

PHILIPPIANS

Joy

This four-chapter letter is filled with love, joy, and peace. The writer is so focused on how wonderful Jesus is. He is full of joy and gratitude about the Philippians to whom he is writing. His circumstances are horrible, yet Paul writes about lasting joy every few paragraphs.

This short book will

- Lighten your heart;
- Turn your attention to “the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord,” inspire you to be more like Jesus; and
- Guide you into joy and peace.

Author: Paul, the Apostle

Recipients: This is a letter written to the church in Philippi, a city in Macedonia. Paul had met them on his second missionary journey. In Acts 16, Paul has a vision of a man pleading with him to come to Macedonia and help. While there, he meets Lydia who opens her house to him and all the new believers. He cast a demon out of a slave girl and the following ruckus resulted in Paul and his companion Silas getting tossed in jail. An earthquake set them free. The next morning, the prison guard, impressed with their joy and relieved that they did not run away, becomes a believer, too. Paul also visits them on his third journey while returning to Jerusalem. (Acts 20:1-6).

When: Paul is in prison when he writes this letter. He says this at the beginning of the letter. (1:7, 13, 17). The book of Acts describes many occasions of speaking in public or performing miracles in Jesus’ name which caused such a commotion that Paul was arrested. His two longest imprisonments were in Ephesus (54-55 A.D.) or in Rome (54-58 A.D.).

Questions to help you focus and apply this letter:

Chapter one: Why does Paul give thanks for the Philippians?

Chapter two: Why does God exalt Jesus? What is the mind of Christ?

Chapter three: What advantages did Paul Have? What is important to him now?

Peace

Gratitude

Chapter four: What can you apply in your life concerning rejoicing and giving thanks?

Who are the other names?

- Timothy is mentioned many times in the New Testament as Paul’s young associate. Paul also sends Timothy to settle problems in churches and to represent Paul in person. In this letter, Paul writes: “I have no one like him. Like a son with a father he has served me in the work of the gospel.” 2:20, 22.
- Euodia and Syntyche (4:2, 3) are women. Paul calls them “my co-workers,” a term sometimes used for pastors and other colleagues of Paul. Few women are named in the Bible, so take note when they are.
- Epaphroditus is a man from Philippi who is only named in this book. He brings gifts from his church to support Paul.

The hymn in Philippians 2

⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in
Christ Jesus,
⁶who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
⁷but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death —
even death on a cross.
⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.