

# Philippians: Living Like Jesus

## Week 4: Will You Be the Example?

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

Paul is in a Roman prison writing to the church in Philippi - a vibrant community faithful to the way of Jesus. The Philippians had sent one of their own to visit Paul in prison and give him financial gifts, and Paul was writing this letter to thank them. As we have seen the past few weeks, he also updates the Philippians on his circumstances. He tells them despite his imprisonment, the Gospel was being spread, and so Paul also encourages the Philippians to stand firm - to continue living faithfully as to not go astray as some other churches had. We've learned what faithful living looks like from Jesus's example, from Timothy & Epaphroditus, and from Paul himself.

His final words to the Philippians will challenge us to be people of humility, reconciliation, and unity. He tells us not to give in to fear, but to be joyful people who bring all things to God. And just as we saw from Paul, sometimes our worst circumstances might be our best opportunity for ministry! So as we close out this book of the Bible, you too can ask yourself - in what ways should I be living like Jesus? Where are my circumstances an opportunity to advance the Gospel to others at SRU & beyond? People all around you have never heard the good news of Jesus - will you be the example?

Read: Philippians 4

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

- What is Paul's plea to Euodia & Syntyche (v. 2)? What do we know about them (v. 3)?
- *Underline each command you see Paul give the Philippians in verses 4-6.* How many did you count? What do you notice about these commands?
  - What is the result of obeying these commands (v. 7)?
- Instead of anxiety, what does Paul say to think about (v. 8)?
- As Paul begins to close his letter, what does he want the Philippians to do (v. 9)?
- What have Paul's circumstances taught him (v. 11-12)? Why is he able to be content in all situations (v. 13)?
- What do we learn that further explains why Paul is especially grateful for the Philippians (v. 14-16)? How does he feel about their gifts (v. 17-19)?
- What similarities do you see between how Paul begins and ends his letter (v. 20-23)?

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

- Throughout this letter, Paul has been giving examples of how our lives should reflect the life of Jesus. Considering this, how should Euodia and Syntyche handle their conflict?
  - They probably both had good reasons to be upset with each other, so why would Paul plead with them to "be of the same mind in the Lord" (v. 2)?
- According to Paul, how can the Philippians acquire the peace of God during times of distress or anxiety (v. 4-9)? What are important steps to note?
- *Reread verse 13.* Many athletes like Steph Curry write this verse on their gear. Without reading the prior verses, how might someone misunderstand Paul's point here? How could this example help us understand the necessity of reading Scripture in context?
- Why does Paul emphasize that those who belong to Caesar's household are sending their greeting to the Philippians? (v. 22) What significance does this hold?

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

- *Raise your hand if there's something in your life you could complain about.* As we've learned from Paul, difficult times are all about perspective. A follower of Jesus chooses to see the beauty & grace in any situation, learning contentment through the one who gives strength. How does this differ from what the world says we should find contentment in?
  - In what areas of your life do you find it most difficult to be content? How can you cultivate contentment & joy in your daily life, especially in moments of stress or uncertainty? What specific steps do you want to take?
- Like Euodia & Syntyche, are there places right now where you've let a conflict with someone get in the way of the Gospel & unity with believers? How can you seek being "of the same mind in the Lord" (v. 2) and who might you need to help you resolve this issue? (*just as Paul asked his 'true companion' in v. 3 to help these women*). Seriously.... will you seek reconciliation today?
- Paul's letter to the Philippians has shown us many examples of what living like Jesus looks like. So now you can ask yourself - will *you* be the example? How has Philippians helped you see what living like Jesus is all about? Where are you being challenged to live more like Jesus at SRU & beyond?