</sup>remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.
    - 5) The principles taught will apply to other struggles you're having
      - Sign-up on line [www.puritycoalition.org](http://www.puritycoalition.org) (flyer and website)
      - Money is no object. We will reimburse you for what you cannot afford. Just let me know. DO NOT LET MONEY KEEP YOU FROM COMING.
      - Website says 1 p.m. but as far as I know it is 12 p.m.

**A New TWE Tradition** – Standing for the Scripture reading (if you're able)

Two reasons...

- 1) Gives us a chance to stretch out between praise and prayer and sermon.
- 2) It's biblical.

**Nehemiah 8:1-8 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup>all the people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded for Israel.

<sup>2</sup>So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand.

<sup>3</sup>He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

<sup>4</sup>Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion. Beside him on his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiyah and Maaseiah; and on his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam.

<sup>5</sup>Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, **the people all stood up.**

<sup>6</sup>Ezra praised the Lord, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

<sup>7</sup>The Levites--Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiiah--instructed the people in the Law **while the people were standing there.**

<sup>8</sup>They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read.