

PHILIPPIANS

Rejoice In
The Lord!

Introduction- The Letter To The Church at Philippi

Lesson One

Philippians

Rejoice In The Lord!

Lesson Goal: To give a brief introduction to the epistle and a basis for the study.

Scriptures: Philippians 1:1, 2; Acts 16:6-40

For Memory: “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
Philippians 1:2

Greetings to the Church at Philippi

The church at Philippi was started by the Apostle Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke. Paul had a dream in which a man called out to him, “Come over into Macedonia and help us.” (Acts 16:9) He accepted that as direction from God’s Spirit and went immediately to that country. The first place they stopped to do missionary work was the city of Philippi. Philippi was an official city, a “Roman Colony,” in the Roman empire with special privileges. It was a place where Roman soldiers retired.

We have no indication that Paul thought that the man in his dream was from Philippi. The Bible only says that he was Macedonian which is the name of the region in which Philippi was located. Paul probably chose that city because it was an important city and on the great highway that led directly to Rome, the capitol of the Roman Empire. Most of those who traveled from the east to Rome by land came through Philippi. So, starting a church there would provide a Christian witness to any who came by.

His visit was brief, cut short by some angry business men and ill informed city judges. Paul and Silas were put into prison, but miraculously set free by God. Though the visit was brief, they managed to begin a church that thrived. First they won, to Christ as Savior, Lydia. (Acts 16:16) She was a business woman who sold purple fabric, one of the most expensive items in the world at that time. Then, when God broke the jail apart with an earthquake, they won, to Christ as Savior, the warden of the prison where they were being held. (Acts 16:16-18)

After they were out of prison, they met with all those whom they had won, to Christ as Savior, to encourage them and to assure them of God’s continued presence with them. Then they went on to Thessalonica. We are told in Acts, chapter twenty, that Paul visited Philippi another time for a few days. As far as the Bible record is concerned, those are the only times Paul was in Philippi. The church there was a strong one and on several occasions they sent financial help to Paul (II Corinthians 11:9) for which he thanked them in Philippians 4:15, 16. They also sent an offering to give relief to the poor in Jerusalem. (II Corinthians 8)

Paul wrote this letter from Rome where he was being held prisoner. It was more than 10 years after his first visit to Philippi. It is a very personal letter. Some of Paul’s letters are formal and very organized. I and II Corinthians and Romans are two examples. However, this letter is a simple letter of thanks and encouragement.

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Paul was very close to the church at Philippi, as we will see later in our study. He loved them, and there seems to be a very special friendship with this church. Maybe more so than with the other churches he started and had relationships with across Asia.

Very likely the Philippians heard about Paul's imprisonment in Rome and decided to make contact with him. They raised some money, and sent Epaphroditus (E-paf-row-DI-tus) to Rome with that gift and some questions.

Paul had been in the Roman prison for about a year when Epaphroditus arrived, and he was touched by the kindness of the Philippians. He was also very concerned to hear that all was not well with the church there.

Paul responded with this letter which contains thanksgiving and encouragement to remain joyful, be humble, sacrifice when needed, live like Christ, and stay united as one fellowship. He began the letter, as he did all his letters, with a prayer for grace and peace from God. Grace is inner beauty and it is also giving that is not deserved. It is perfectly demonstrated in the life and death of Jesus.

We will enjoy studying this letter from Paul. It has many wonderful things to tell us. As we shall see next time, it is all about joy...the joy that Christians experience in Jesus.

*Underlined statements in this Teacher's Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher's Guide.



Teaching Tips:

1. In preparation for this lesson, it will be well for the teacher to be familiar with the story of Paul's first trip to Philippi and what happened there. This is found in Acts 16.
2. Songs that emphasize missions, God's power, and Christian fellowship will be appropriate.
3. Pray with your students for God to bless missionaries who help establish churches like the one at Philippi.
4. Be careful not to get too involved with the story of Paul's time in Philippi. It is a great story, but not the theme of the lesson today.
5. The words grace and peace are not given in-depth treatment here. You might want to spend additional time with those very important words that Paul used to begin every one of his letters.

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For Memory: "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."
Philippians 1:2

Greetings to the Church at Philippi

=The church at Philippi was started by the Apostle Paul, Silas, _____, and _____.

=Paul probably chose that city because it was an important city and on the _____
that led directly to _____, the capitol of the Roman Empire.

=Paul and Silas were put into _____, but miraculously set free by _____.

=The church there was a _____ one and on several occasions they sent _____
help to Paul (II Corinthians 11:7) for which he _____ them in Philippians 4:15, 16

=Paul wrote this letter from _____ where he was being held _____.

=The Philippians heard about Paul's imprisonment in _____, raised some money, and
sent Epaphroditus to Rome with that gift and some _____.

=Paul had been in the Roman _____ for about a year when Epaphroditus arrived, and he
was touched by the _____ of the Philippians. He was also very _____ to
hear that all was not well with the church there

=Paul responded with this letter which contains _____ and encouragement to
remain joyful, be _____, sacrifice when needed, live like _____, and stay united as
_____ fellowship.

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that there is a God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.

Fifth, believe that He has answered your prayer and be ready to live for him all the rest of your life.