

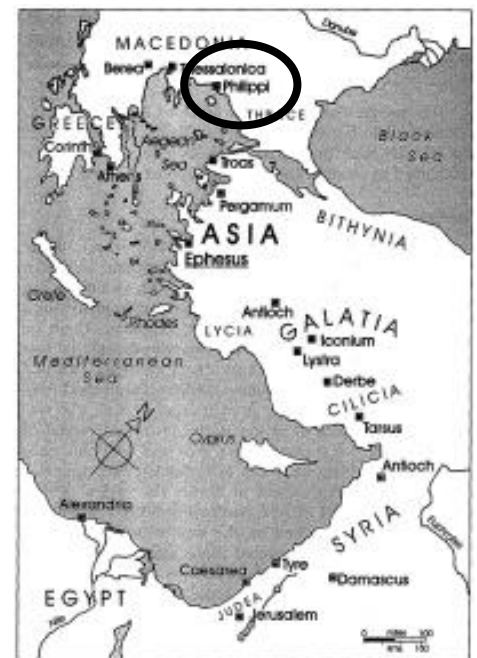
A Study of Galatians, Ephesians, **Philippians**, Colossians

Many times we look at the congregations of the New Testament and we think of them as the cream of the crop, the best of the best, the models of what we are to be. The truth is that these congregations were much more like our congregation that we think. These congregations had blessings and challenges just like we do. The apostle Paul did as much guiding, leading and rebuking as he did motivating and complimenting the people for their faith.

As we look at these congregations we pray that God leads us to see that there is much that we can learn from the guidance and teachings that God gave them through the apostle Paul. We will also pray that our congregation can also grow through that same guidance and teaching.

The history of the city of Philippi

- Philip II (the father of Alexander the Great) annexed the land and the city during the increase of his empire. He named his new city Philippi after himself.
- Philippi was a city that had a thriving gold mining industry. This industry funded much of Alexander's conquests.
- This spread of the Greek culture during the empires of Philip and Alexander was called Hellenization. This was the beginning of the culture and way of life that made it possible for Paul and the missionaries of Christ to travel freely taking the Gospel with them.
- The Romans finally conquered the Greek empire and Philippi with it. By now the gold was gone and Philippi had all but died out.
- Philippi once again came to prominence because of the major battle for the throne of Rome. Mark Antony and Octavian defeated Brutus and Cassius for the right the crown.
- Philippi soon regained prominence as a city on the main trade route between Rome and Asia.
- Philippi was resettled by former Roman soldiers and citizens of Rome. This helped Rome keep its trade routes safe and its empire large.



Paul and Philippi

- Paul came to Philippi on his second missionary journey. (Acts 16)
- Paul approached a small group of women who were praying near the river on the Sabbath.
- From these women and their families the congregation in Philippi began.
- Philippi was the city where God rescued Paul and Silas from prison
- It was the city where the jailer asked, “What must I do to be saved?” and his whole family was baptized that evening.
- Paul visits Philippi twice on his third missionary journey.

The Congregation at Philippi

- Marked by their love and support for Paul and his ministry.
 - Sent Epaphroditus to aid Paul in this ministry in whatever way he could
- Urged to have greater love for one another
- Urged to have humility in Christ
- Urged to grow in Faith
- The letter to the Philippians is often spoken of as a letter of Joy. Joy in Christ.

Read verses 1-2

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: ²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. How does Paul stress the unity of faith between himself and Timothy? Why do you think he doesn't have to say anymore?
2. Why doesn't Paul say anything about himself or his ministry as he had in Corinthians and Galatians?
3. We often talk about saints as those who die in faith. Paul uses a different definition for saints in this chapter. What is Paul's definition for saints?
4. Do we fit into that definition?
5. What is the best part of the introduction? (As we have looked at before)
6. How is this a good way to start the letter?

Read verses 3-11

³I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

⁷It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. ⁸God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

⁹And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

6. How had the congregation in Philippi shown itself faithful?

7. How could this partnership have been a blessing to Paul, even in his more difficult times?

8. Why are the Philippians always in the heart of Paul? What bond do they have?

9. What type of partnership should we have with our pastor, circuit, district and synod?

10. What are some practical ways we can show that blessed partnership?

Read verses 12-18

¹²Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. ¹³As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

¹⁵It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸But what does it matter?

9. This is an amazing case of God working good from what seems bad.
 - ✓ What had happened to Paul that was bad?

 - ✓ What was the immediate good that happened close to Paul?

 - ✓ What good did it do for the rest of the brothers in the Lord?

10. Unfortunately, what is often our reaction when something negative happens in our life?
11. What were the two motivations for preaching the Gospel?
12. Is Paul talking about false teachers here? If he is not, what actions is he talking about?
13. How can we sound like Paul even if we know, or have the impression, that some are pastors for the wrong reasons?
14. How can personal ambition make its way into a congregation?

Read verses 18b-26

The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. ²⁰I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²²If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

15. This section contains a statement that should be on our lips and hearts, it should be written on our doors and taught to our children. What is that verse that should be one of our Christian motto?
16. How does Paul, rightly look ahead to his death?
17. How does he put his hope for death into the proper prospective?
18. How does Paul show his submission to his Lord?

Read verses 27-30

²⁷Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel ²⁸without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. ²⁹For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

19. What direction does Paul give for Christian living?

20. How did he support this statement in the previous verses?

21. Verse 29 talks about Christ and suffering in a unique way. How does Paul put the words together in a unique way?

22. How should we look at our sufferings for Christ?

23. Throughout all of this are Paul's words exclusive of his ministry and his apostleship alone, or are they inclusive of all that Christ has asked his people to do to spread his Word?