

Philippians: Living Like Jesus

Week 2: Christ Jesus Is Our Example

→ *Survey: Let's understand the background and context of the passage.*

Philippians is a letter written by Paul, while in a Roman prison, to the church he had started in Philippi. He wrote this letter to thank them for sending gifts and financial support, to reassure them of his circumstances, and to encourage them of the joy found in Jesus. We learned last week that Paul's time in prison has actually been for good - the Gospel has advanced. He's been able to tell the Roman guards the good news of Christ Jesus, and he's inspired other Christians to talk more openly about Jesus. Yet, he still doesn't know what is going to happen to him. Will he be released or will he be executed? As he considers both of these, he concludes dying and being with Jesus would be a gain for him; however, he believes it would be better for others if he were released so that he could continue to live faithfully as an example and to share about Jesus. We see Paul's willingness to suffer in order to love others more than himself.

To Paul, living as a Christian means seeing your own story as a lived expression of Jesus's story. Last week we read how Paul said "to live is Christ." This week we are going to see Paul encouraging the Philippians to do exactly that. In this passage, Paul shares Jesus's story through a beautifully written poem, revealing not only who Jesus is, but also the example that his followers are to imitate. Together as we read, you too can ask yourself - in what ways should I be living like Jesus?

Read: Philippians 1:27-2:18

→ *Observe: Let's take a close look at what the text is saying.*

- No matter what happens, how does Paul want the Philippians to act (v. 27)?
- If the Philippians conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, what is Paul confident will happen to their community (v. 27-28)?
- What does Paul say will be granted to the Philippians on behalf of Christ (v. 29)?
- *An if-if-if-then statement!?* What do we see Paul expressing? If what, then what? (v. 1-2)?
- What are markers of how these Christians should interact with each other (v. 3-5)?
- How is Jesus described (v. 6-8)? Note specific descriptors of who he is & what he does. In a word or two, how would *you* summarize how Jesus is described?
- Despite the lowly status of Jesus, how did God treat him in verses 9-11?
- What does Paul commend the Philippians for (v. 12), and what does he further instruct them to do (v. 12-15)?

- What gives Paul reason to rejoice and be glad (v. 16-18)?

→ *Interpret: Let's seek to understand the meaning of this text in its original context.*

- In this passage, Paul highlights the value of Christian unity & living with humility, with Christ Jesus as the ultimate example. Why is unity a necessary part of Christian community? How do the commands in this text help us better understand how to achieve unity?
- Paul tells the Philippians that they will suffer for Christ (v. 29). With what tone do you think Paul is telling them this & why do you think he would describe it this way? Should suffering be an integral part of a Christian's life? Why or why not?
- Verses 6-11 poetically tell the life, death, resurrection, and reign of Jesus. Why would Paul retell the story of Jesus to the Philippians? What does this teach us about Jesus?
- Paul reminds these Philippian Christians that they are saved by God (v. 28). What then does it mean when he tells them to 'continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling' (v. 12)? Why does Paul instruct them to do this and for what purpose?

→ *Apply: Let's explore where the text intersects with our lives and our world.*

- This passage shows one way of Christian unity & humility is looking to the interests of others over the interests of ourselves. In what ways do you do this well? And in what ways do you want to grow? Are there areas where you might be unintentionally contributing to division?
- What is the Gospel, or good news, of Jesus? Why is it good news? So then, what does Paul even mean when he tells the Philippians to 'conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ?' (v. 27)?
 - If you're honest with yourself - is your life consistent with the good news about Jesus? Where is God calling you to grow in consistently living this way?

- Is there anything else that God put on your mind from this passage?