

PHILIPPIANS

JOY ON THE JOURNEY

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Philippians 1.1-11
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I. Connecting With One Another

What do you remember about your earliest encounter with God? Did you pursue God or did God pursue you? Before continuing, please pray for Good Shepherd to be a community of faith and to be people of truth and grace - discerning without condemning, loving even those who are hard to love, speaking the truth in love, and always willing to humbly point others to Jesus, the Savior.

II. Introduction to this Study

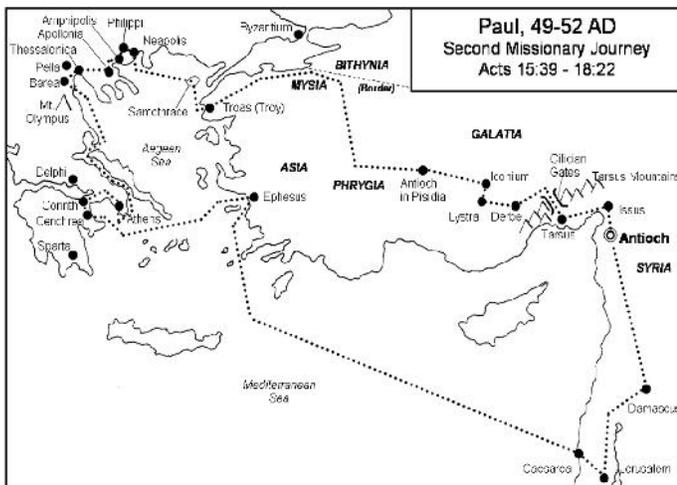
The Apostle Paul is a significant person in the development of the Church. God pursued Paul, encountered him in a powerful way that transformed him from God's enemy to an ardent herald of the good news of Jesus Christ. As we read and study through Paul's letter to the Philippians not only do we see Paul's pastor-like heart, but we see how God pursues us, draws us into relationship, and then continues to enable us to continue our journey of faith... with confidence, with joy, and in the grace of God.

III. Study the Text - Read Acts 9.1-19

- We have to begin with the transforming experience of Saul of Tarsus as he is confronted by the risen Jesus. What do verses 1 through 3 tell you about Saul's fervor for persecuting followers of Jesus? About Paul's disregard (disdain?) for Jesus?
- Verses 4 through 9 tell of the encounter and the immediate result. What do you think Paul thought about during these three days?
- How do verses 10 through 19 paint a picture of conversion - in this case from persecutor to chosen instrument? What is in store for Saul?

IV. Study the Text - Read Acts 16.6-25

- This is the beginning of the second missionary journey Paul undertook. If you were traveling with him, what evidence would have convinced you that you were obeying the will of God? How did God guide them to Philippi according to verses 6 through 12?



- How does God lead them to Lydia (verses 13-15)? What do these two instances suggest about the methods God uses to lead and speak to you and me today?
 - How did Jesus empower Paul and enable him to make this journey, proclaim the gospel, and continue with joy (verse 25) through the threats and difficulties?
 - How does this encourage you as you continue on the journey of faith on which Jesus is leading you?
- ### V. Study the Text - Read Philippians 1.1-11
- How would you have felt if you were among the Philippian Christians the first

time this letter was read?

- b. Notice verses 1 and 2. Paul and Timothy (see Acts 16.1-5 regarding Timothy) address "the saints in Christ Jesus." Take a moment to reflect on the fact you are a "saint", that is, one who is in a relationship with God and being made holy - made like Jesus - by the Holy Spirit.
- c. "Grace and peace to you from God...and the Lord Jesus..." Don't skip over this greeting - it's loaded with significance! This is a brief prayer, a blessing that bids that the grace of God will be with another person or persons. How do you define "grace" as it is used here?

Which of these definitions of "grace" help you?

- 1. God's loving kindness 2. God's Riches At Christ's Expense 3. Unmerited favor
 - 4. An undeserved gift 5. God's good will toward you
- d. What about peace? How readily do you bid others to be free from worry, free from anxiety, and truly being "well in soul" by trusting in God? How vividly do you experience this kind of divine peace?
 - e. How would you describe Paul's feelings toward the Philippians from verses 3 through 8? Why do you think he feels this way about them?
 - f. What causes Paul to be so confident (this term is from the Greek word "pepoitos" that means to be convinced of or to be persuaded about) the Philippians' future (verse 6), after all, they were living in a major Roman city, in a "pagan" culture, and in an atmosphere that did not take kindly to the proclamation of Jesus being "the Lord?" Also, while he is writing, he is in a Roman prison (verse 7).
 - g. Where do you see God continuing this "good or beneficial work" in your life? In Good Shepherd?
 - h. What do verses 3 through 8 reveal about healthy Christian relationships? Have you experienced the kind of partnership Paul describes here?
 - i. What are Paul's prayer requests for the Philippians (Verses 9-11)? Why would each of these qualities be essential to spiritual maturity? How do these things describe the "good work" that God will carry to completion (verse 6)?

VI. Reflect and Respond

- a. Encouragement is the kind of expression that helps someone want to be a more faithful follower of Jesus even when life is rough. How would this part of Paul's letter have encouraged the Philippians? How has it encouraged you?
- b. What can you do through words, prayers, and actions to encourage someone in their faith journey today? You may want to use Paul's prayer as a model and take some time to thank God and pray for someone you love .
- c. In what ways do you see God developing in you the qualities Paul prays for on behalf of the Philippians (verses 9-11)? Do you share Paul's confidence that God will bring those things to completion in your life?