

# Philippians: Living Like Jesus

## Week 3: Three Examples Like Jesus

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

While in a Roman prison, Paul writes a letter to his beloved brothers and sisters in the church he had started in Philippi. He thanks them for their support and encourages them that the Gospel is being spread boldly and broadly despite his circumstances. But even as the message spread, there were some that misunderstood and distorted the true Gospel of Christ. (We saw this as we studied Galatians last semester). These Jewish Christians called Judaizers were still stirring up trouble! So Paul reminds the Philippians that salvation is guaranteed not by works, nor by status, but through faith in Christ alone.

Last week we saw that though Jesus was God, he humbled himself as a servant, even to the point of death! And this is the example that his followers are to imitate. Just as Christ laid down his life for others, Paul urges the Philippians to practice humility and to look to the interests of others, not seeking worldly gain. Today we will look at three examples of people who did just that. And as we read, you too can ask yourself - in what ways should I be living like Jesus?

Read: Philippians 2:19-30

*Split into two groups! 19-24 | 25-30. Answer these questions:*

- Who is Paul hoping to send to the Philippians? What do we know about this person? What is their relationship with Paul? Why does he hope to send them?
- In what ways is this person an example of living like Jesus? In other words - how do we see Jesus through this person and their story?

Read: Philippians 3:1-4:1

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

- What is Paul's reminder to the Philippians? (v. 1) Is this his first time saying this?
- Who does Paul warn against? (v. 2) *Does anyone remember from Galatians who these people are & what were they teaching? What conflict were the Jews & Gentiles having around circumcision?*
- In what ways do these people differ from true believers, or "the circumcision" as Paul describes it (v. 3)? What is their confidence in?
- What are some reasons for why Paul should have "confidence in the flesh" (v. 4-6)?
- How does he respond to these reasons, or "gains" that he has (v. 7)? Where does Paul find his righteousness from (v. 9)? What is his focus (v. 10)?
- What does Paul clarify in verses 12-14? How would you summarize his goal?
- With what tone does Paul talk about "enemies of the cross of Christ" (v. 18)? What is the key difference between these people and Christians (v. 19-20)?
- What does Paul urge the Philippians to do as he closes this part of the letter (4:1)?

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

- Why would Paul list all these reasons for why he could have confidence in the flesh (v. 5-6) - what was he trying to tell the Philippians?
  - Are his reasons inherently bad things? Why or why not?
  - If not, then why would he consider these things all loss? (v. 7)
- Just as we looked at Timothy & Epaphroditus, in what ways is Paul an example of living like Jesus? In other words - how do we see Jesus through this person and their story?
  - Based on this passage, what would you say is the goal of Paul's life? What is he striving towards and how does he encourage the Philippians to do the same?
- The Philippians were citizens of Rome. As a Roman Colony, they followed Roman laws and customs, not those native to their own land. Considering this, what does Paul mean when he says that a Christian's "citizenship is in heaven" (3:20)?
  - Does this mean Christians shouldn't care about Earth? Why or why not?

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

- How is "rejoicing in the Lord" a safeguard for the Philippians (3:1)? What would it look like for you to rejoice in the Lord no matter the external circumstances? What would change in your life if this was your perspective?
- We may not care about circumcision in the same way the Judaizers did, but Christians throughout time have mistakenly measured their standing with God by works. What are the things of the "flesh," instead of Christ, that you sometimes put confidence in?
- What are some of the customs and values of the Kingdom of God that "citizens of heaven" are called to live out? How do these contrast the customs and values of our culture? Where is God calling you to build His Kingdom here at SRU as it is in heaven?
- Are there any other ways this passage challenges you to be more like Jesus?