



Week 1 Discussion Questions

Philippians Introduction and Greeting

Acts 16 and Philippians 1:1-2

Icebreaker:

What is one highlight from your summer and what are you looking forward to in this next season?

Read this week's passages: Acts 16 and Philippians 1:1-2

What stands out to you from the passages or sermon this week?

Paul the Apostle is the author of the book of Philippians. Who is Paul and what do you know about his life?

Paul is a Jew and former Pharisee who studied in Jerusalem under a popular rabbi and is also a Roman citizen. As a Pharisee, Paul persecuted and killed Christians who followed Jesus, but after an encounter with the Risen Jesus he became a follower of Christ and an apostle. Paul played a significant role in spreading the Gospel to the Gentiles and establishing the early church in the Mediterranean and beyond. Paul's correspondence by letter with the various churches he planted became significant church documents and teachings and make up a large part of the New Testament. Paul is likely the author of thirteen New Testament books including the Letter to the Philippians. The narrative accounts we have of Paul's life and missionary journeys are found in the book of Acts. Between Acts and Paul's letters, we are told of a man who dedicated his life in service to Christ, suffering for Christ's name and mission. We also see a man who dearly loves people, who seeks their good, and encourages them in their own faith.

The account in Acts 16 tells of the first followers of Christ in Philippi and the establishment of the church there. Paul's relationship with these Christians later prompts him to write a letter of encouragement to the church in Philippi. That letter is what we know as the book of Philippians. How do you see the Spirit leading Paul and Timothy in Acts 16 and how do they respond to its leading?

Paul, Silas, and Timothy repeatedly submit their lives, comfort, and plans to the Spirit's leading. When the Holy Spirit forbids them from going to Asia or did not allow them to enter Bithynia, they respond with obedience and continue their journey elsewhere. The Holy Spirit leads them to Lydia who is in Philippi and their obedience results in the conversion of Lydia and her whole family. Paul's unwavering allegiance and faith in Christ also gets him arrested. While in prison, the Spirit responds to Paul and Silas' prayers and their continued trust and faith brings the Philippian jailer to faith as well.



Who do Paul and Timothy meet in Philippi on their missionary journey, what details about these encounters stand out, and what is the result of each encounter?

Paul and Silas meet Timothy, who is circumcised and joins them in their journey. Lydia, a woman, is the reason the Spirit shut other doors. Lydia's faith would influence her whole family and she is an important support to Paul's ministry in Philippi. The slave girl with the spirit challenge's Paul's faith and gets them put into prison, and Paul and Silas' response is prayer. The jailer, in some way complicit in their beating and imprisonment, is shown grace and recognizes their faith and believes and so does his family.

What is one word you would use to describe yourself and your place in the community of believers at Calvary?

In the opening verses of the letter to the Philippians, Paul addresses the recipients of his letter as the "saints" in Philippi. What comes to mind when you think of a saint?

"Isn't sainthood a Catholic thing?" "You mean the football team?" Many Protestant or Evangelical Christians in the U.S. church are less accustomed to the use of the word saint. Maybe you have seen it used in the Bible and know that all Christians are saints, but it is not a significant word when you think of yourself or your faith.

The word "saint" means "holy ones." To be "holy" is to be "set apart". **All** Christians in the New Testament and beyond are considered "saints" who are holy and set apart, not for anything they have done, but because **all** have been made holy through the blood of Christ. If you are a Christian, you are a saint. What impact does being a saint have on how you view yourself and how should it impact the way you live your life?

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." While Christians still sin, our sinfulness is no longer our defining quality. Before Christ you were called "sinner," but in Christ you are a "saint." The change in identity occurs apart from us, through Christ. We cannot earn this identity and do not need to become holy to be accepted by God. God calls us holy from the beginning, and it is this identity, united to Christ, that allows us to live holy lives. Recognizing your identity as a saint empowers you to live faithfully and gives you a calling and purpose in God's kingdom.

Paul calls himself and Timothy servants of Christ Jesus in the opening of the letter to the Philippians when in his other letters he refers to himself as an apostle. How do you see Paul demonstrate this posture of Christ-like service in his life and in his actions in Acts 16 and Philippians 1:1-2?

Paul's conversion and submission to Christ changes everything about his life. His entire life's purpose shifts and is dedicated to the spreading of the Gospel of Christ. He listens to the Spirit, prays continually, and responds in obedience even when his plans had been different. Paul calls himself a servant of Christ in the opening of this book, when

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A Philippians Mark-it-Up series

servanthood will be a large topic. He does not use his authority for clout and does not hold the Philippians to a standard he does not meet himself.

How would your life look different if you intentionally sought to live as a saint and a servant of Christ this next week?