Philippians 1

Introduction
-The city of Philippi was founded in 356 B.C. by Philip of Macedon (father of Alexander the Great, about 10 miles inland from Neapolis
-42 B.C. – A famous battle was fought there: Augustus and Anthony vs. Brutus and Cassius (latter lost)
-The city was on the Egnatian Way (a major Roman road)
-Roman fort there – Why would Rome want a fort there? To protect Rome from the east (Persians and Parthians)
-Philippi was primarily a military city (not a commercial center very much)

Do we have a record of the establishment of the Lord's church there? Yes: Acts 16
-Read Acts 16.9-40
-Who were converted? Lydia and her household (v 15)
-Next event? The casting out of the evil spirit of the slave girl (Acts 16.16-24)
-Result? Paul and Silas were arrested and beaten with rods (v 22) and put into prison
-Acts 16.38 – the Roman officials were afraid when they found out that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens
-Why were the Roman officials afraid? There had been a public beating of Paul without a trial
-A very dramatic beginning for the church there
-Acts 16.31 – When does the Bible say that the jailer was saved? V 34 – After he had been baptized
-Read 2 Cor. 8.1-2 – The churches of Macedonia were complimented for their generosity in giving

Letter to church at Philippi
-The most personal of Paul's letters
-Not a debate, no warnings, very cheerful and optimistic
-Background: Paul was in prison (1.7)
-The "prison epistles"? Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon
-He was writing the church at Philippi to thank them for their help in supporting him in prison and in his mission work

Philippians 1.1-2
V 1 – How did Paul usually identify himself in the salutation to his letters? Apostle
-Why did he not do that here? There was no question about his apostleship by the Philippians, but a question at Corinth
-Timothy – the letter was probably dictated to him
-Who were the "saints"? All faithful Christians at Philippi
-The practice of calling someone "Saint" is not found in the Scriptures – we are all saints (set apart for holy service)
-Who else did Paul address in the introduction? The overseers (bishops) and deacons
-What are the six titles given to elders in the New Testament? Bishops, presbyters, overseers (Acts 20.28), elders, pastors, shepherds
V.2 – Grace and peace (for Gentiles and Jews)

**Philippians 1.3-11**

V.3 – If we had been Paul, what would we have remembered about Philippi? The beatings and being put into prison, etc.
- What did Paul remember? The Christians at Philippi

V.4 – When Paul prayed for the church at Philippi, what kind of prayer was it? One of joy

V.5 – Why? Their contribution to his work *(from the beginning)*
- They had a great love for mission work
- Their *"participation"*? More than just money, but prayers, concerns, physical help
- They didn't just sent the money once a month and leave it at that, but they sent their prayers and their concerns

V.6 – Antecedent to *"He who began a good work"*? God and Christ
- Paul did not take credit for the establishment of the church at Philippi

V.7 – How were the members at Philippi partakers with Paul? Suffering with him (their empathy)

V.8 – Paul could not even express his love for them, but *"God knows"*

V.9 – What did Paul pray they would have? Real knowledge and discernment (wisdom)

V.10 – Why the need for real knowledge? To know right from wrong

V.11 – They had the fruit of righteousness
- Summary: Paul had deep gratitude for the church at Philippi
- Similar to the words of Christ to the church at Philadelphia in Rev. 3.7-13 – very positive
- How did the church at Philippi compare with the church at Corinth? …the church at Laodicea? (thought questions)

**Philippians 1.12-20**

V.12 – Reminiscent of other Scriptures?
- Read Gen. 50.20-21 – Joseph and his brothers
- Read Esther 4.14 – Who knows…?
- Read Acts 28.30-31
- Read Romans 8.28 – All things work together for good….

V.13 – What had been the result of Paul's imprisonment? The guards had heard the gospel that Paul preached
-There were about 9000 Roman soldiers stationed at Rome at that time
-See Phil. 4.22 – some had been converted

V 14 – Another good result? More courage among "most of the brethren"
-Why? See v 15

V 15 – Do we have some today who preach from envy and strife? See 2 Cor. 11.13-15 – We will always have such people
-Factious, jealous, "partisan," ignoble purposes

V 16 – What was Paul's attitude toward evangelism? He made a defense of the gospel
-Significance? He never backed down
-Examples of where he would not back down? Mars Hill (Acts 17.22ff), before Agrippa (Acts 26), Festus, Felix, Peter (Galatians 2)
-Paul did not soften the message to impress people
-Read Acts 24.24-25 (before Felix)
-With Paul, there was no backing down concerning the gospel
-He did not present lessons on how to deal with stress, and he did not need a 10 piece rock band to entertain the audience

V 17 – The wrong motives in preaching the gospel

V 18 – One good thing about those who preached the gospel with wrong motives? At least the gospel was being preached

V 19 – What two things did Paul need? Their prayers and the Spirit of Jesus Christ
-Was Paul in his first imprisonment or his second? It appears to be his first, at the end of the Fourth Missionary Journey – See Phil. 1.25

V 20 – Paul's ultimate goal? To exalt Christ with boldness

Philippians 1.21-26

V 21 – What did "living" mean to Paul? Christ…
-His view of death? A new and better experience (see 2 Cor. 5.6-8)
-Why is death a gain? Going home (or graduating)

V 22 – Advantage of living on in the flesh? More work for Christ

V 23 – What two goals were pulling at Paul? To live on or to go home
-Most of us wouldn't have any trouble with the question
-We are in love with this life and all of its trinkets and gadgets and pleasures
-Whenever the latest electronic gadget comes out, Paul would not have said, Oh, I have to have one of those....
-Paul: If choosing based on his own pleasure, he would choose to go home with Christ
**V 24** – Which would be better for the Philippian church? His living on in this life

**V 25** – Why did Paul know he would continue living (and not be executed)? Because that was best for the church at Philippi, and God always works things out the best for his children

**V 26** – Paul believed he would see the Philippians again
- Why were the Philippians proud of Paul? His courage

**Philippians 1.27-30**

**V 27** – But whatever happened, what were Paul's instructions? Live faithful lives
- Why? So Paul would hear of their faithful lives
- Specifically what did Paul want to hear about the church at Philippi?
  1. That they are standing firm (for sound doctrine)
  2. United in one mind
  3. Striving together (not against each other)
- Notice the emphasis on unity
- Disunity is a terrible witness to the world

**V 28** – Was the Philippian church then undergoing persecution? Apparently so - "your opponents"
- Who would have been their opponents? Pagans, those making money from the heathens
- Why was Paul thrown into prison in Philippi in the first place? For casting the demon out of slave girl and causing the businessmen to lose money on her – See Acts 16.16-18
- The persecutors were powerless to crush the church - it just meant their own destruction

**V 29** – Two great privileges of the church at Philippi? To believe in Christ and to suffer (granted to them = a gift)
- How different we view persecution today!
- Many times in our public prayers, we thank God that we are not being persecuted, but for Paul, it was a great privilege
- Read Matt. 5.11-12
- Read Acts 5.40-41
- Read 1 Peter 3.14

**V 30** – Probable a reference to Acts 16 and the persecution at Philippi

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Philippians 2

Philippians 2.1-4

V.1 – Rhetorical questions - Is there any doubt in the use of "if"? No – a very forceful way to write (the "If-Then" argument in public speaking and debating)
-Any encouragement in Christ? Of course; how could we live without Christ?
-Any fellowship of the Holy Spirit? Romans 8 – if we don't have the Spirit, we do not have Christ
-Any consolation of love? Yes
-Any affection and compassion? Yes
-This is like the Declaration of Independence: We hold these truth to be self-evident....

V.2 – Notice: If all these statements are true…? Then the church is to be united
-Did Paul believe in "unity-in-diversity"? No
-Did Paul believe in the ecumenical movement and the United Church of Christ? No
-Which congregation was divided into four groups? The church at Corinth
-What made Paul happiest? To see a church that was united
-In other letters Paul begged churches to be united (1 Cor. 1, Rom. 14, Colossians 2.20-22)

V.3 – What attitudes are we not to have? Selfishness and conceit
-There is no indication that the church at Philippi had these problems
-Why then was Paul writing this to them? To prevent such problems from developing
-The proper attitude to have? Esteem each other more highly than ourselves

V.4 – Another attitude? Watch for the needs of others

Philippians 2.5-11

V.5 – Who is our example in all this? Jesus

V.6 – Was Christ God…? See John 1.1-2 (there is a serious problem with the Jehovah Witnesses' translation)
-Luke 18.18-19 – only God is good
-*grasped* = NASB footnote: utilized, asserted
-V 6 – Jesus' humility prevented any bragging that he was God
-The title Jesus preferred? Son of Man

V.7 – Christ "emptied himself" = set aside the glorious characteristics of the Godhead
-What form did Jesus assume? That of a human being (man)
-Why did he take on human form? Heb. 4.15 – to be tempted as we are

V.8 – The extent of his humility? His death on the cross
-Other forms of humility? Birth in a stable, step-son a carpenter, 12 lowly men as apostles
-What act of humility did Jesus do shortly before his crucifixion? John 13.5-20 – washing feet of the apostles
V 9 – What did God the Father do? Exalted Jesus and gave him a glorious name: Jesus Christ

V 10 – Who should bow to Jesus? All beings
-Will atheists someday bow the knee to Jesus? Yes

V 11 – All tongues will confess Jesus as Lord at the end of the world
-It is going to be easier to do it now than to wait until then

Philippians 2.12-18

V 12 – Why was Paul so proud of the church at Philippi? They had always obeyed God (whether or not he was present made no difference)
"When the cat's away, the mice will play" did not apply to the church at Philippi
-Which congregations deteriorated so badly when Paul left? Corinth and Galatians
-Congregations are not static – they are always changing
-Example: the church at Ephesus (Acts 20), compare with Ephesus in Rev. 2.1-7 (had lost their first love about 35 years later), the church at Colossae fell to Gnosticism
-What does it mean to work out our own salvation? Individual problems must be worked out
-What denominational doctrines are refuted by v 12? Mormons and the baptism for the dead - impossible according to this verse (also refutes purgatory and predestination)

V 13 – When a father leaves directions for his son and his son follows them, it is the father working through his son
-God works through us when we obey him

V 14 – Do we ever grumble today? Many times
-Paul set the example in not grumbling about what happened to him at Philippi

V 15 – What does our lack of grumbling show? That we are the church of God
-Is our generation "crooked and perverse"? (thought question)
-As we live faithful lives, how does the world see us? As lights
-On the job with evil people, they will start coming to us for advice, etc., because we are Christians - there is less bad language and better behavior when we are present

V 16 – Secret: holding to the word of life
-Why was Paul hoping the church at Philippi would remain faithful? So that his work would not be in vain

V 17 – Paul's attitude toward execution? He was not afraid, if the Philippians remained faithful

V 18 – What did Paul urge the Philippian Christians to do? To have his joy and outlook
Philippians 2.19-30 – His two co-workers in Rome: Timothy and Epaphroditus

V 19-20 – Did the church at Philippi know Timothy? Yes (on the Second Missionary Journey)
-According to v 19-20, why was Timothy being sent to Philippi? To get news to send to Paul for encouragement and to build up the church at Philippi.

V 21 – Describe some of the preachers in Rome? Self-centered – See 2 Tim. 4.16

V 22 – Why would Timothy look upon PL as his father? Paul baptized him, Timothy's father was not mentioned as a Christian, so he had very close ties with Paul.
-Does v 22 mean that we can call a preacher by the title "Father"? – Read Matt. 23.9

V 23 – Paul was awaiting the outcome of his trial
-If he was sentenced to death, there would be no need for Timothy to return.

V 24 – Paul's belief about the outcome of his trial? To be acquitted (declared innocent)
-Acts 26.32 – Agrippa had already said he should be released (a very weak case).

V 25 – Epaphroditus – a brother from the church at Philippi.
-Why had he been sent to Paul? To take the contribution from the church at Philippi and to assist Paul – See Philippians 4.18.
-How did Paul describe Epaphroditus? …my brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier, your messenger, a minister to my need.

V 26 – What had the Philippians heard? That Epaphroditus was sick.
-How could they have heard this? Via the Egnatian Way (Christians from Rome stopping at Philippi).

V 27 – Was he sick? Yes, he almost died.
-Expression "sorrow upon sorrow"? Paul was in prison and was deeply concerned about Epaphroditus.

V 28 – Epaphroditus was on the way back to Philippi.

V 28-30 – Almost a letter of recommendation (praise for Epaphroditus)
-Notice the close ties that held the First Century Christians together
-Nothing holds people together as much as our faith in Christ.

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Philippians 3

Philippians 3.1-11

V 1 – Other references to joy and rejoicing in Philippians: 1.4, 1.25, 2.18 (2 times), 4.4 (about 14 references to joy in this book)
-Why did he go over this material again? A safeguard (we need to be reminded of things)

V 2 – The danger lurking for church at Philippi? Dogs
-Real dogs? No, symbolic for people without morals
-Dogs were dangerous in the First Century (like "dingoes" in Australia today)
-Two Greek words for dog: family pet and wild animal (Paul used the second word here)
-Nature of false teachers? Jewish converts who were still clinging to the Old Testament
-Did other congregations face this problem? Yes, the church at Antioch (Acts 15)
-Remember the letter from Jerusalem: to abstain from blood, things strangled, fornication, food offered to idols (the answer to the Judaizing teachers at Antioch)
-Also the churches of Galatia (a severe problem) and the congregations in the book of Hebrews, and the church at Colossae

V 3 – Who are the true "Jews" today? Christians
-What makes us "Jews"? Not outward circumcision, but worshiping God and Jesus Christ
-Explain: "putting no confidence in the flesh": The Jews claimed salvation based on the outward act of circumcision

V 4 – Did Paul know how Jews thought? Yes…
-In other words, Paul was saying, "I know where they are coming from…"

V 5-6 – What could Paul boast about as a Jew? (7)
1. Circumcised on the eighth day
2. From the nation of Israel (not a Gentile)
3. Tribe of Benjamin (along with King Saul)
-Why was this special? It was a very small tribe, almost wiped out in Judges 20-21; there were only 600 men left in Benjamin (Judges 20.47)
-A special provision had to be made to find wives for them
4. Hebrew of Hebrews (as Jewish as you could get)
5. A Pharisee (according to the Old Law) – better than being a Sadducee
7. Found blameless (no charges against him)
-Remember the country song: "It is hard to be humble when you are perfect in every way"
-In other words, Paul was perfect in the Jewish way of thinking
-Paul: "Look, if you want to talk about being a Jew, let me tell you about myself"

V 7 – What did Paul lose when he obeyed the gospel? Everything
-List? Respect of fellow Jews, position of a rabbi, honor, and status, everything a Jews holds dear (especially the Pharisees)
-He was now considered a traitor and a disgrace, according to his former friends and fellow...
scholars

V.8 – How can we read v. 8 and not be affected?  (thought question)
  -What power!  "count" = Paul had thought about it
  -How did Paul describe these things in comparison to knowing Christ?  Rubbish
  -Two possibilities: either Paul was crazy (a madman), or he had made the greatest bargain in human existence
  -Problem with some Christians: they want to hold onto both worlds
  -What did it mean to Paul to gain Christ?  Everything in his life

V.9 – Upon what was his righteousness now based?  Not the Old Testament law, but on faith in Christ

V.10 – How did Paul know Christ?  He knew the power of the resurrection and his sufferings
  -"Conformed to his death"?  = baptism (Romans 6.5-6)

V.11 – Paul's goal?  The resurrection of the dead
  -The intensity of Paul is missing with some Christians today
  With some, it is a Sunday morning only religion – just one hour a week, with no other commitment

Philippians 3.12-16

V.12 – Was Paul perfect (sinless) yet?  No
  -His goal?  To try to keep getting better
  -"It" = perfect faith and grace, etc.
  -When did Christ lay hold of Paul?  On the road to Damascus

V.13 – Should we worry about our past mistakes?  No, Paul had no desire to look backward
  -What did Paul have to forget?  The persecution of the church and the death of Stephen
  -Read 1 Timothy 1.12-15
  -See 2 TM 4.6-8 – His goal?  The crown of righteousness
  -Paul's "modus operandi"?  Reaching forward

V.14 – He was seeking the prize
  -His one supreme goal in life: eternal life
  -Remember what our Lord said: He who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom (Luke 9.62)

V.15 – Perfect = mature (RSV, NIV, NAS footnote: mature) – Matt. 5.48

V.16 – Encouragement to keep striving, not to fall away

Philippians 3.17-21
**V 17** – **What example?** Having one goal in life
- The importance of influence is seen here
- The Philippians were to follow Paul's example

**V 18** – A lot of people "walk," but "living" and being a Christian are two different things
- **What does it mean just to "walk"?** It refers to enemies of the cross

**V 19** – **How do such people live?** Their end is destruction, and their god is their belly (KJV)
- Their "glory" is shameful, and their minds are set on earthly things
- In some cases, their only goal in life is to get the autograph of some famous person or to find a certain baseball card, etc.

**V 20** – **Where is our citizenship?** In heaven
- **In what sense do we hold American citizenship?** By our place of birth (for most of us)
- But our heavenly citizenship is far greater
- **When had Paul relied on his Roman citizenship?** At Philippi when he was about to be beaten

**V 21** – **How does Paul describe our bodies?** Humble
- **What will happen to these "humble" bodies?** 1 Cor. 15.42-53 – they will be changed

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Philippians 4

[See Acts 28.30-31 – in custody in Rome]

Philippians 4.1-3

V.1 – "Therefore" – Based on what? Phil. 3 - the ultimate goal of salvation (3.20 – our citizenship being in heaven)
-Terms of endearment Paul had toward Philippians? Beloved, brethren, joy, crown, beloved (twice)
-How was this church his "crown"? Probably the best congregation he had established

The church at Philippi had not given Paul any trouble (think about the church at Corinth and the churches in Galatia)
-But he didn't have to worry about the church at Philippi
-Notice Paul's deep affection in this verse
-Probably the worst thing about being in prison was that Paul was not able to visit the church at Philippi
-No other letter of Paul is like this one in expressions of love for the people
"Stand firm" = Paul's example in Acts (see Phil. 1.16) = he never backed down from preaching what people needed to hear

V.2 – Where in the letter had Paul urged them to be united? Phil. 2.1-4
-What had happened between Euodia and Syntyche? Some kind of argument (not doctrinal)
-Why didn’t Paul go into details or take sides? It probably was not important, and maybe the two women could not even remember
-What did Paul urge for these two women? To live together in harmony
-Had Paul had his arguments? Yes, with Barnabas (Acts 15.36-41) over John Mark
-but see: 2 Tim. 4.11 and Col. 4.10

Lesson: We are going to have disagreements even in the best of times in the best of congregations
-Strong-willed people are going to disagree, but only strong-willed people can keep the church from falling apart and disbanding (or getting taken over by false teachers)
-Solution: Learn to live in harmony
-Can two Christians take each other to court? No, 1 Cor. 6.1-5

V.3 – Much discussion over the identity of the "true comrade"
-Maybe one of the elders, maybe the preacher, maybe someone who received the letter and read it to the congregation
-What do we learn about Euodia and Syntyche? Helpers of the apostle Paul
-How could they have helped? Financially, maybe in working with the women of the congregation (older women are to teach the younger ones)
-So they were both good, faithful Christian women
-How were the Christians at Philippi to help Euodia and Syntyche? To help them to get along together better

V.3b - They all helped spread the gospel: my fellow workers
-In some congregations, the load is placed on a few people
-No one will remember our names in a hundred years
-But let us hope that faithful Christians will take our places when we depart
-They will say: There were faithful Christians in the opening decades of the Twenty-first Century
-Our goal? To have our names in the Lamb's book of life – Read Rev. 20.11-15

Philippians 4.4-7

V.4 – We as Christians are to be happy people
-What parts of the Christian life lead the way to happiness? Examples? No drunkenness, drugs, smoking, adultery, gambling (debts), divorce, suicide, etc.

V.5 – V 4 – theoretical, V 5 – practical
-KJV: moderation, RSV: forbearance, NIV and NASB: gentleness
-What attitude are we to have in the church? Not to insist on getting our own way, being more willing to suffer for the sake of peace
-Why has this attitude? Lord is near and will take care of us

V.6 – Anxiety vs. concern? Difference?
-We are not to worry to a harmful extent
-Example: If hungry, we are to work for food
-If out of work, we are to search for a job, but worry is forbidden – Read Matt. 6.25-34
-When we have needs, what are we to do? Make our requests known to God
-Those who say that the Holy Spirit only operates through the Word (Bible) today need to think about this verse
-Why make requests to God if he only works through his Word?
-We all have copies of the Bible
-This writer was at a lectureship several years when the speaker was adamantly saying that God only operates through the Word today
-But at the end of his lesson, an announcement was made about a little girl in the congregation who had suddenly taken very ill and was on the way to the hospital
-Everyone was urged to pray for the little girl
-But why? If the Spirit only operates through the Word, why not just hand her a copy of the Bible and tell her to read it?
-When we make requests, what else are we to do? Offer thanksgiving to God

V.7 – As we mature as Christians, what will happen? Greater and greater inner peace
-See John 14.27
-A deep peace begins to develop in our lives

Philippians 4.8-9

V 8-9 – Six things that we are to think about
V 8 – 1. True = the truth of the matter
There are several very dangerous false doctrines attacking the Lord's church today, and our first job is to find out the truth (what the Bible says about these doctrines).

2. **Honorable** = avoiding appearance of evil

Some things are technically not sinful, but leave the wrong impressions and bring dishonor to the Lord's church.

3. **Right** (KJV: *just*, RSV: *just*, fair = being fair with other people)

4. **Pure** = indicates moral purity and self-control

5. **Lovely** = dignified – *What kind of person is a "lovely person"?*

6. **Good repute** = spoken well of by other Christians

"*We are what we think*

**V 9 – How did Paul teach?** Precept and example (his third time to say something like this)

-Note: "*Practice these things*" – we have to work at it

### Philippians 4.10-23

**V 10** – The real purpose of this letter: to thank them for their financial support of him in Rome

- **The story?** The church had sent him aid and had to stop for period of time
- They were now sending help again
- **Had they ever lost concern for Paul?** No

**V 11** – **Was Paul starving to death in prison?** No

- **What was the answer to not having everything he wanted?** Not to want so much
- **What had he learned?** To be content with what he had
- A great lesson, especially at Christmas time, but really for all year-long
- **What does American advertising tell us about new products?** They will make us happy

**V 12** – **What two extremes had he had?** Humble means and prosperity (maybe as a tentmaker, maybe before his conversion)

- If time, see the poem "Invictus" by William Henley
- It is an example of the thinking the world (relying on self, rather than on Christ)
- This was the favorite poem of Timothy McVeigh, who blew up the federal building in Oklahoma City, OK, April 19, 1995, and killed 168 people
- But what was the source of Paul's confidence? Jesus Christ
- There are many man-made systems of thought for building up self-confidence: Dale Carnegie (when I was growing up), Transcendental Meditation, assertiveness training, Scientology, etc.
- They may attract many followers, but the real answer is here in *Phil. 4.13*
- Paul could face all circumstances of life through his faith in Jesus

**V 14** – He could bear all things, but he appreciated the help of the Philippian church

- God used the Philippians as a tool to help support the apostle Paul
- Paul didn't want to leave the impression that their support was not welcomed
V 15 – Which congregation had helped Paul when all others had not? Philippi

V 16 – Probably after establishing the church in Philippi on the Second Missionary Journey
-So from its beginning, the church at Philippi had been a mission-minded church

V 17 – Real benefit of doing mission work: it helps the local congregation
-How is a congregation helped by being involved in missions work? (thought question)
-The church at Crystal had has supported dozens of mission works since it became self-supporting in 1980, but has not gone bankrupt yet!

V 18 – Was Paul suffering at this time? No
-Who had brought the gift? Epaphroditus
-Our giving? Like a sacrifice to God (a pleasing aroma)

V 19 – What would God do in return for their giving? Supply all their needs

V 20 – All glory was to be to God
-Amen: this is certain - it is beyond question

V 21-23 – Final words of farewell

V 21 – Final greetings
-We are to greet one another today as Christians

V 22- Where had Paul been doing his personal evangelism? Where he was: among Caesar's guards and household workers
-Old saying in church work: Bloom where you are planted.

V 23 – Farewell

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