

Expository Bible Study for Paul's Letter to the Philippians

Lesson #5 • “Striving Together for the Faith”

• H A N D O U T •

► Our last study covered Paul's prayer for the Believers at Philippi. He was concerned that their spiritual growth might stagnate during Paul's imprisonment. He stressed that their love for one another should grow, their spiritual discernment should intensify, and that they would walk in the fruit of righteousness for the Glory & Praise to God.

Following his prayer, Paul revealed one of the reasons he was writing: To encourage his fellow believers that, though his imprisonment might look like a set back to the ministry of the Gospel, it was really the opposite. It was an opportunity to spread the Gospel to Roman authority, which they would not be available to them, otherwise. Paul expressed his belief that his imprisonment was part of God's Plan for spreading the Gospel message into the very heart of pagan Rome. Therefore, being in chains was a way for Paul to serve Christ, and there was no reason for anyone to be fearful or discouraged.

Paul concluded this section of his letter by stating that some were preaching the Gospel message for purely selfish motives. They were jealous of Paul's success and popularity. They were striving to call attention to themselves thru their preaching skills and to discredit Paul in the process. Instead of being upset by this, Paul reacted to the situation by saying: *“So what! It doesn't matter! They're preaching the Gospel accurately, which is more important than their motives. So rejoice that the Gospel is going forth.”*

Our study closed with Paul revealing that whether he lived or died as a result of his hearing before Caesar, he would ultimately benefit either way. However, in the end, he did say he thought he would live and be able to continue to encourage the beloved and faithful Believers at Philippi. He assured them that his love for them was deep and abiding.

**Paul's letter now shifts into instructional mode.
The faithful at Philippi need to work together for the cause of the Gospel ...**

► **Philippians 1:27** [NLT]• Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again, or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together, with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News.

Q: What is significant about Paul using the terminology: “live as a citizen of heaven?”

Q: What lifestyle exhortation does Paul give the Believers at Philippi?

Q: What is involved with “standing firm in one spirit and one purpose?”

Literally, this phrase in Greek states: _____

Paul expands his thoughts on what can be accomplished with a unified team ...

► **Philippians 1:28** [NLT]• Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God Himself.

Q: What does Paul mean when he uses the word “intimidation” to describe the Philippians' reaction to the enemies of the faith?

In Greek, the word for “intimidation” means: _____

► There is a larger truth involved here: _____

Q: What does Paul promise when Believers stand firm together, in one spirit and purpose?

► Paul's promised results are two-fold when Believers are united, standing together:

1. _____

2. _____

Q: How would this “sign” manifest itself as a deterrent against the enemy?

It is a privilege for a Believer to suffer for the Faith ...

► **Philippians 1:29-30** [NLT] • For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for Him.

We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it.

Q: What does this passage say about the two gifts every Believer is given as a privilege?

Q: Why would suffering be considered a privilege?

► **James 1:2-4** • Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

► **1 Peter 1:6-7** • In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which perishes though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Q: Why does Paul bring up the issues of his own struggles to people who are clearly struggling?

This brings the study lesson to Chapter 2.

In the previous passage Paul told the Philippians how to stand strong against the external conflicts that were coming against the church. Now he tells them how to deal with the internal conflicts within the church.

► **Philippians 2:1-4** • If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility, consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Q: Why does Paul use “if” before each key statement in this passage?

Q: What do each of the four “if” statements convey?

1. If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ:
2. If any comfort from His love:
3. If any fellowship with the Spirit:
4. If any tenderness and compassion:

Q: What does Paul mean when he speaks of having or being in “fellowship?”

► “Fellowship” is the ancient Greek word: _____

Q: What does Paul ask for?

Q: What are the three things Paul says should be avoided?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Q: Of all the attributes to be avoided on which Paul could have focused his attention, why these three?

The Greatest Example of Humility is Christ Jesus. What follows is one of the most beautiful Christologies found in all of the New Testament. It is a masterful statement illustrating true humility and selflessness. This is where we will pick up our study next time.

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Next Time ♦ Lesson #6 ♦ “True Humility & Selflessness”

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