

Philippians at Home

Week Two: Philippians 1:12-30

Welcome to week two of our Philippian discussion guide. As a quick recap, in the first half of chapter one, Paul shares his love for the Philippian church and his thankfulness for their partnership in the gospel. We also witness Paul's confidence in God who will finish the work of grace in our lives. The second half of chapter one builds on this idea of God's sovereign purpose as we learn to see opposition as opportunities for the advancement of the gospel.

Prepare

Find a cozy place to sit in the warmth of our glorious Santa Barbara sun, grab a Bible and a device to access YouTube, and ask the Holy Spirit to work in your heart and mind through your study of Philippians.

Watch & Listen

Listen to this [audio recording of Philippians 1](#). You'll notice the audio icon in the upper left corner of the website. Listen for a word or phrase that God brings to your attention.

Read & Discuss

Scripture Reading One: [Philippians 1:12-18a](#).

Neither Paul nor the church he founded in Philippi had it easy. Philippi was a Roman colony known for their patriotic nationalism. As early followers announced Jesus as the true king, they faced persecution yet remained faithful to the gospel. Paul's own arrests, imprisonment, and trials span across eight chapters in Acts. Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians during one of his many imprisonments. Chained to official bodyguards of the Roman emperor, Paul awaited his fate at the hand of an earthly king.

- How did Paul regard his suffering? What opportunities arose because of Paul's chains?
- While none of us literally share Paul's chains, we may have situations that feel like limitations or opposition to sharing the gospel. What are your chains? Is it a job that keeps your arms tied? Duties at home caring for young children? A sickbed? Social distancing? How can your "chains" become an opportunity to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- Retell stories in scripture when God sovereignly orchestrated what humankind meant for evil into the means for accomplishing God's purpose. How many can you recall?
- Instead of silencing the church, Paul's imprisonment encouraged others to be bold with the gospel. How have you seen persecution, opposition, or limitations of one individual strengthen the resolve in others to boldly proclaim Christ?

Scripture Reading Two: [Philippians 1:18b-26](#).

Paul's letter expressed his uncertainty: would he be released and resume fruitful labor or die at the hand of his accusers? Paul's future may be uncertain on a human level, but he is certain that whatever the outcome Christ would be exalted through him.

- Paul says, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (1:21). How would you explain *to live is Christ* to a non-believer? From what you know of the Bible, what are the promises gained after death for followers of Christ?
- Do you share Paul's conflicting desires: to depart from this world to be with Jesus or to remain for the sake of bringing God's kingdom to earth? Why or why not? What's more important than life or death for Paul?
- The Greek word for "progress" in faith in verse 25 is the same word for "advance" of the gospel in verse 12. If you still have a pulse, your job is to advance the gospel. Take a moment to consider what new work God may be calling you to for others' "progress and joy in the faith."

Scripture Reading Three: [Philippians 1:27-30](#).

The world can't dismiss a faithful Christian standing firm under persecution. Maybe, your witness to an unbelieving world will go down in the history books. Maybe no one will ever hear of your witness, but God knows. Our lives in the public sphere must match up to the gospel because we submit to another King than the kings of our culture. Suffering for the gospel is inevitable with Christ as your King, but, as we stand firm alongside other Christians, our united message proclaims that Jesus reigns.

- Paul gives two reasons why God allows persecution. What are they? (See [Phil 1:28](#)).
- Paul also saw suffering for Christ as a way to identify with Christ. How does Paul develop this idea in other writings? (See [Phil 3:10](#); [Rom 8:17](#); [2 Cor 1:5](#)).
- How have opponents of the gospel intimidated you in the past? What opposition does our church community face where it is important, we stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel?

Apply & Pray

- Reflect on a few key things the Lord is teaching you in the first chapter of Philippians and pray over next steps.
- Pray for missionaries and Christians serving across the globe who face persecution daily.
- Consider watching a documentary or reading a biography on the life of a missionary. A good place to start is Corrie ten Boom's autobiography, [The Hiding Place](#). If you have elementary age kids try [Christian Heroes: Then and Now](#) by Janet & Geoff Benge.