

"THE JOY OF FAITH"

UNSHACKLED: JOY BEYOND CIRCUMSTANCES | PASTOR MATT ERICKSON | PHIL. 1:1-26 | JAN. 6/7, 2017

"And I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith." (Philippians 1:25)

The Setting (vss 1-2)

Paul's situation

The Philippian church

Joy in _____ (vss 3-11)

Gratitude overflowing into joyful prayer

Centered in the Gospel partnership

Intercession aimed at love and glory

Joy in _____ (vss 12-18a)

Paul's desire to advance the Gospel within his circumstances

Paul's desire to spark a Gospel movement regardless of motives

Joy in _____ (vss 18b-26)

Facing the trials of life in light of the ultimate end

Enduring the trials of life for the sake of other

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. This weekend we begin a new series, "Unshackled: Joy Beyond Circumstances," from Paul's letter to the Philippians. Begin your study by thanking God for His Word. Ask Him to speak to you through your study of the Scripture. Express to Him your desire to grow in His ways.
2. Background: Philippians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul with Timothy (1:1) to a church in Macedonia during his imprisonment in Rome, somewhere around 60-62. The letter was delivered by Epaphroditus (2:25), a member of the Philippian church, after his recovery from an illness. Paul encourages the believers to continue in their faith regardless of external or internal challenges.
3. Whether on your own or with others, read Philippians 1:1-26 aloud. You may want to highlight, circle or underline key terms that appear more than once.
4. Paul's introductions often display themes of his letters. What do you notice from the first two verses that could be upcoming themes?
5. Verses 3-8 is one long sentence in which Paul expresses his grateful joy toward God for the Philippians. Why is Paul grateful and rejoicing over this local church?
6. In verses 9-11 what is the subject matter of Paul's prayer for the church?
7. How do our prayers compare to Paul's prayers? What is one way that Paul's example may change the way you pray?
8. According to verses 12-18, what are Paul's personal circumstances? What is happening to his captors and through others because of Paul's circumstances?
9. What stands out to you about the Paul's attitude in the midst of his difficulties?
10. In verses 18-26 Paul writes about the impending trial he expects to face. What internal dilemma is Paul facing? What is his resolution (even though he likely is powerless to make a decision as a prisoner)?
11. What is one thing that God is speaking to you through this study? If you are on your own, write it down and pray about it. If you are in a small group, take time to discuss this with one another before praying together.

FURTHER REFLECTION:

Make Philippians more meaningful in your life this week in some way:

- Since it was a letter, read Philippians out loud in one sitting (takes 15 minutes).
- Memorize a verse from Philippians 1. Write it on a notecard or make it your screen background so you will see it regularly.
- Read an introduction to Philippians in a commentary or online, such as:
biblica.com/resources/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-philippians/
esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/introduction-to-philippians/