

PHILIPPIANS

Finding Joy in Every Season

A Personal Letter

Philippians 1:1-2 & Acts 16

1. THE SERVANTS

Read Philippians 1:1a

Who is this letter from? “_____ & _____, _____ *of Christ Jesus*”

- What is notable about the way the writers of this letter describe themselves?

2. THE SAINTS

Read Philippians 1:1b

Who is the letter to? “*all the _____ in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi...*”

- This word is drawn from the word “holy” (hagios in the Greek) and refers to being set apart.
- What are we set apart *from*? What are we set apart *for*?
- How is it that these Christians could hold the title of saint? **See the three most important words after ‘saint’ in the text.* How does that little phrase make all the difference in the world?

3. THE SETTING

Read Philippians 1:1b

Philippi, located in modern day Kavála, Greece, was a major city on a commercial road for the Roman Empire. As a Roman colony, its citizens enjoyed special privileges such as strong military protection and exemption from heavy taxes. The city enjoyed its high culture of Roman architecture, Latin education, and fashionable clothing. It’s a city you and I may have wanted to live in.

Even so, this city was not in Paul’s initial plans. Paul’s desire was to continue moving eastward into Asia to see the gospel spread, but the Holy Spirit kept Paul and his companions from going this way. Clearly, God had different plans, and they involved the city of Philippi. Look and see how this happened...

Read Acts 16:6–10

- How did God call Paul & his companions westward toward Philippi in Macedonia?
- Was Europe initially in Paul’s plans? Was it in God’s plans?
- How did the ‘servants of Christ’ respond to God’s leading?

Read Acts 16:11–15

- What was Paul’s initial experience like in Philippi? How did he see God work?

Read Acts 16:16–40

- Why were Paul and Silas attacked, beaten and thrown in prison?
- What was their heart attitude in the cold, dark, prison cell? How is this possible? (see vs. 25)
- What miraculous events happened in the prison cell?

Look back and see the people that made up the Philippian church. This was a diverse community of faith! There were already people of various backgrounds, races & classes united into the church family by the gospel of Christ.

This dramatic beginning produced a tight bond between Paul and the Philippian church. Here we see the importance of the local church. Every believer is to be a functioning part of a church where the Word of God is preached.

BRING IT HOME

1. Given who Christ is, why is it a privilege, rather than oppressive, to be one of his bond servants?
2. A pandemic changes many things, but it can never change your identity in Christ. What could it look like – right now – for you to be a servant of Christ in the following areas:
 - Your Home
 - Your Church
 - Your Neighbourhood or Workplace
3. As a saint, how are you living a set apart life in what you pursue and what you refrain from?
4. When in your life has the Holy Spirit re-directed your plans for His greater purpose?

PRAYER POINTS

- Ask the Lord to grow you as His servant who values His glory, His Kingdom, & His will above all things.
- Thank the Lord that, in Christ, we are called saints. Ask the Lord to help you live a life worthy of this calling.
- Praise the Lord that He is able to open up hearts (like Lydia) to receive the gospel. Pray for Him to open up hearts of unbelievers in your life to the gospel.