



Week 2 Discussion Questions

Thanksgiving and Prayer

Philippians 1:3-11

Icebreaker:

How have you seen God working in your life lately (over the summer)?

Read this week's passages: Philippians 1:3-11

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

When reading a New Testament letter, we are reading someone else's mail. In order to understand the meaning of Paul's letter to the Philippians for us today, we need to first understand its original meaning. Discuss the following questions together to better situate ourselves with the context of this letter:

Who is Paul (the author of the letter)?

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.

Who are the Philippians and where is Philippi (Recipient of the letter)?

Philippi is an ancient city that was located in Eastern Macedonia. We learned in Acts 16 that Paul helped establish the church in Philippi through a group of women believers he met there. We see there and in Philippians of the partnership and support Paul received from Lydia and others in his missionary work.

What situation prompted Paul to write this letter?

Paul's correspondence is evidence of his ongoing relationship with the believers in Philippi and his desire to thank them, encourage them, and address both practical logistical issues and spiritual practice concerns we will see later in the book.

What is Paul trying to address or communicate to the Philippians in the letter?

Encouragement in faith and reinforcing the gospel message and what it means to live it out practically in community with one another.

What details does Paul provide to us about the Philippians in these verses?

Paul has a relationship with the believers in Philippi. He has been praying for them. He finds joy in remembering them because of their partnership. They have shown him



evidence of faith and demonstrated love that comes from Christ. All these things are valuable to Paul and he hopes they are for the Philippians too.

What kinds of challenges would the people in Philippi (especially Christians) be facing in their day to day lives?

Paul and Silas were imprisoned in Philippi on their second missionary journey because of their message and actions. Roman citizenship and allegiance to the emperor posed significant trials for Christians who were persecuted for their faith. Many of the Christians lived in poverty and had limited resources—it was a risk to their lives and livelihood to be a Christian and live the self-less and servant-hearted life prompted by the gospel.

What kinds of challenges are you currently facing and where is it difficult to have faith?

List and discuss together each of the ways Paul encourages the faith of the Philippians and what he prays would be true in their lives. Discuss what these encouragements mean practically (i.e. what is “partnership in the gospel” or the “fruit of righteousness” and what would it look like?)

Paul prays for his friends. He tells them how he is encouraged by their faith and experiences joy when he thinks of them. He thanks them for their sacrifice and partnership for the gospel. He reminds them that it is God who completes the good work in them and that he will complete it. He cares about them and their faith and also makes sacrifices toward that end. He prays they would have abounding love for one another that comes from Christ, that they would be blameless and have fruit of righteousness.

The Philippians’ “partnership” takes the form of financial support or provision of resources and leadership amongst believers to build up one another even when Paul is absent. “Fruit of Righteousness” might call to mind the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5. You could read Galatians 5:22-26 to help understand what this means.

Which of these encouragements do you need to be true in your life right now?

How is wavering faith encouraged by Paul’s declaration in verse 6?

Being a Christian means that God has already displayed his faithfulness toward you and in moments or season when you feel like your faith is lacking, remember that even when you lack, God is faithful and he will bring you to completion when Jesus comes again and you are with Him in heaven forever. This truth gives us hope when we do not have all the answers right now.

This letter of encouragement comes from Paul, a church planter/missionary, to a group of his fellow believers who have demonstrated steady faith and commitment to one another. What motivates Paul to pray for his friends in Philippi?

✧ To Live *is Christ* ✧

A Philippians Mark-it-Up series

Paul continually displays a genuine love for Christ and love for his people. Paul's life and actions are always guided by this love in all he seeks to do.

How has your faith been strengthened and encouraged by your community at Calvary or by other fellow believers?

How does Paul understand Christ's role in his life and the life of the Church in these verses?

In these verses, Paul displays an understanding of Christ as God, who is good, is the Author of life and faith, and is the source and end of all love. Living in step with Christ leads to blamelessness and righteousness that can only come from Him. Christ is the foundation of Paul's life and the example he follows and he wants the same to be true for all believers.