

A Study of Philippians: “Sharing Joy and Hope in Jesus!”

Introduction

Author:	The Apostle Paul
Date:	First Century in the 60’s
Place:	Rome, while Paul was chained awaiting trial in Caesar’s court
Purpose:	Sharing Joy and Hope in Jesus!

Background

Acts 16: 11 – 40 give us the background information we need to appreciate Paul’s relationship with the believers in the Roman colony of Philippi. During his time in Philippi, the Holy Spirit blessed his preaching of the gospel. A group of believers gathered for worship in the household of Lydia, where Paul was an invited guest. His stay also included imprisonment, as well as the opportunity to share a message of eternal hope in Jesus with his jailer who asked one of life’s most important questions: “What must I do to be saved?”

Chapter 1: 1 – 2 (NIV)

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all God’s holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Note the reference to “overseers and deacons.” A decade or more had passed since Paul’s first visit to Philippi. The believers had organized themselves in a way that included what we might call pastors and other congregational leaders. The Lord himself calls people to public ministry through his people, then and now.
- **What blessings do we receive through those who serve in the public ministry today? (See also Ephesians 4: 11 – 13)**
- The words of verse 2 are so familiar that we could almost miss the beautiful truth they convey. The word “grace” is God’s undeserved love and kindness shown to a world of sinners through the saving work of Jesus. Because of Jesus we also have “peace” with God, the assurance and certainty that our sins have been fully forgiven.
- **Consider how important God’s grace and peace are to you, especially during difficult times.**

Chapter 1: 3 – 8 (NIV)

I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

- Remember that Paul was in chains as he wrote these words. He was moved to thank God as he remembered the believers in Philippi. He was prayed with joy as he thought about the people there.

**What brought Paul the most joy as he thought about the believers in Philippi?
(See v. 5)**

- We aren't in chains, but these are unusual days. However, we are separated from each other during this time of "social distancing" and a suspension of regular in person worship at church.

What brings you the most joy as you think about your brothers and sisters in Christ at David's Star?

- In Verse 6 Paul refers to the "good work" begun in the believers at Philippi. This "good work" is the planting of saving faith in their hearts. For example, Paul baptized the jailer and his household in Philippi. Bringing that "good work" to completion means staying in faith and growing in faith until Jesus calls us to heaven or he comes again on the Last Day.

When did the Lord begin his "good work" in you?

How will that "good work" be brought to completion?

In verse 8 you can almost feel Paul's heart ache for personal fellowship with the believers in Philippi.

Do you think that this time of social distancing and isolation will result in a greater appreciation for the times we are able to gather together in worship with each other? Explain.

Prayer

Dearest Lord, thank you for the good work of faith you began in me through the gospel and the work of your Holy Spirit. Keep me in your grace and peace. Thank you also for the fellowship of believers at David's Star. As I think about my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I remember especially [*add personal words and thoughts*]. Speed the day when this time of distancing comes to an end. Bring us together again that we may encourage each other in our walk with you. Amen.