

Reading Philippians

We will begin reading the book of the Philippians this week. After being forbidden to travel to Bithynia, The Spirit led Paul to Philippi in Macedonia (Acts 16:9-15). While there wasn't a synagogue, Paul found a group of women assembled for worship. Paul preached the gospel to the women, and among those converted was Lydia and her household.

The church planted in Philippi would become Paul's favorite church. This group would have a special place in Paul's heart. At times, they would be the only congregation financially supporting him in the cause of the gospel.

Paul's letter to the Philippians will challenge us in many powerful ways.

Philippians will challenge us to be servants.

- Paul had the heart of a servant. While he desired first to depart and be with the Lord, he also wanted to remain on the earth to continue serving his brethren (Philippians 1:21-24).
- Jesus is the greatest example of a servant.
 - He left the glories of heaven to live as a man, proclaim the gospel, and be obedient to the point of death on a cross (Philippians 2:1-11).
 - God has called us to have the Lord's mindset and follow in His footsteps (Philippians 2:2-5). We must be humble, considerate, and attentive to the needs of others.
- How can we serve others?
 - Sitting in a hospital waiting room with a family.
 - Attending a funeral and grieving with others.
 - Taking sick brethren a meal and cleaning their home.
 - Sacrificing our time and resources to practice hospitality.

Philippians will challenge us to focus on heavenly citizenship.

- The term "citizenship" would have meant a lot to the Philippians. Philippi had special Roman status. Those who lived there took pride in the city's Roman culture and privileges. They held in high esteem their Roman citizenship and way of life (Acts 16:21).
- Paul taught that heavenly citizenship is more valuable than Roman citizenship.
 - It is also more valuable than being a United States citizen!
 - We need to remember this whenever we find ourselves discouraged by our nation's constant drifting away from God.

Philippians will challenge us to live with joy.

- The theme of joy is found throughout this letter (Philippians 1:4, 18, 25; 2:2, 18; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 10).
 - This is especially powerful coming from the pen of Paul since he was suffering in a Roman prison at the time.
 - Despite his poor circumstances, Paul still chose to have joy in Christ!
- We also must choose to be people of joy! Regardless of our circumstances, we must celebrate our heavenly citizenship, relationship with God, and fellowship with one another.

Philippians will challenge us to grow.

- Paul was never satisfied with his spiritual maturity (Philippians 3:7-15).
 - He let go of his past sins and accomplishments and pressed forward.
 - He sought to grow and know Jesus better each day.
- There is always room for us to grow and improve. Each day, we must challenge ourselves to learn, pray, serve, and become more like the Lord.

Conclusion:

Are you a citizen of the heavenly kingdom?

- Shawn Jeffries