

The Letter to the Philippians – Lesson 3 Philippians 1:22-2:4

The apostle Paul is writing this letter from a place of confinement. He is under arrest in Rome, awaiting trial, and he is chained night and day to a Roman guard. In your study of this letter thus far, you have noticed that Paul's attitude is joyful even though he faces a very real possibility of imminent death.

- 1. Read Philippians 1:22-26. Paul anticipates his future.
  - a. Paul is convinced that he will be living on for a while. What is his view of the purpose of his continuing to live? (Phil. 1:22)
  - b. What does Paul anticipate for his future connection with the believers at Philippi? (Phil. 1:25-26)
  - c. What does Paul mean by their *"progress in the faith?"* in (1:25)? Refer to Colossians 1:9-12 for a fuller explanation of the concept.

d. *For personal reflection:* What do you expect to see in your own life as you make progress in the faith?

- 2. Read Philippians 1:27-30 Paul challenges the Philippian believers.
  - a. Paul considered the believers at Philippi to be his partners in the work of advancing the gospel. What conduct does Paul expect of the Philippian believers? (1:27)
  - b. In your own words, state what is meant by "the gospel." References that may help you are John 3:16, Romans 5:8, and Romans 1:16-17.

c. **For personal reflection:** What are the implications for <u>us</u> of Paul's exhortation to "stand firm in one spirit, with one mind contending for the faith of the gospel?" What would that look like in our lives? How might this affect how we respond to relatives, friends, or neighbors who are skeptics?

d. Sometimes we mistakenly think that if our lives are pleasing to God, then we will have success and honor and an easy life. How do the examples of the early church, of Paul, and of Jesus contradict that perspective? What are we to understand about conflict and suffering from verses 27-30?

- 3. Read Philippians 2:1-4 The key to harmony is humility.
  - a. Paul lists several benefits of their Christian faith. What are these benefits?
  - b. Throughout the letter to the Philippians, Paul expressed his concern about the need for unity within the community of faith. Refer to Colossians 3:12-14 and describe what attitudes will foster the unity Paul hopes to see.
  - c. Philippians 2:3 challenges us to reject self-focused ambition as a primary motivator, and to cultivate humility instead. How would you explain what is meant by *humility*? See Galatians 5:13-15 and Romans 12:9-13.

d. **For personal reflection:** What specific things would be different in your life if you began to move toward this goal of looking more toward the interests of others? How would it expand and improve your relationships? Take a moment to pray and ask God to build in you a heart of gentleness, patience, and humility.