

23T17c Reflections Philippians
(Written by Dr. Kip Wehrman 07/20/2023)

Hello everyone. My name is Kip. Welcome to the PUNLA Coffee Table. Today, we are going to do something a little different. I recently read several of the letters from the Apostle Paul from start to finish in a single setting. These are not long letters, maybe 15 minutes to read each. Today, I want to look at the letter to the Philippians.

Let's pray.

Philippians Summary and Reflection

Context

The author is thought to be the Apostle Paul with Timothy. The audience is the church in the city of Philippi. Philippi was a major city in Macedonia named after the father of Alexander the Great. Paul planted this church during his second missionary journey along with Timothy and Silas (49-52AD). Most historians believe the letter was written between AD61-63 while Paul was in prison in Rome. This is one of the so called prison epistles.

Summary

General outline,

- Introduction (Philippians 1:1-11)
- Paul's Reflections from Prison (Philippians 1:12-30)
- Encouragement to Humble Service (Philippians 2:1-30)
- False Teaching (Philippians 3:1-21)
- Concluding Remarks (Philippians 4:1-23)

This letter is clearly written by both Paul and Timothy (v. 1). After Paul's customary greeting, thanksgiving and prayer, Paul shares his joy that his imprisonment has resulted in many believers among his guards. Paul mentioned that there are those who preach out of jealousy and rivalry with him. Paul says, if Christ is preached then he does not care about their motivations. Despite our situations we all should live as the citizens of heaven that we are.

Paul's focus for the second part of this letter was to live with the proper attitude following the example of Christ. Paul says, don't be selfish but instead be humble. We need to work hard to show the results of our salvation by the way we live. Paul then tells them he plans to send Timothy and Epaphroditus to them. Epaphroditus was from Philippi and was very ill but has since recovered due to God's mercy.

Paul's focus for the third part of this letter was to show the value of knowing Christ and the importance of living the way Christ wants for our lives. Paul addresses false teaching probably Judaizer. Paul makes the statement that he is a Jew among Jew but now consider it all nothing compared to his relationship with his Lord Jesus. Paul also shares his anguish for the believers who have turned away from Christ.

Paul's focus for the fourth part of this letter was to encourage the Philippians. He addresses a conflict in the church between Euodia and Syntyche. Paul ends his letter by thanking the church for their financial support. After this Paul closes his letter in his customary way with greetings and closing remarks.

Reflections

After several times reading through this letter in many translations, NLT, KJV, NIV, NET, ESV, and AMP, I was moved by the depth of the emotion Paul was showing for the Philippians. Philippians 1:8 (NLT), *"God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus."*

Philippians 2:3-4 (NLT), *"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too."* This advice from Paul is profoundly contrary to the culture today as well as the culture of his day. The fact that this applies equally today, shows us this is a universal truth of Scripture. Most people are selfish and only worried about their own interests. But followers of Christ are called to be different and show that difference in their lives. We can show this difference by thinking of others as better than yourself. But, how many of us actually do this? Our example is Jesus. He did. When we sacrifice our time, energy, and money for others with no expectation of anything in return, then we demonstrate this universal principle. The world can see we are different by the fruit of our actions.

Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT), *"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."* This is perhaps my favorite Scripture, don't worry instead pray, then experience the peace of God which is far beyond any understanding. Jesus told us that worry cannot add a moment to our lives, so why waste our time with things that we cannot change. Turn our fear and hurt over to Jesus. Truly surrender our lives to the only one who can actually change our situation. Trust Jesus with the outcome, then sleep like a baby. When we truly trust that whatever Jesus does with our life is the best for us, then we can sleep like a baby with no cares for the world.

Philippians 4:11-13 (NLT), *"Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength."* I truly appreciate Paul's thoughts here. Paul is not saying he did not want more. Paul probably did not like being hungry or cold, but despite his circumstances he could be content. Content does not mean, he did not work to find better. This contentment is when we allow Jesus to be in control. Jesus will provide what we need, when we need it. Not when we want it. Contentment is not very common in our world today. Paul's example here and the many others in Scriptures remind us that contentment is a choice. Our situation does not define us. How we deal with the

situations in our lives defines us. If we follow Jesus and trust Jesus, then no matter what we are facing we can have peace (or contentment). I am thankful for the peace that surpasses all understanding and how it molds my attitudes and actions.

Let's Pray.

Let me leave you with this today. If you have never read Philippians in one setting please do and see if you can see what I was reflecting on. I'm sure you will see other things as well. Reading large sections and full books of the Bible in one setting is an amazing way to immerse yourself in the story. These letters would have been read to a church. Remember to do your homework and understand the context before you begin. The extra work will be worth it.

Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA CoffeeTable. If you liked the message, please share a link with a friend. You can contact me at kip@punla.org if you have comments or questions. So, until next time @ the PUNLA CoffeeTable. God bless.