
OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

PHILIPPIANS

ADEOYE, EMMANUEL

THEME: EUPHORIA

Euphoria is a feeling or state of intense excitement and happiness. Euphoria is an extreme happiness or confidence

INTRODUCTION

The Eleventh Book Of The New Testament Is Paul's Epistle To The Church At Philippi. Philippi Was A City Of Macedonian, The First Of The District A Roman Colony Act(16:12) Thessalonian Was the Capital City Of The Province Of Macedonian, Philippi was the only county of the area to have a status of colony. This status gave the city the distinct advantage; self-government, administration under the roman law and citizenship right (**Act 16:20b**)

Paul established the church in Philippi and appear to have had warm relationship with it he work there twice **Act 16:11**. The Church Helped Support Paul's Ministry In Other Locations (**Phil. 4:14-17**).

BACKGROUND

It is also important for us to understand the circumstances under

which this letter was written. Philippian church was the first church that Paul established in the European soil on his second missionary journey to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. He wrote this letter while he was in Rome as a prisoner, where he was persecuted by the opposition of the Christian workers.

Paul had become good friends with the Philippians, and they became brothers and sisters in Christ. Consequently, when they heard that he was in prison they sent one of their members named Epaphroditus to give their offerings to him as their way of support. So, Paul wrote a letter to the Philippians (which he sent it back with Epaphroditus) to express his gratitude for their support. But also, Paul's letter to the Philippians was written to strengthen the fellow believers from the church in Philippi as they were facing persecution just as he was.

DESTINATION

The letter is formally address to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi (**1:1**) it addresses is later

confirmed by the authors calling it recipient Philippians (**4:15**).

DATE

- It Was Until Five Years After He Had Founded The Philippian Church That Paul Had The Opportunity To Visit It; While On His Third Missionary Trip, About AD 55 (**Act 20:1-2**)
- After Three Month In Corinth, he paid a second visit to Philippi, spending sometime in Jerusalem (**Act 20:6**)
- After His Arrest In AD 57 And Confinement In Caesarea In AD 57-59.

He Appeal To Caesar and was therefore sent to Rome AD 60. Ten years after planting the church at Philippi; he pens this epistle to the assembly.

OCCASION

- Upon learning of Paul's being sent to prison in Rome, The Philippians sent a gift of money and other helpful item to him by Epaphroditus (**4:18**) a member of their won congregation, in addition to the delivery gifts. He was to remain for unspecified time to serve Paul; While Ministering To The Apostle He Fell ill and Almost Died (**2:26-27**).
- The Philippians were distress for him. All this added anxiety to Paul's already considerable burden.
- He now write this epistle, thanking them of their gifts and send Epaphroditus home prematurely in order that all

parties may be relieved of unnecessary anxiety for each other.

- Epaphroditus Arrives Back In Philippi With Paul's Letter Of Thanks In Hand

PURPOSE

- The primary aim of the letter is to offer sincere thanks to his beloved converts for their gifts to him.
- But there are number of secondary objectives
- He seeks to allay their fears for him by informing them of his prison conditions (**1:12-20**)
- He explain Epaphroditus's premature return home (**2:25**)
- Having been informed by Epaphroditus of the discord between Euodia's and Sntyche, he urge the church to live in Christian harmony (**4:2**)
- He caution about their enemies (**3:1-4:1**)
- General encouragement in the Lord.

Paul was in display of magnanimous spirit **Phil 1:12-18**.

Paul 's chain had served to advance the gospel and make many Christian bolder **Phil 1:12-14**. Yet some at Rome were feeling either embraced or threatened by his presence as prisoner - **Phil 1:15-16**. They wanted to prove that the church could survive without him and thus preach with great zeal.

The problem was not doctrinal (The content of their preaching but personal) (The impure motive behind

preaching). Paul could only rejoice that so much evangelistic effort was in evidence **Phil 1:18**. The secret to such attitude is contained in Paul's life-motivation **Phil 1:21**. His present imprisonment at Rome was a cause of gratitude rather than despair - **Phil 1:12-14**.

THEME

- The Basic Theme Of The Epistle Is Joy. The Ideal Of Rejoicing Is Found 16 Times Appearing In Noun Form (1:4 2:18) and verb form twice (2:17) this is the basic ample of theme throughout the letter.
- There Is Joy In Suffering, Fro Through It God Accomplishes Good (1:12-14)
- There Is Joy In Sacrificial Giving Of Oneself (2:17-18) And Of Ones Good (4:18)
- To Meet The Needs Of Others And To Do God's Will, Thus Following Jesus Example (2:4-11)
- There Is Joy In Knowing Christ And Experiencing His Resurrection Power (3:8-10)
- There Is Joy When Harmony Prevails Among Brethren (2:4, 4:2-5)
- There Is Joy Over The Adequacy Of Christ (4:13,19) Which Produces Contentment For Every Circumstance Of Life

WHAT CAN WE TAKE AS LESSONS FROM PHILIPPIANS LETTER?

This was a testing time to the Philippians. It seems like this was a perfect time for Paul to write to the believers in Philippi, not only to

strengthen their faith in Christ but also to give them more reason to rejoice and to continue serving the Lord and sharing the gospel for the sake of Christ. What about the Christians today? Is this letter relevant to us today? Of-course it is! Christians today are still facing the same opposition. The book of Philippians teaches us important lessons in humility and perseverance, helping us to and strength and courage to stay strong in faith, remain humble and reject false teachings and hold on to the truth.

1. LESSON FROM THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS: OUR SUFFERINGS ARE A SACRIFICE TO GOD

REJOICING IN SUFFERING

First Paul reveals in (**Phil. 1:12-14**) how his sufferings has been a blessing in disguise in advancing the gospel. He shares how other believers in Philippi have gained courage to preach fearlessly about God since he was imprisoned in Rome. This is contrary to popular belief, that if we suffer as Christians people will be discouraged and discredit God. But sometimes true conviction comes when we see other believers holding on firmly to their faith in God, becoming obedient to the point of death.

But there is something that really caught my attention in **Phil 1:29** where Paul says it was granted to us to suffer for Christ. "For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to

suffer for him” **Philippians 1:29**. Some other versions call it a privilege to suffer for him.

In the third chapter we get to understand why both believing and suffering was granted to us. The Apostle Paul says “*That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death.*” **Phil. 3:10**. For someone the question might be why do we need to suffer persecutions when Jesus has already suffered? Please check this article: what is Gods purpose for suffering for a deeper understanding.

OUR SUFFERINGS BRING HONOR TO GOD

In this book, we see Paul being content with whatever the outcome may be in his sufferings. This contentment comes from the fact that Paul is fully aware of the life he was called into. The life of living for Christ. He is very cognizant of the fact that living for Christ means honouring him with your whole being, whether through life or death.

2. LESSON FROM THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS: REJOICE ALWAYS BECAUSE “TO LIVE IS CHRIST AND TO DIE IS GAIN”

TO DIE IS GAIN

This tells me that the afterlife is still a mystery even to some believers. In this book, Paul reveals this mystery of dying in the Lord. He enlightens us that even if he suffers to a point of death, it is in fact more beneficial to him to depart and be with the Lord.

But if he lives it is beneficial to the church as he will be doing more fruitful work for the Lord (**Philippians 1: 21-22**).

This resonates with the scripture in **Revelations 14:13** “Then I heard a voice from heaven say, “write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. “Yes,” says the Spirit, “*they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them.*”

TO LIVE IS CHRIST

It seems like Paul is saying, we are like agents to the kingdom of God that are not only bringing profits to our father’s business, but also making investments to the kingdom. But like any worker, it is more beneficial to get an early retirement and enjoy the fruits of your labor, but if work has to continue, we are still adding value to the kingdom.

AS A RESULT, EVEN IF WE HAD TO SUFFER TO A POINT OF DEATH IT IS STILL AN ADVANTAGE TO US

Paul is encouraging the church not to be afraid of any opposition because God has already given us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. This scripture proves to be true when we look at the life of Jesus. I mean painful death of a loved one is extremely painful especially to those who are left behind with those memories. But let’s be honest, to see someone you love hanging in the cross is even worse. We are not the only ones to deal with such trauma, Mary the mother of Jesus, even God himself his Father, experienced the same pain even if it was only for three days.

3. LESSON FROM THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS: TRUSTING GOD'S PLAN

Paul teaches us in this book that when we trust God's plan we are bound to have positive thinking. Yet, positive thinking is not spontaneous but intentional just like forgiveness. We see this in Philippians 4:8 where he says *"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."*

Paul is also bold enough to put himself as a reference for the church when he says they must put into practice whatever they learnt, heard or seen from him (**Phil.4:9**). Indeed in the next verse we see Paul modelling the way, and being true to his words. In **Phil.4:10**, It seems like there was a time when the church were not able to take care of him, but Paul being positive, he chose to think they had no opportunity to show it not because they didn't care or got tired of him, especially because they've done it before.

4. LESSON FROM THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS: CONTENTMENT IN EVERY SITUATION

Paul chose to focus on God and not on people. This is why he was content in his spirit throughout his sufferings. He knew that God wouldn't fail to take care of him whether through the people he knew or through strangers. Hence, he says *"Do not be anxious*

about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." **Phil.4:6-7**.

Paul had no time to be bitter about who didn't show up when I needed him the most, because he knew that his help comes from God and that God timing is perfect. That is why he says *"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."* **Phil. 4:12-13**.

Paul's trust in God's power and supply is so much so that even after receiving the gifts from the brothers and sisters in Philippi, he is grateful but also convinced that it is more beneficial to them than it is to him. *"Not that I desire your gifts, what I desire is that more be credited to your account."* **Phil.4:14**.

5. LESSON FROM THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS: FIXING OUR EYES ON JESUS

In the first chapter, we learn the importance of fixing our eyes to Jesus. Paul here is warning and concerned about the false prophets/teachers who have taken the opportunity to preach from selfish ambitions while Paul is away (**Phil.1:15-18**). But Paul's trust in the word of God is unshakable. He understands that even if the false teachers are teaching

from selfish ambitions but the word of God will not return void without accomplishing what it was sent to do (*Isaiah 55:11*). He even says in *Phil.1:18* “*It doesn’t matter! I am happy about it, so long as Christ is preached in every way possible, whether from wrong or write motives. And I will continue to be happy.*”

This is also a reminder that yes, there are false prophets, and we will know them by their fruits as Jesus taught us in Matthew. But also even the called pastors and prophets are also human, and they will make mistakes. Ours is to focus on the gospel of Jesus Christ and remember “*that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*” *Philippians 1:6*

6. LESSON FROM THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS: HUMILITY AND SERVICE

HUMILITY

Paul encourages the Philippians to remain humble as being a humble servant serves as the core, and to share Gods love with one another. He says “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made

himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.” *Philippians 2:5-7*. As a humble servant, Christ gave up his divine privileges in order to become a servant of God, becoming obedient to a point of death. This being the reason why God exalted his name above all the other names.

- **SERVANTHOOD AND PUTTING OTHERS FIRST**

Philippians 2:3-4, tells us “*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*” This is a powerful reminder that as Christians, we are called to serve god’s people and put their needs before our own.

We are called to shine like stars in this corrupt dark world we live in, so that God’s nature will be seen through the light of his children. This is also a reminder that with all the privileges that we have as the children of the most high God, it is easy to take advantage of it. But our call is to look at the first born son of God, Jesus Christ and remember that he never boasted, he was never judgmental but instead he used his gifts and power to serve others so that they also become servants of Christ

CONCLUSION

This epistle is intensely personal and endearing to anyone who studies it. How wonderful it would be for all believer to capture the mind of Christ and spirit of rejoicing, which are central to the message of this letter.

HYMN 503 BY RAY WALKER CARRETH