Philippians Family Bible Study

As a father with two small kids, I recognize that I have the responsibility to be the spiritual leader of my family. I also recognize that all the theological training in the world does not automatically mean that one becomes a master of teaching children the Bible. I know that the days get busy, and life gets hectic but that does not remove the responsibility to lead our children to the truth of God's Word and to teach them what God has to say. I know that it is also easy to fall into the trap of: "I brought my kids to church this week, it's their responsibility to be the spiritual leader and they can get all they need from Sunday morning." If we want to meet with the God of the Word, we must constantly turn to the Word of God. The purpose of this study is to help families of all ages consistently dive deeper into the Word of God together. Each study will consist of three elements: 1. The verses for the day. (The translation for this study is ESV but feel free to use a different translation if you are more comfortable with it). 2. A short devotion to read together that unpacks what is happening in the verses. 3. Questions to go over as a family. These questions will be divided into 3 different age groups: Elementary, Middle and High School, and adults. Some answers may be provided to help move the discussion along. Each day will only cover a handful of verses and can be finished relatively quickly but don't rush through the conversations that could come. Who knows what the Lord might do as you gather to talk about His Word together?! I pray that this would be beneficial for all that use it, and that Christ would be glorified as families come together to know Him better.

-Pastor Brady Bassett

Day 1- Philippians 1:1-2

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons: **2** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Devotional

Chances are if you were to receive a letter in the mail, you would want to know who it was from. If you were to get a love letter from someone, it would be weird for them to pour out their heart to you if you had no idea who they were. Knowing who it is that sent you the letter makes a huge difference. Depending on how well you know the person who sent the letter you will likely value the letter more than if you don't know the person very well. I know that I am going to love a letter from my wife significantly more than a letter from someone I don't know as well. I'm going to value a letter more from my best friend from college than a letter from the IRS. The church in Philippi (the city where the letter of Philippians is addressed to) loved the Apostle Paul (the author). And Paul loved the church in Philippi as we will see over the next few weeks. Paul shows his love for the church through service. Paul is an apostle which means that he has authority, through Christ, to give commands to the church but Paul does not begin his letter by advertising his apostleship. Instead, he refers to himself and Timothy as servants of Christ Jesus. Paul may have authority in the church, but he does not have ultimate authority. Jesus Christ is the head of the church and every single person in the world is under His authority. It is not Paul or the pastor or the overseers or deacons that turns sinners into saints. That is only through Jesus making our hearts new as we come to Him in faith and when we come to Him in faith, we can have peace with God. It is important for us to remember that the saints of Jesus Christ are not the "Super Christians" that stand above and beyond the "Little Christians". Every Christian is a saint in Christ Jesus.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle and High School Age	Adults
1. Who wrote the letter to the Philippians?- Paul. 2. What city is the Philippian church in?- Philippi 3. What does a servant do? 4. What do you think it means to be a servant of Jesus?	1. Who is the Apostle Paul?- A former Pharisee who became an apostle after Jesus appeared to him in Acts 9. 2. How do we receive peace with God?- Salvation through Jesus Christ. 3. What is a saint?	1. Where in Scripture do we see Paul and Timothy in Philippi? 2. What significant events happened to Paul while he was in Philippi. 3. Do pastors today have the same level of authority that Paul had as an Apostle of Jesus Christ? What is that made someone an Apostle?- Hint: Acts 1:21-22, Acts 10:38-41.

Day 2- Philippians 1:3-6

[3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, [4] always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, [5] because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. [6] And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Devotional

There are some churches that are a chore to pastor and there are some churches that are a joy to pastor. I'm sure that Paul would agree with that statement. There is no doubt that Paul loved every church but based off his letters, it is easy for us to assume that some churches were a little more difficult to pastor than others (I'm looking at you church of Corinth). Paul is writing Philippians while being imprisoned for preaching the Gospel but when you read this letter, Paul certainly doesn't sound like he's in prison. Philippians is a joy-filled letter because Paul has a joy in Christ that cannot be taken away by his circumstances. That's the power of Jesus! Christian joy is eternal joy because Christ is an eternal Savior that gives eternal life! As Paul prays to God, he remembers with joy the work that the Philippians did and were doing for the Gospel. In Acts 16, Paul comes to Philippi for the first time. While in Philippi, Paul and his co-workers in the Gospel meet a woman named Lydia. In Acts 16:14 we see that, "The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul" and her and her household come to faith in Christ. What we see in that verse is the same thing that Paul mentions in Philippians 1:6. God was the One that made Lydia receptive of Paul's message. Everything about our salvation is God initiated or God-driven. If God does not move our hearts, our hearts won't move. Salvation is God beginning, middle, and end. We would never move towards God if God did not first move towards us. Martyn Lloyd-Jones reminds us, "The Bible simply tells us that salvation is altogether and entirely the work of God. It tells us that man in his sinful state is against God, he does not desire God and would never return to God. There would never have been a Church at all, nor would there have been salvation, if God had not begun to act." If God is the one that starts our salvation, we can trust wholeheartedly that He will complete the

work of salvation in our lives. Paul knew that what God started; He would finish. We can trust God in the exact same way and with that comes a joy that can never fade away.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. How did Paul feel when he thought about the Philippians helping him with the work of the Gospel? Joyful 2. What do you think it means to pray with joy? We remember that God is working in our lives and because God is always in control, we have a lot to be happy about. 3. What do you think makes Paul's joy different from other people's happiness? It is centered on Christ and what Christ accomplishes.	1. What do you think it means to partner with other Christians in the Gospel? 2. Can you remember a time when God began the work of salvation in your life? Who did He use to present the Gospel to you? 3. Read Acts 16 together and talk about the work of the Gospel that was happening in Philippi.	1. God brings people in our lives that He uses as positive and Godly influences. Who is someone in your life that you can thank God for in "all your remembrances of" them? (Phil 1:3). 2. What can you do as a partner of the Gospel? What have you already been doing? 3. What is the "Day of Jesus Christ" that Paul talks about in verse 6? (2 Thessalonians 1:10 might be helpful…)

Day 3- Philippians 1:7-8

It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. [8] For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Devotional

What does it mean to love as a Christian? Paul gives us a great picture of it in Philippians 1:7-8 and he will continue to give us a great picture of it throughout the remainder of his letter. I think we all recognize that the word "love" can be used in a lot of different ways. The way that a husband loves his wife should be a lot different than if we say that we love a certain movie or vacation spot. A Christian is someone that is called to love differently and is also someone that is loved differently. What does that mean? Just look at what Paul says in these verses. Paul has a special place in his heart for the Philippians. He says that he holds them in his heart because they are partakers with him of grace. Paul is saying that the same grace that saved him is the same grace that saved the Philippian Christians. They have a mutual meeting point through the grace of Jesus Christ. No matter what Paul went through, be it imprisonment or sharing the Gospel, he knew that he and the Philippians were brought together by grace. Grace is God's undeserved favor towards us. It is something that we cannot earn, and it is something that cannot be bought. It is God's gift of favor towards those that do not deserve it. Jesus is the ultimate gift of grace. We do not deserve the gift of the Gospel, but God freely offers it to us. There is no greater love than this: God's perfect love extended to imperfect people through the Gospel. Not only are Christians loved perfectly, but they are also expected to love as Jesus loves. Paul says at the end of verse 8 that he "yearns for you all with all the affection of Christ Jesus." That's a type of love that cannot happen on its own. It needs come from a heart that has been made new by Jesus. Paul's love for the Philippians came from the core of his heart. We cannot just tolerate other people or pretend to love them. Christian love must be intentional. Christian love is "patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It

does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a). That's the kind of love that Christians are to love with.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What was it that brought Paul and the Philippians together?- Grace and the Gospel. 2. What do you think makes the love of Jesus so special? 3. Can you think of a time when someone showed the love of Jesus to you? How did it make you feel?	1. In what way have you shown the love of Jesus to someone this week? 2. Do you think that it is hard or easy to love people in the same way that God loves? 3. What is distinct about Christian love?	1. Christian love cannot be selective. Who is someone in your life that you have struggled to love? 2. How have you seen the love of Jesus bring people together? 3. How do you see the grace of God and the love of God come together in the Gospel?

Day 4- Philippians 1:9-11

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, **10** so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, **11** filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Devotional

Every parent wants to see their child grow up big and strong. I don't think that there is a single parent in the world that wants to see the child that they love so much go backwards in their development. Paul sees himself as a spiritual father to those that he has shared the Gospel with. Paul tells the church in 1 Corinthians 4:15, "I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel." Of course, Paul doesn't mean that he became the physical father to every single Christian in the Corinthian church. What it does mean is that there was a special relationship between Paul and the Corinthians through the Gospel that was like the relationship between a father and a child. As a father that cares for the development of his child, Paul prays that the Philippians would continue to develop in love, knowledge and discernment so that they would approve of that which is excellent and be pure and blameless for the day of Christ and be filled with the fruit of righteousness. Paul uses a lot of big theological words in these verses but all of that can be summarized in 1 big theological word: sanctification. Sanctification means to be set apart for holiness. It means to be more like Jesus as we grow in our faith. As we grow in our love for Christ and our neighbors, as we desire more of God's holiness over what we want, as we pursue pure lives over sin-stained lives, we are growing in our sanctification. Sanctification is something that we will never complete in this lifetime. There will never be a day in the life of the Christian where they can say that they have perfected what it means to be a Christian. But the day will come when our sanctification will be complete, and that day is the day when we are with Christ. There the growing pains of Christianity will be finished, and we will be as much like our Savior as it is possible for redeemed sinners to be.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What does sanctification mean?- To be set apart and to become more like Jesus 2. What did Paul mean by saying that he was a spiritual father to the Corinthians?- They had a special relationship through the Gospel because Paul led them to faith in Jesus. 3. What can we do to be more like Jesus?	1. If you are a Christian, who is the spiritual father that led you to faith in Christ? 2. What are some things that you can do to grow in your sanctification? 3. Is there another Christian in your life that you can trust to help you grow in your sanctification?	1. Have you been the spiritual father or mother to someone? How did you lead them to the truths of the Gospel? 2. What are some things that you can do now to get the opportunity to lead someone to faith in Christ? 3. Sanctification is not always easy. There are growing pains involved. What are some verses that you can memorize that will help to encourage you as you become more like Christ?

Day 5- Philippians 1:12-14

[12] I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, [13] so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. [14] And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Devotional

There's an old hymn by William Cowper that goes, "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform. He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm. Deep in the dark and hidden mines, with never-failing skill, He fashions all his bright designs and works His sovereign will." Prison and freedom are two words that don't often go together in a positive way. Prison time is hardly ever seen as a time of great productivity. When you think of prison, you probably think of someone sitting in a tiny cell and not getting a whole lot down or contributing all that much to society. You might think of someone that is sitting in a little box with a whole lot of time on their hands and not a whole lot to do. That would not describe the Apostle Paul's time in prison. As we mentioned a few days ago, Paul is imprisoned for the Gospel when he writes to the Philippians, but the letter certainly doesn't read like a letter from a guy that is wasting away in a jail cell. Paul tells the Philippians that God has not only advanced the Gospel in Paul's imprisonment, but his imprisonment has allowed the Gospel to go deeper and wider than before he was imprisoned! It just goes to show that while the man of God may be bound, the Word of God never is. The Christian may be in chains, but the Gospel itself cannot be stopped. The fact that the Gospel is reaching more people through Paul's imprisonment shows us that God really does move in mysterious ways to accomplish His will. How far has the Gospel reached in Paul's imprisonment? It turns out that it has reached the imperial guard that has been assigned to watch him. The ancient Roman empire that is so opposed to the Lord Jesus is now being impacted by the Gospel of the Lord Jesus! Not only is Paul reaching the Roman guards with the Gospel, but Christians are also being inspired to preach the Gospel with even greater

boldness. God moves in mysterious ways. There very well may be something happening in your life right now that on the surface looks bleak and problematic that God may be using to advance the Gospel further than it had gone before and like Paul, we have great reason to rejoice!

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. Why was Paul not upset or angry about being in prison?- The Gospel was advancing. 2. Do you think that God is able to bring good things out of bad circumstances? Why or why not?- Yes, we see it in Paul's imprisonment through the advancement of the Gospel 3. Prayer: Ask that God would use all the circumstances in your life as an opportunity to give God glory.	1. Why do you think other Christians were inspired to share the Gospel with more boldness despite Paul being in prison? 2. Everyone wants to be known for something. Paul was known by the imperial guard for being in prison for Christ. What is it that you want to be known for? 3. Prayer: Ask that God would give you boldness to speak the truths of the Gospel without fear.	1. What does it look like to "speak the Gospel without fear"? 2. Can you think of a moment when the Gospel moved powerfully despite the circumstance not being the greatest? 3. Prayer: Ask that God would continue to encourage those that are currently imprisoned for the Gospel around the world and empower them to speak the Gospel boldly and without fear.

Day 6- Philippians 1:15-18a

Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will.[16] The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. [17] The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. [18] What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

Devotional

Everyone has their critics. As we have seen in these verses and throughout Scripture, Paul certainly had his fair share of critics. In verses 15 and 16 Paul mentions that there are those that preach the Gospel out of love and good will (the way it should be done). Paul also mentions that there are people that existed during his days that were preaching Christ from envy and rivalry that were also preaching out of selfish ambition to hurt Paul while he was in prison. Deep down we all want to be loved. Most people don't want to make enemies. People have different motives for doing different things. There are people that preach the Gospel with good motives and there are people that do it with bad motives. It is a good reminder that what we say and do matters. Not only that, the "why" behind the things we do matters. Are your motives pure in what you are doing? Or are you simply doing it as a way to get back at someone that you have an issue with? How did Paul handle his critics? How did he respond to those that were sharing the Gospel with the intention of harming him? He rejoiced! Why on earth did he do that? How could he do that? It was because he recognized that in every way, Christ was being proclaimed and in that he rejoiced. Warren Wiersbe writes, "Like a faithful soldier, Paul was 'set appointed for the defense of the Gospel.' He was able to rejoice, not in the selfishness of his critics, but in the fact that Christ was being preached! There was no envy in Paul's heart. It mattered not that some were for him and some were against him. All that mattered was the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!" To be a Christian is to desire less of ourselves so that Jesus would be exalted higher. He must increase and we must decrease. Paul could say what he says in

Philippians 1:15-18 because God and the Gospel was the priority of his life. Can the same thing be said about you?

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. How did Paul react to his friends and his critics preaching the Gospel?- With Rejoicing 2. Is it possible to preach the Gospel with bad motives? - Yes, Paul's critics were guilty of doing that. 3. Why was Paul able to rejoice about his critics preaching the Gospel?- Because God was being glorified in the spread of the Gospel.	1. What were the two ways that Paul described the people who were preaching the Gospel?- Answer in verses 15-17. 2. Why do you think motives are important when it comes to sharing the Gospel? 3. What is it that motivates you to live a God-honoring life?	1. What do you think preaching with envy, rivalry, and selfish ambition would look like today? 2. What are some ways that you can protect your own heart from sharing the Gospel with impure motives? 3. What lesson can you learn from Paul on how he treated his opponents?

Day 7- Philippians 1:18b-20

Yes, and I will rejoice, **19** for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, **20** as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

Devotional

At the end of verse 18, Paul doubles down on his rejoicing! In Paul, we see a man that is totally devoted to Jesus. Why is there so much rejoicing in Paul's life at this moment? He tells us in verse 19, "For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance." The word deliverance can also be translated as salvation. The question that we need ask as we study this passage of Scripture is whether Paul was referring to his physical deliverance from prison or is he talking about a spiritual deliverance? Is he referring to prison chains or spiritual chains? Paul seems to think that he will ultimately be delivered from prison as we will see later in Philippians 1:25 but Paul has more in mind than just a physical rescue from a Roman prison. How do we know this? At the end of verse 20, Paul notes that Christ will be honored in his body, whether by life or by death. What is it that Paul is saying here? What he is saying is that whether he lives or whether he dies, Christ will be glorified. Whether Paul remains in prison or is set free, Christ will be glorified. To Paul, imprisonment was just another path to glorifying the Savior. What we all need to understand is that while our circumstances on earth may not always be good, our God always is. He is always worthy to be honored and praised whether we live or whether we die. James Montgomery Boice wrote, "Paul was so confident that God's will for him was perfect- that it was the best possible thing for him- that he was able to accept it willingly even if it meant death at the hands of a Roman executioner." God's plan for His people is always good. Even death for a Christian is just a graduation into glory. We know that we can trust Him because we know that "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6).

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What does Paul tell the Philippians that he will do in response to their prayers for him?- Rejoice 2. What two things does Paul say will lead to his deliverance in verse 19?- Prayer and the Holy Spirit 3. Prayer: Ask God that He would continue to show you reasons as to why you can rejoice.	1. What does it look like to rejoice in Christ? 2. Is Paul talking about a physical deliverance or a spiritual deliverance in these verses? 3. Prayer: Ask that God would help you to see His goodness behind every circumstance.	1. Can you confidently say that Christ is always being honored and glorified in your body? 2. Even if Paul stayed in prison, he would have rejoiced in the goodness of God. Is there something in your life right now that is stopping you from seeing the goodness of God? 3. Prayer: Ask that God would bring to your mind the joy of salvation throughout the day.

Day 8- Philippians 1:21

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Devotional

These 12 words should be the motto of every Christian. One could go as far as saying that this is the summary statement of what it means to be a Christian. To Paul, his entire live is Christ. Paul is not talking about just existing. He is talking about willingly doing all things for the glory of Christ. Every aspect of his life is connected to Jesus. Paul is saying that it does not matter what the world does, or his friends do, or what his family does, he will live for Christ. There is not a single area of his life that is not touched by Christ. He is totally devoted to Christ. Jesus is the center of the Christian faith and without Him, there is no faith. Jesus is the reason that Paul lives. John MacArthur writes, "Paul trusted, loved, served, witnessed for, and in every way was devoted to and dependent on Christ. His only hope, his only purpose, his only reason to live was Christ. He traveled for Christ, preached for Christ, and was persecuted and imprisoned for Christ." How many of us can say our lives are that devoted to Christ? When it comes to the things that we say and do, we should ask ourselves, "Will Christ be glorified in this action?" Sin isn't glorifying. Are our lives so closely connected to Christ that our life could be described simply as "Christ"? What about death? No one really likes to talk about dying but it is a part of life. Paul doesn't describe death as something negative which may shock you. Instead, he says that death is gain. What does he mean by that? Paul knows that when the Christian dies, he or she is immediately taken into Heaven to be in the presence of Christ. Paul sees death as gain because he will be in a place of sinless perfection. He will stand before the Jesus that he has so faithfully lived for. He will be in a place where God Himself will be and "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain" (Rev 21:3-4). That is why death is gain for Paul. It is why death is gain for every Christian. What does this mean for Christians today? A story that D.L. Moody used to tell will help us. Moody was a pastor in the 1800's and he used to tell about a teenage girl that suddenly became completely paralyzed on one side. One day she

was in her bed and a doctor told her family that her best days were behind her. The young girl was a Christian and she overheard the doctor and said, “No, doctor, my best days are yet to come, when I shall see the King in his beauty.” That is why death is gain for all believers of Jesus Christ. We shall see the King in all His glory, and we will finally be home.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. For Paul, to live is _____? And to die is_____? 2. What is a good question to ask yourself when you aren’t sure if you are doing the right thing? “Will Christ be praised and glorified in this?” 3. In the story from D.L. Moody, why did the girl believe that her best days were ahead of her?- She knew she would see Jesus.	1. How is death gain for Christians? 2. What happens to Christians the moment that they die? 3. Can you confidently say that for you to life is Christ and to die is gain?	1. What is the main thing that you are living for? 2. How does Christianity prepare us to die well? 3. How do you think a Christ-centered life helps us to better understand death?

Day 9- Philippians 1:22-26

“If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. [23] I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. [24] But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.[25] Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, [26] so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.”

Devotional

Every day we are confronted with tough choices. Sometimes we will find ourselves trying to pick between two things that we really want. Paul was no different. In Philippians 1:21 he recognized that death for the Christian is gain but he is torn between going to be with Christ and staying on earth. He is torn because he knows that if he remains alive, he will be able to be a fruitful witness for Christ. It means that he will be able to carry on the work of sharing the Gospel. Paul wants to be in the presence of Christ, but he also recognizes the benefit of remaining on earth to strengthen believers and continue reaching the lost. Paul understands that until the Christian is in the presence of God, they are not home yet. Heaven is the believer’s true home. On this earth, the Christian is a traveler on his or her way to the promised land. Paul recognized this in 2 Corinthians 5:6-9: “So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.” Paul knows that his life and his death are in the hands of the God that is in control of all things. With that confidence, Paul understands that whatever happens to him will be for the good of the people of God and for the Lord’s glory. It will always be better to depart and be with Christ but as long as you are breathing, that means that God’s work for you is not finished. In a way, the Christian never retires. They live faithfully and strive for “fruitful labor” as long as the Lord will have them. The work won’t be done until the faithful servant is brought home to the presence of Christ.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What are the two things that Paul is trying to choose between?- To be with Christ or to stay with the believers. 2. Which option does Paul believe is better?- To depart and be with Christ 3. What does Paul say is the main goal of the Christian in 2 Corinthians 5:9?	1. What is the toughest choice that you have ever had to make? 2. What do you think "fruitful labor" looks like for Christians? 3. Paul recognizes the need for Christians to be in community with each other so that they can mutually grow in the faith. What are some benefits of Christians coming together?	1. Do you believe that God gives the believer the joy to do the work of ministry? 2. What area of ministry do you think the Lord has gifted you to serve in? 3. How is being in service with other Christians beneficial for everyone?

Day 10- Philippians 1:27-28

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, [28] and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.

Devotional

The Bible is full of commands that tell believers to "stand firm." Paul tells the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 16:13, "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong." In Ephesians 6:11 we read that we are to, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil." Paul also says in Galatians 5:1, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." What does it mean for the Christian to stand firm? Paul is no stranger to using military imagery. When Paul says that we are to stand firm, he likely has in mind the way that a Roman soldier would stand at the post that he was assigned. If a commander told a solider to guard one specific point, it was expected that nothing would remove that soldier from that point. They were to be like a tree planted firmly in the ground. Believers are to plant themselves in the same way (Psalm 1:1-3). Paul tells the believers that one of the sure signs of their salvation is how they stand firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel. Together they would have no fear of those that opposed their message because they had these sure signs of salvation. The evidence of their salvation was not something that they would have to produce, it was given to them from God Himself. When the believers saw their oneness in the Gospel, they would know that God Himself was seeing to the success of the church. All believers need to be reminded that it is God that builds the church. Jesus says in Matthew 16:18, "on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." As the church in Corinth were arguing over their favorite pastor, Paul reminds them in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is

anything, but only God who gives the growth." God is growing His church. One of the sure signs that He is accomplishing that purpose is through the unity of the church and the endurance of believers. God is growing His church, and He will see to it that His plan will not fail.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. Who is it that grows the church?- God 2. Do Christians have anything to fear from those that push back against the church?- No. 3. What is one of the signs that Paul mentions as to how God is growing the church?- Believers stand firm together.	1. What do you think it means to live a life "worthy of the Gospel"? 2. What does it mean for the Christian to stand firm? 3. What does it mean to strive side by side for the Gospel?	1. If Paul were alive today, do you think he would be able to hear that you personally are standing firm with other believers? 2. Read Psalm 1 and compare the righteous and the unrighteous with what Paul says of believers in Philippians 1:27-28. 3. Are there areas in your conduct that you feel does not line up with your commitment to the Gospel?

Day 11- Philippians 1:29-30

For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, [30] engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Devotional

It should come as no surprise to anyone that there is suffering in the world. A lot of Christians are surprised to find out that once they become a Christian they still go through periods of suffering. Church history is filled with examples of believers that not only suffered for Christ but also willingly died for Him. Paul would eventually go on to die for Christ. In fact, every apostle except for John would die a violent death for their faith in Christ. Even today there are places where it is illegal to be a Christian and a Christian can be put to death for what they believe. Suffering for Jesus is very real, but it is worth it. Because of the sure salvation of Jesus, believers can go through suffering with rejoicing! This doesn't mean that they put on a happy face as if nothing bad is happening. Jesus Himself suffered, and I doubt He did it with a smile on His face. But for the joy that was set before Him, He endured. He knew the glory that laid ahead and He knew the sureness of His people being with Him forever. Christians are going to face persecution. It may not be death and imprisonment like the apostles, but the world will look at us and treat us differently than if we were not Christians. The world will question why we would want to be a Christian. Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:12, "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." How should the believer respond to this? James says in James 1:2-3, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness." In Acts 5, the apostles are arrested, beaten, and eventually released for preaching the Gospel. While most people would have been discouraged by this treatment, the apostles have a totally different mindset. Acts 5:41-42 says, "Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worth to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus." The

apostles rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer for Jesus! They didn't run and hide, they didn't suppress the Gospel to make the world happy, instead they were encouraged to go out and tell even more people about Jesus! Why so much confidence? Because they knew that Christ had died, that Christ had risen, and that Christ would come again. They knew that their whole lives were in the hands of God and that He would bring them safely home. Christians need to accept the idea of persecution but Christ's victory over death is sure. Because He lives, we can face tomorrow no matter what.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What is persecution?- Suffering for Jesus. 2. Have you ever noticed a time when people that are not Christians have treated Christians differently? 3. Prayer: Ask that God would encourage Christians around the world to remain faithful when dealing with persecution.	1. Why would suffering for Christ's sake be considered a gift to believers? 2. How does enduring persecution make the Christian like Jesus? 3. Prayer: Pray that God would give us the endurance to go through persecution.	1. Why do you think it is that the Gospel has flourished despite the persecution of Christians? 2. What do you think it looks like to go through persecution and suffering with joy? 3. Prayer: Pray for believers around the world that they would continue to spread the Gospel despite persecution.

Day 12- Philippians 2:1-2

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, [2] complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Devotional

Chapter 2 of Philippians starts with a lot of "ifs". All of these "if" statements are meant to have an obvious "yes" answer. Think of it in this way: Is there encouragement in Christ? Yes! Is there comfort from love (specifically from the love of Christ)? Yes! Is there participation (or fellowship as the CSB translates it) in the Holy Spirit? As Christians we have fellowship with the Holy Spirit? Do Christians receive and practice affection and sympathy or mercy? We sure do! Our salvation is a sign that God has shown us affection and sympathy! What Paul is getting at in these verses is that if these things are so (which they are) there is a way that Christians should be living. Paul gives out the characteristics of the Christian. If we are going to claim the name of Jesus, that means we will need to make sure our lives and actions resemble Jesus. Paul understands that when Christians come together in unity that it is a joy filled moment. Paul himself says that his joy would be complete if the Philippians one be of the same mind, have the same love, and be in full accord and of one mind. What he means by this is that the church would be united in love and in truth. Paul believes that a healthy church is one that comes together in love and goes through the storms of life united as one. There will be times of trouble, but the church is at its best when it comes together in one mind, one love, and one accord. What does this look like in detail? Perhaps it is best seen by what Paul says in Colossians 3:12-17: "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, [13] bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. [14] And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. [15] And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. [16] Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all

wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. [17] And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What was one of the "if" statements that Paul makes in Philippians 2:1? 2. How does God show us mercy?- The cross is one of the clearest examples 3. What is a good way that you can show patience or mercy to someone?	1. In what ways can a person find encouragement in Jesus? 2. Why do you think that it is important for the church to be united as one? 3. What do you think it means to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17)?	1. Do you think that it is more difficult for Christians to be united in love or over doctrine/truth? 2. How does the unity of the church help to testify to the truth of Christianity? 3. How does unity within the church help to bring joy to believers?

Day 13- Philippians 2:3-4

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Devotional

Philippians 2 starts with things that we should do and then it shows things that we should not do. In verses 1-2, Paul says that we are to do everything in one mind and one love. Then in verse 3 we see the opposite of that. Paul says that we are to do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit. Pride shouldn't be the thing that motivates all our actions. Pride and selfishness is the total opposite of everything that Jesus is and represents as we will see later in Philippians 2. Jesus says in Matthew 20:28 that he came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Paul doesn't say that the Christian should not care about himself at all. Some people think that to be a Christian means that you completely stop taking care of yourself or thinking about yourself. I don't think that is true. Instead, Christianity calls you to look at yourself differently. Christianity does not mean that in everything you put yourself down and neglect your needs but rather that you would put others above yourself. To be like Jesus means that we care about the needs and interests of others. We are no longer the center of the universe (in fact, we never were but we definitely liked to act like we were.) We need to be incredibly humble people. C.S. Lewis once said, "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less." What an important reminder for us! We prioritize ourselves far too often. True Christian humility is to think of others before we think of ourselves. The question then is, do you think highly of others? Do you put others first? Charles Spurgeon said, "Do not obey the world's saying, 'Take care of Number One.' Have a large heart, so that, though you care for yourself in spiritual things, and desire your own soul-prosperity, you may have the same desire for every other Christian man or woman." Christianity requires thick skin and a tender heart. Our skin needs to be thick because not everyone will like us, and our hearts must be tender because their opinion of us should not impact the love and humility we must show them.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What does it mean to be selfish? 2. Finish the quote, "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of…." 3. Prayer: Pray that God would help you to be humble like Jesus.	1. Why do you think it is so hard to be humble? 2. What does it mean for us to consider others as more significant than ourselves? 3. Prayer: Pray that God would give you opportunities to practice humility.	1. Why do you think Christianity requires thick skin and a tender heart? 2. Do you think that humility is something that comes naturally? Why or why not? 3. Prayer: Pray that God would give you an opportunity this week to look out for the interests of someone else.

Day 14- Philippians 2:5-8

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. [8] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Devotional

In these verses we see the great example of Jesus Christ. Most people learn better when they have an example to imitate. What greater example than the Lord Jesus Christ? Humility is hard. It does not come naturally because the sin in our hearts wants us to take care of our own needs first. What better motivation to be humble than to see what God Himself has done. What is Paul saying about Jesus in these verses? He is saying that Jesus Christ is fully God. To be "in the form of God" is to be God Himself. Colossians 1:15 says that Jesus "is the image of the invisible God." To be in the image of God and in the form of God shows to us that Jesus is and always has been God. Jesus did not become God by living a perfect life or at his baptism as some think. No, Jesus has always been and always will be God. That is why it is so amazing that this God of infinite worth, the Creator over all things, the One whom all of Heaven adores would take on the form of a servant. Not only does Jesus become man, but He also humbles himself to the point of death on a cross. None of us can say that we have done what Jesus has done. Not one of us can honestly say that we have ever given up as much as Jesus has. If you think that it is hard to be humble, look at what Christ has done. To see Jesus for all He is and for all He has done requires us to be humble. He must increase and we must decrease. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, "There's only one way to be humble, and that is to look into the face of Jesus Christ; you cannot be anything else when you see him. Humility is not something you can create within yourself; rather, you look at him, you realize who he is and what he has done, and you are humbled." What a Savior we have!

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. Finish the statement: Jesus has always been and always will be….. (God) 2. What do you think it means to be a servant? 3. What are some ways that Christians can act like a servant?	1. What does it mean for Jesus to be in the form of God? 2. Do you think that it is harder to give up power or take power? 3. How does the life and death of Jesus move Christians towards humility?	1. Why do you think Paul emphasizes the cross at the end of verse 8? 2. Where else in the Gospels do you see Jesus acting as a servant? 3. How can a reflection of Christ's humility move you to worship?

Day 15- Philippians 2:9-11

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Devotional

There is a reward for Christ's perfect obedience to God the Father. When we see the word "therefore" in the Bible, it is helpful to ask the question, "What is it there for?" Why is it that God has highly exalted Jesus and given him the name that is above every name? It is because of what Jesus accomplished in Philippians 2:5-8. Jesus is the perfectly obedient and humbled Son and because of what He accomplished on earth, He is the highly exalted name and Lord of Heaven. It's important to know that Jesus did not receive glory only after He went to the cross and rose again. Jesus says in John 17:4-5, "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." What then does Paul mean in Philippians 2:9-11? He means that what was once the private exaltation and worship of Christ in Heaven has now become revealed on earth. No one is without excuse when it comes to honoring and praising Jesus. One day, God the Father will see to it that every single person, willingly or unwillingly, will recognize that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Jesus is Lord whether anyone wants Him to be or not. As God the Son is praised, God the Father is praised. There is great reward for obedient and humble service. We see that Jesus humbled himself to the point of death and God has rewarded Him for what He has done. The same is true for every Christian. God will reward faithful service. As we look to Heaven, we see that everything that we give up in this world will be worth it for what we will gain in the next. Where Jesus is, there we shall be too. Have you confessed that Jesus Christ is Lord? Have you humbly submitted to Him? Have you asked Him to remove the sin of your life and give to you His righteousness and forgiveness? There is no

reward without humble submission to Christ. Heaven isn't the goal; Jesus Christ is! Without Him, heaven is not worth having.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What does Paul say every tongue will confess of Jesus in verse 11? 2. Has Jesus always been God? 3. What do you think it means to worship Jesus?	1. What was Christ's reward for His perfect obedience to the Father? 2. How does the promise of reward motivate us to live humbly now? 3. Can you say that you have truly submitted to Jesus as Lord?	1. What is the purpose of Christ's life, death, and resurrection? 2. What motivates you more: The promise of reward? Or the promise of being like Christ and in His presence forever? 3. What is the reward of Heaven?

Day 16- Philippians 2:12-13

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, [13] for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Devotional

How are people saved? The Bible clearly states that salvation is found in no other name than Jesus Christ. Jesus says in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Peter says in Acts 4:12, "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Paul says in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." That's pretty clear on how man is saved. But there has been confusion on what man contributes to salvation is. The question is: Is faith alone really all it takes for us to be saved? Some confusion may come from a misunderstanding of what Paul says in Philippians 2:12 that we are to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." When we see that phrase that we are to work out our salvation, we might think that God is saying that there are good works that we have to do to secure our salvation. But that isn't what Paul is saying here. He doesn't say that we are to work FOR our salvation, he says that we are to work OUT our salvation. Salvation cannot be earned. We don't contribute anything to our salvation except the sin that makes salvation a necessity. When Christ saves, He saves completely. Instead, Paul is telling us that we are to continually pursue Jesus in all that we do. There is never going to be a time in the physical life of the Christian where he or she can say that they have perfected what it means to be a Christian. There needs to be an ongoing awe and respect for God as we strive to be more like Jesus. So no, Paul is not saying in these verses that we must earn our salvation. For the Christian, salvation is already accomplished by the finished work of Jesus. James Montgomery Boice said, "No one can work his salvation out unless God has already worked it in." As God continues to work in our salvation, He will do

it for His glory and for our good. Our salvation is not faith plus works but our salvation through faith will naturally produce good works.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. How are people saved?- By grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone 2. Can you earn your salvation?- No. 3. Is it possible to be a perfect Christian?	1. Is faith alone all that is necessary for salvation or is it also by good works? 2. Why do you think that people feel like they need to earn their salvation? 3. What is the difference between working FOR salvation and working OUT salvation?	1. How do good works connect to salvation? 2. What does Paul mean that we are to work out our salvation with “fear and trembling”? 3. How can you better stand in awe of what God has done?

Day 17- Philippians 2:14-18

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, [15] that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, [16] holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. [17] Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. [18] Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

Devotional

Christians are supposed to be witnesses. We know what God has done in our lives and when God saves, He does not save so that we would stay the same. It should be noticeable that we belong to Jesus. It should be noticeable by other Christians, and it should even be noticeable to non-Christians. Peter says in 1 Peter 2:12, "Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits." Everyone should be able to see that Jesus is our Lord and Savior through the things that we do and the things that we say. When Paul says that Christians shine as lights in the world, he is saying something that Jesus had already said in Matthew 5:16: "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." The only way that a person can have a light shine from them is if the Creator of love and light, Christ Himself, has saved that person. Without Christ there is no light to a lost world. We as believers are to live godly lives and as the world looks at our conduct, they will know that there is a reason behind the things that we are doing. What are some ways that we can make sure that this is happening? First off it can only happen if we are truly Christians. God must put the light of the Gospel in our hearts first before we try to be a light to others. Paul says in verse 14 that Christians are to do everything without grumbling or disputing. This might not sound like much, but Paul has a reason for including it. If Christians are constantly grumbling, disputing, and complaining, they are acting as if God were not in charge of all things. Grumbling and complaining will show that we are not grateful for all

that God has done and is doing. Something else that Paul points to again is the Christian is to rejoice. All through Philippians we see a reminder to rejoice, and we will continue to see it throughout this book. Christians have a lot to rejoice about. If anyone has reason to rejoice it is the Christian. God has brought us from death to life and has given us the gift of Jesus at no cost. One day God will bring every Christian to heaven where they will be forever in the loving presence of Jesus and there will never be a day without pure rejoicing.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What is one reminder that Paul gives Christians all throughout the book of Philippians?- Christians are to rejoice. 2. What does Paul say Christians shine as?- Lights to the world. 3. What do you think it means for Christians to shine as a light in a dark world?	1. What does it mean for a Christian to be a witness? 2. Why should Christians do everything without grumbling or disputing? 3. What are some ways that you can show a better attitude when faced with life's problems?	1. Paul references a sacrificial offering of faith. In what ways does Christianity require us to sacrifice? 2. How can rejoicing with other Christians help you to endure the trials of life? 3. What are some ways that you can avoid doing things with grumbling or disputing?

Day 18- Philippians 2:19-24

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. [20] For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. [21] For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. [22] But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. [23] I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, [24] and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

Devotional

Right in the middle of Paul's letter there seems to be a "break in the action." In verses 19-24 Paul begins to talk about Timothy. Timothy is first introduced to us in Acts 16. He is a young man that goes on to be a missionary with Paul and a pastor. Timothy is mentioned in several of Paul's letters to other churches or individuals. This Timothy that Paul mentions is the same Timothy that would be addressed in the books of 1st and 2nd Timothy. Why does Paul bring up Timothy at this point in Philippians? Paul wants to show the Philippians (and us) a model of what he has been writing about up to this point. He mentions Timothy's concern for the church in Philippi and how Timothy has proven time and time again that he has good Christian character. Timothy is also someone that has practiced and continued to practice the humility that Paul has been writing about. Timothy was a living example of what it means to be a servant. It was natural for Timothy to be a servant. He had seen it as he worked and traveled with Paul, and he knew it through the Gospel. Paul also knew that he could trust Timothy. Paul says that he doesn't have anyone else with him that he trusts as much as Timothy. This is a great reminder for us to surround ourselves with trustful, sacrificial, godly men and women as our friends. Sinclair Ferguson writes, "The best friends are those who imitate our Lord Jesus in looking out for the interests, needs, and concerns of others. Such have been delivered from the bondage of self-obsession; they are free to live in self-forgetfulness, full of Christ's grace, delighting to be servants of others." Can you honestly say that you have a friend like that? Is there someone in your life that you know you can trust to be a godly influence?

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. In what book of the Bible do we first get introduced to Timothy?- Acts 2. Why is it important to have Christians friends? 3. Where are some places where you can meet other Christians?	1. Why does Paul bring up Timothy at this point in his letter? 2. How did Paul know that he could trust Timothy? 3. Do you agree with this statement: One friend that loves and serves Jesus is better than a dozen friends that don't	1. Why do you think Christian fellowship is so important? 2. What friend do you have in your life that sounds the most like Timothy? 3. Does the success of other Christians bring joy to your life?

Day 19- Philippians 2:25-30

I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker
and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, [26] for he has been longing
for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. [27] Indeed he was ill,
near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should
have sorrow upon sorrow. [28] I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may
rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. [29] So receive him in the Lord with
all joy, and honor such men, [30] for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to
complete what was lacking in your service to me.

Devotional

In verses 25-30, Paul brings up another friend that has ministered alongside him name Epaphroditus. Epaphroditus was well known and loved by the Philippians because he was one of the leaders of the Philippian church. Epaphroditus was the one that the Philippians used to send their gifts to Paul (Philippians 4:18). While he was away from the Philippians, Epaphroditus became incredibly sick and almost died. Paul says that God had mercy not only on Epaphroditus but also mercy on Paul because of how much he loved and valued Epaphroditus and his ministry. Epaphroditus is a model servant. It is impressive that even when he was sick, his greater concern was for the church. One might think of Jesus in the upper room in John 14-17 where even though He knew He was about to face the cross, He prayed and comforted His disciples. Like Timothy in the verses that were read yesterday, Epaphroditus is a living example of everything that Paul has written about in these first two chapters. He points to Christ in the way that even while suffering, he loved and longed for others. With Epaphroditus we are reminded of two things: 1. Christianity requires risk. 2. Christians still go through suffering. Epaphroditus shows us that to serve others as Christ would have us to serve will push us. To follow Christ faithfully and serve Paul and the church faithfully, Epaphroditus traveled to Rome to deliver the gift to Paul and that itself was not easy. The path from Philippi to Rome wasn't easy. It was about 800 miles and would take weeks to travel the dangerous terrain, but this did not deter Epaphroditus. He

would be faithful to Christ and to Christ's church. Epaphroditus' sickness is also a reminder to us that Christians are still human. Christians will still go through sickness and old age but even this God uses for His glory and our good. Even in sickness, God continues to show His love and mercy. In sickness and in health, Epaphroditus lived as an example of Jesus. When the Philippians (and us) want to see an example of faithful Christians and lives that are truly transformed by the Gospel, we can look at Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus. Tony Merida writes, "Timothy and Epaphroditus (and Paul) give us living examples in the book of Philippians. All three men show us what happens when the gospel really transforms us from the inside out: we begin to live like Jesus."

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What happened to Epaphroditus?- He was sick and almost died 2. What did Epaphroditus do for Paul?- He brought him the gift from the Philippians 3. According to Tony Merida, when the Gospel transforms us, what do we begin to do?- Live like Jesus	1. Does being a Christian mean that we never have to go through suffering? 2. Why do you think Epaphroditus was worried about the Philippians? 3. How could you use Philippians 2 to explain to other people what it means to be humble?	1. In what ways has God shown mercy to you today? 2. Who are the people in your church that remind you the most of Timothy, Epaphroditus, or Paul? 3. What does risk look like in Christianity?

Day 20- Philippians 3:1-3

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.[2] Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. [3] For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.

Devotional

At the beginning of Philippians 3, Paul returns to the theme of rejoicing. Christians always need to be reminded of the fact that they have much to rejoice about in the Lord. This is something that we can never have too little of. If it is from the Lord, there is nothing wrong with continually coming back to the truths and commands of God. When it comes to what God has done, it is impossible to rejoice too much. When in doubt (or not in doubt), rejoice in the Lord always! In verses 2-3, we see some of Paul's strongest language in the entire letter and it is used to address false teachers and those that claim to be Christians but whose lives and teachings looked nothing like true Christianity. This is a firm reminder for us that not everything or everyone that claims to be Christian really is Christian. It can say "Church" on the building but be nothing like one. Paul writes for us to look out for those that teach any other gospel that is not the gospel as revealed in the Bible. Paul warns the church in Galatia, "I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from him who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel- not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are troubling you and want to distort the gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:6-7). There is only one gospel. If Scripture must be contradicted or "corrected" for it to line up with what is being claimed as the gospel, it is not the true Gospel. The true gospel worships by the Spirit, glories in Christ alone, and is based purely on faith and not by works (or by the flesh as Paul says at the end of verse 3). J. Alec Motyer writes, "To Paul, these things mattered. He insisted that what he preached was the truth, not an insight or facet of truth; the Christ he preached was the only and all-sufficient Savior of sinners; and the gospel he preached- Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone- was the only gospel which ensured acceptance before God and eternal glory." These are the elements of true gospel

preaching and true gospel worship. There is no other gospel except the gospel laid out plainly in the Bible.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. Can you ever rejoice too much in Jesus?- Nope! 2. Is there any other gospel other than the one that is seen in the Bible?- Nope again! 3. Prayer: Ask that God would help you to never get tired of rejoicing in Jesus.	1. What are some ways that people can "distort" the gospel? 2. Why do you think people try to distort the gospel? 3. Prayer: Ask that God would remind you each day of the joy that you can have in Christ.	1. Why do you think that Paul uses such strong language when describing the false teachers? 2. What is some false teaching that you have come across in your lifetime? 3. Prayer: Ask that God would help you to be able to discern what is true and what is false.

Day 21- Philippians 3:4-7

Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: [5] circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; [6] as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. [7] But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Devotional

The Bible is clear that salvation is by faith alone and not by works, good deeds, or lifestyles. Paul uses himself as an example in these verses to combat what the false teachers had been telling the Philippians. On paper, Paul was the exact type of person that would look like he would "qualify" for salvation. Paul gives his credentials in verses 4-6 and says that if anyone had a reason to be confident in the flesh, or by their works or upbringing, it was him. He was an Israelite which means he was a part of the people that God had called to himself. He was a Pharisee which means that he knew the Bible. If anyone was going to be saved by biblical knowledge, it was the Pharisees. In the book of Acts we see that Paul (then known as Saul) was a persecutor of the church. He believed that Christianity was unbiblical, and he thought that he was doing a great service for God by persecuting Christians and having them arrested and put to death. Paul followed the Law of God, as did his parents apparently in reference to his circumcision on the eighth day. If anyone was to be saved by works, it would have been Paul! But Paul discovered that he needed a Savior when Jesus appeared to him in Acts 9. In the eyes of the Jewish religion, Paul had it all. Jesus changes all that. Paul says, "whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ." Paul had good things but without Christ, he did not possess great things. Warren Wiersbe said, "Paul's own treasure brought glory to him personally, but they did not bring glory to God." To be a Christian is to lose all confidence in what you bring to the table of God. You may know the Bible well and not be a Christian. You might be a part of a family that loves Christ and goes to church every Sunday and not be a Christian. You might do a lot of good things in your community and help those that are hurting and not be a Christian.

You might have received recognition and praise for good things you have done for others and not be a Christian. Those things are good, but they won't save you. Christ alone is what saves. What is your greatest treasure? What is the thing that you value and boast about the most? Anything that is above Jesus is what you truly value and that cannot save you. Only Jesus can.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. Can doing good things save you? 2. What is the only thing that can save you? 3. Finish the verse: Whatever gain I had, I counted as	1. Is it possible to "qualify" for salvation? 2. What is the thing that you value the most? 3. Why do you think that people believe that "being good" is enough to get them to heaven?	1. Why did Paul use himself as an example in these verses? 2. Why is biblical knowledge not enough for salvation? 3. What are some good things that you have that may get in the way of your devotion to Christ?

Day 22- Philippians 3:8-11

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ [9] and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—[10] that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, [11] that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Devotional

There are a lot of things that fight for our attention. There are a lot of things that are probably fighting to be at the front of your mind. Some of these things may be good and some of these things may be bad. There are probably things that you want to be known for or known as. But what thing is most important? The most important thing in your life is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. The most important thing you can be known as in the eyes of God is righteous through Christ. That's the reason that every man, woman, and child exists! Paul knew what was most important. Everything that he had he counted as loss for knowing Jesus. A person with everything that lacks Christ has nothing and the person that possess nothing but Christ alone has everything that they truly need. If you have Jesus as your savior, you have everything that you need in life. J.I. Packer said, "Once you become aware that the main business that you are here for is to know God, most of life's problems fall into place of their own accord." How do we know this? Because through Jesus, we come to know the power of God and the power of the resurrection. If even death has no claim on the believer, what is there to fear? Christ is ours and Heaven is our home so what treasure could be greater than that? If Jesus makes us righteous, what else could we possibly want? The righteousness that Paul possessed was a righteousness that only Christ could provide. To be a Christian means that Jesus is our everything. Good things are still good things, but they are not the main thing. They are not the things that we wake up for every morning. Paul says that in everything that we do, we should strive to be more like

Jesus. We can do this with confidence because we know that if God has begun a good work in us, He will see it to completion.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What are some things that fight for your attention? 2. What is the most important thing for you to do with your life?- Glorify God and enjoy Him forever. 3. Righteousness can only be found in who?- Jesus Christ	1. What is something that you know you have to give up to be more like Christ? 2. What does it mean to count all things as loss for the sake of knowing Christ? 3. What are some ways that you can make sure that God remains the most important thing in your life?	1. Why is it often hard to give things up for Christ? 2. What do you think it means to glorify God and enjoy Him forever? 3. How does suffering help to make us more like Christ?

Day 23- Philippians 3:12

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

Devotional

Is it possible to be perfect? Some Christians in history have thought that it was possible but there is no hint in Scripture that it is possible for a Christian to become completely perfect before they go to Heaven. Yes, Jesus does give to us His righteousness when we come to faith in Christ but that does not mean that we become perfect. Even though Jesus does forgive us of all our sins, that does not mean that we completely stop sinning. Christians still sin and make mistakes. The apostle John says in 1 John 1:8, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." No one should expect to be perfect, but we should all strive for perfection. We may not be sinless but we must strive to sin LESS. If Christ has saved us from our sins, why would we want to keep doing the things that Jesus paid for on the cross? Even the great apostle Paul was not perfect. He knew his flaws and imperfections better than anyone. Paul knew that he had not yet arrived to what God was leading him to be. He knew the power of the resurrection and he knew that the only way he would be perfect was with a resurrected body. Paul was not what he wanted to be but that did not discourage him from pursuing the goal that he wanted. Charles Spurgeon said, "He had not yet reached his own ideal of what a Christian might be. He had not yet obtained from Christ all that he expected to obtain. He was not sitting down to rest and be thankful, but he was still hurrying on, reaching after something that was yet beyond him. He could not say, 'soul take it easy, you have much goods laid up for many years' but he still felt his own spiritual poverty, and he continued reaching." Christianity isn't a sprint, it's a marathon. We don't reach the finish line until God says that we have reached it. Part of being a Christian is recognizing that you are not yet what God is making you to be. The Christian

is someone that recognizes both their worth and their unworthiness. They recognize that they are never worthy of the tremendous worth that has been given to them by their Savior. You aren't perfect but you are loved by a perfect Savior who calls you to live like Him so go out and live as perfectly as a redeemed sinner can.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What does being perfect mean to you? 2. Was the apostle Paul perfect? 3. Does becoming a Christian mean that we become perfect?	1. How does becoming a Christian push you to sin less? 2. Why do you think a Christian needs to be honest about his or her imperfections? 3. Where does our worth and value come from?	1. Do you think that trying to be morally perfect can distract you from following Christ? 2. Why do you think some Christians believe that is possible to be perfect in this lifetime? 3. Have you become more aware of your sin since you became a Christian?

Day 24- Philippians 3:13-14

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Devotional

People like to look to the past. They like to think back to their past achievements and think those things have enough weight and meaning to carry them far into the future (I'm looking at you Dallas Cowboys fans). The past does matter. The good and bad things that have happened in your life have helped to shape who you are but there is a danger in only looking backwards. It's practically impossible to run forward if you keep looking backwards. Paul knows that there is a goal ahead of him. Paul knows that who he was at that point was not ultimately who Christ was making him to be. Paul knew that the glory that was ahead of him far surpassed anything that was behind him and the sooner you recognize that, the greater your life is going to be. Hebrews 12:1-3 says, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted." There is a race that the Christian is running, and the prize is the eternal presence of Jesus. What the author of Hebrews is saying to all believers is that we need to run the race that God has laid before us and when we feel like our legs are about to give out from the weight, look straight to Jesus. Keep your eyes on the One that endured all the pain of the cross so that we might be brought back to Him. He didn't have to do it but out of His great love for us, He did! Jesus didn't look back as he faced the cross, He looked forward. He looked ahead to the joy that was before Him when all of God's people would be brought together as one redeemed people. God is the God of your past, the God of your present, and the God of your future. Keep your eyes on Him that shed His very blood for you

and keep moving forward knowing that every Christian that has ever ran, has not ran the race in vain. The time will come when this race is finally over, and we will be able to fully enjoy the prize of our salvation.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. Why do you think it is a bad idea to look behind you if you are trying to run forward? 2. What is the "prize" of being a Christian?- Being with God forever 3. What did Jesus look ahead to when He was about to go to the cross?- The redemption of God's people.	1. What do you think your greatest achievement is? 2. Can you honestly say that you would leave that achievement behind to push on towards Christ? 3. When will the Christian's race finally be over?	1. How can constantly looking back be a hinderance to your walk with Christ? 2. What motivates you to keep moving forward? 3. Do you think that there is a healthy balance between looking at your past and moving forward?

Day 25- Philippians 3:15-19

Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. [16] Only let us hold true to what we have attained. [17] Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. [18] For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. [19] Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.

Devotional

It cannot be overstated just how important it is to be surrounded by and to learn from good, Christ-centered leaders that truly know the Bible. It is one thing to know and teach the truth, it is another thing to know it, teach it, and live it out. Paul tells the Philippians that it is for their benefit for them to follow the example of good leaders. Paul knows that even the best Christians still have flaws but there are things in their lives that are worth imitating. Paul tells the church in Corinth, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). We should seek to imitate our leaders as long as our leaders are seeking to imitate Jesus. We need to be aware of the possibility that there are times when those that are in a position of leadership will claim to be representing Jesus and not actually be doing so. False teachers exist. Many of these teachers will claim to be faithfully representing Christianity but that is not true. If a teacher must change Scripture to make it line up with their teaching, it is not from the Lord. Christ must be at the heart of everything that is taught. Paul warns the Philippians that these false teachers have their priorities on their own goals and that their minds are not set only holy and heavenly things. What should be our response to false teachers? As we see in Paul, our hearts should break for them just like our hearts break for anyone that is lost. Every single person in the world needs Jesus as their Savior. Without Jesus, they are completely without hope. The world needs to know the true Gospel. If we know the truth we should seek to share the truth. We should seek to imitate Christ so that those that are "enemies of the cross of Christ" would see what it means to belong to Jesus. The world needs to see followers of Jesus that know the truth.

We should not be afraid to be like the people in Berea in Acts 17 and check everything by Scripture to make sure that what is being taught is true.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. Who is a good Bible teacher that you know? 2. Paul told the church that they should imitate him as long as he imitated one other person. Who was that other person? 3. How can we make sure that what someone says about Jesus is true?- Read and know the Bible	1. What do you think maturity looks like in Christianity? 2. Why should it not surprise us that Satan uses things that sound true to teach people false things? 3. What does it look like to have a heart that breaks for the lost?	1. What are some ways that false teaching can come close to the truths of Christianity? 2. Why do you think it is so easy for people that are knew to the Christian faith to be swept up into false teaching? 3. Have you ever personally been under the influence of false teachers? How were you able to tell that what they were teaching was wrong?

Day 26- Philippians 3:20-21

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21] who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Devotional

Citizenship was an important thing in Paul's day. Rome was the superpower of the world. Their territory stretched over most of Europe, the Middle East, and parts of Northern Africa. To be a Roman citizen came with certain perks. One example is that a Roman citizen would usually be protected from punishment like crucifixion or torture. People would even spend money to buy a Roman citizenship (Acts 22:26-28). Paul himself was a Roman citizen and while this awarded him some protection, we know that he still suffered as a Christian. Paul and the Christian's glory does not come from their birthright or their nationality. Paul and the Christian's boast comes from knowing that they belong to a better country and that they are citizens in heaven. The Christian's home is in heaven. The Christian is just passing through this world to get to his or her true home with Christ in heaven and when we arrive there, we won't ever be the same. Paul says that while we wait for our Savior now, we know that we will be transformed to be like Christ when He returns. How do we know that this will happen? It is because Jesus subjects all things to Himself. He is above all things and before all things. He is the Alpha and the Omega, and all power and authority belongs to Him. He that has the power to raise the dead and rescue lost sinners surely has the power to transform our bodies to be like His. We can be sure of it! Paul speaks of the future glory that we as Christians are to receive in such certain terms that it is like it has already happened. Paul writes in Romans 8:30, "And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified." We know that the day is coming when we will see Christ fully. That is one of the greatest perks of being citizens of Heaven. If you are a follower of Christ, live in light of your citizenship. You are a child of God and co-heir with Christ. Take your eyes off the things of this earth and

look to the glory of Heaven knowing that is your home. It is safe and secured in the arms of the God that has saved us.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What does it mean to be a citizen of a country? 2. What was a perk of being a Roman citizen in the 1st century? 3. Where is the citizenship of the Christian?- In Heaven	1. What do you think it means to be a citizen of Heaven? 2. How does Paul know that Jesus will be able to transform our earthly bodies to be like His heavenly body? 3. How can the certainty of the resurrection inspire us to live boldly for Christ now?	1. What does living as a citizen of Heaven while living on earth look like? 2. Why do you think that Paul talks about our future glorification as if it already happened (Romans 8:30)? 3. What are ways that you can show that you are a citizen of Heaven?

Day 27- Philippians 4:1-3 (2 hard names in this passage so the way to pronounce was added in- Pastor Brady)

Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. 2 I entreat Euodia (E-Oh-Diya) and I entreat Syntyche (Sin-Tiki) to agree in the Lord. 3 Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Devotional

It should be clear to all of us by now that Paul loved the Philippians. He looks forward to the day when he can be with them again, but we also know that he has accepted that Christ may have different plans for him. Paul so greatly loves the Philippians that he considers them his joy and his crown. What Paul means by this is that the Philippians were living and breathing proof that Paul was successful in his ministry. He reminds the believers that he loved so dearly that they need to stand firm in the Lord together. Then the awkward part happens. Paul names some names and tells them to get over their difference and agree in the Lord. It almost always feels awkward when you get called out for something but imagine how it felts to be called out by an apostle! And now you are in the Bible for the rest of time! Paul did not call out to these two women out of anger but due to his great love for them. To really be the church means that sometimes uncomfortable conversations need to happen. We aren't quite sure what the disagreement was, but Paul knew that if Euodia and Syntyche continued in their squabble that negative things could happen. Paul knew that the best thing for them to do was to have the church come together and help them in their disagreement. I think that when some people go to church, they think that the best thing to do is stay as uninvolved as possible. They want to come in late, sit in the back row, and then leave the second that the pastor says amen or the last note of the song is played. But is that the best use of the church? Absolutely not! The church, as flawed as it may be at times, is still what God uses to bring His people together. No church is perfect, but the true church of Jesus Christ exists to love God and to love their neighbor. One of the best ways

that the church can love you is to come alongside you when you are struggling. It is not unloving to call out behavior that is not beneficial to your physical, emotional, or spiritual life. It is unloving to know about the things that you are doing that are pushing you away from Christ and to say or do nothing about it. All Christians work together for the glory of God and for the good of every single person made in the image of God.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. Why do you think we feel embarrassed when people call us out for our behavior? 2. What do you do when you disagree or have an argument with someone? 3. Why is it important for Christians to get along and love each other?- Read John 13:34-35	1. Why did Paul call the Philippians his joy and his crown? 2. Why is it loving for the church to come together when church members disagree with one another? 3. Why do you think that people are often hesitant to open themselves up to others in the church?	1. What is your joy and crown? 2. Has the church ever come alongside you when you and someone else were disagreeing over something? 3. What can you do to support someone that is going through something within the church?

Day 28- Philippians 4:4-9

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. [5] Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; [6] do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [8] Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. [9] What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Devotional

There is a whole lot that is happening in these verses so I would encourage you to go back and read these again slowly. In Sinclair Ferguson's commentary, *Let's Study Philippians*, he divides these six verses into three relationships: Our relationship to God, our relationship with each other, and our relationship with ourselves. It's hard to top that so where in these verses do we see the Christian's relationship with God? In verse 4 Paul goes back to the main theme of the entire letter: Rejoicing. Where does that rejoicing come from? Not within ourselves or from our circumstances but we are to rejoice entirely in the Lord! There is no such thing as rejoicing too much when it comes to the things of God. You can have true joy in Jesus Christ. Jesus says in John 15:11, "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." A fullness and overflowing of joy can only come from Jesus. In verse 5 Paul points to our relationship with other people. He says that we are to let our reasonableness or gentleness to be known to everyone because the Lord is at hand. Sinclair Ferguson writes, "This command seems unrelated to the exhortation to rejoice; but there is a connection. The people who are joyful are those who have been delivered from an obsession with themselves and their immediate circumstances. But that is also a prerequisite to being gentle. The joyless person can never be a gentle person." Paul knows that the Lord could return at any moment and that reality should push all believers

to live in light of His return. That knowledge should shape and mold the way that we interact with others. In verses 6-9 Paul talks about the relationship that you personally have with yourself. There are ways that we are to live and ways that are we are to think. We can live lives without anxiety because we have peace with God and because we have peace with God, we can go to Him with all our prayers and requests knowing that He hears us. We are to pursue holy and righteous things, put those things into practice, and share those things with others. Do what is true, do what is honorable, do what is just, pure, lovely, and commendable. Live like Christ!

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What is the main theme of the book of Philippians?- To rejoice in the Lord 2. Is it possible to rejoice too much in Jesus? 3. What does it mean to have peace with God?	1. What are the three relationships that Paul mentions in these verses? 2. How does the second coming of Jesus help us to live less anxious lives? 3. How can you practice the things that Paul mentions in verses 6-8?	1. Do you think that you can confidently say that you rejoice in the Lord more now than you did when you were first saved? 2. What do you think it looks like for a Christian to have a fullness of joy? 3. Do you think that an unbeliever could look at you and sense a spirit of gentleness or reasonableness (Verse 5)?

Day 29- Philippians 4:10-13

I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. **11** Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. **12** I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. **13** I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Devotional

We know that Paul didn't have it easy as he was writing his letter to the Philippians. Living under Roman imprisonment was anything but comfortable Yet, Paul knew how to make the most of the situation as we have seen throughout this letter. Paul greatly valued the care and help that the Philippians gave to him, but he wanted them to know that his rejoicing did not depend on what the Philippians gave to him. Paul was content to have Jesus. If you have Jesus, you have everything you really need. Paul knew that he could rejoice with plenty, and he could rejoice with nothing. How could he do that? How could Paul look death in the face and say that he was not only content but could rejoice? It's because he knew that he served a God that was able to give him the strength to carry on. When Paul says in verse 13 that he could do all things through him that strengthened him, he wasn't talking about it as if he had superpowers. When Paul said he could do all things, he meant that he could do all the things that God had given him to do through the strength that only God could provide. That is a promise that every single Christian can take part in. If God has something for you to do, He will give you the strength and the joy to be able to do it. Charles Spurgeon said, "Paul here meant that he could endure all trials. It matters not what suffering his persecutors might put upon him, he felt that he was quite able, through divine grace, to bear it. He daily expected that he might be led out to die, and the daily expectation of death is bitterer than death itself. He was ready to be offered up, and made a sacrifice for his Master's cause. Every child of God, by faith, may say, 'I am able to do all things.'" God has a race for you to run and He will see to it that you finish it and the only way to finish it is

by relying on the strength that God so graciously provides. The “secret” to being able to endure all things with contentment is knowing that we serve a God that is working all things for His glory and our good.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What was happening to Paul while he was writing Philippians?- He was in prison 2. What was Paul’s attitude like while he was in prison? 3. If God has a job for you to do, how do you know that you will be able to do it?- Because God is going to accomplish exactly what He wants in the world.	1. What does it mean to be content? 2. What is the secret to being able to endure all things for Christ? 3. What task do you feel like the Lord has for you to do with your life?	1. What does it mean for a Christian to be able to do all things through Him that strengthens them? 2. How can Philippians 4:13 be taken out of context? 3. What are the dangers of taking a verse like Philippians 4:13 out of context?

Day 30- Philippians 4:14-18

Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. [15] And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. [16] Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. [17] Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. [18] I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

Devotional

It takes more than one person to make a church. Christians need to recognize the great need that exists to partner together for the Gospel. The Philippians were a church that went above and beyond when it came to Gospel partnership. From the day that Paul left Macedonia, no church supported him to the extent that the Philippians did. Even while in prison, Paul continued to be supported by the Philippians. Paul recognized that this partnership was crucial for believers. As believers partner together as the church, it is for the benefit for those that they are reaching, and it is beneficial for the believers. It is the visual reminder that they are serving as the hands and feet of Christ. As Christians come together, we need to make sure that we are doing something about the needs of others. It is important for Christians to support their leaders so that they can do the work of leading the church. It is important for Christians to support missionaries so that they can reach the world with the Gospel. It is important for Christians to come together and help those that are hurting. Christ has richly blessed us, and it is our turn to go and bless others. This doesn't mean that you need to give millions of dollars to the poor to be a partner in the Gospel. Giving is not what makes you a Christian. It is not the amount that matters; it is the heart and the motive behind the amount. To bless someone else with the love of Christ may look small to some but it does not go unnoticed. Jesus says in Matthew 10:42 that even a cup of cold water given to someone will not go unnoticed or unrewarded in the Kingdom of God. Luke 21:1-4 says, "Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering

box, and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And he said, 'Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on." It wasn't the amount that caused Jesus to say this, it was the motive that drove this poor widow to give. Before Jesus sees the help in your hands, He already knows the motive in your heart. How are you partnering with the church to show the world the glory of Christ?

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. Why do you think that it is important for Christians to come together to help church leaders? 2. What could you give to help the work of the church and are you willing to give something now to help others? 3. Prayer: Ask that God would give you a heart to partner with others for the Gospel	1. How is partnering together as the church beneficial for believers? 2. Do you think that being a Christian always requires sacrifice? 3. Prayer: Ask God that He would show you an area in your church where you could partner with someone for the Gospel.	1. What does partnering for the Gospel look like in your church context? 2. What are some ways that you have seen the church mobilize to help others? 3. Prayer: Ask that God would show you more opportunities where you could be a partner in the Gospel?

Day 31- Philippians 4:19-23

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. [20] To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. [21] Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. [22] All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. [23] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Devotional

As we reach the end of Paul's letter to the Philippians, there are a few important things that we need to be reminded of. Today we read five verses so we will look at five things that we need to be reminded of. The first reminder is that God is able to supply every single one of our needs. He may not supply everything that we want but we know that everything that we need to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever is already offered to us in Jesus. Heaven is ours, eternal life is ours, God Himself is ours! That is our greatest need met through the riches of Jesus Christ, and we cannot forget that. The world's greatest need is the Savior: Jesus Christ. The second reminder is that God will be glorified forever and ever. Nothing can stop the Gospel. Death, sin, and Satan have no claim on God. Jesus rose victoriously over the grave and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord. God will be glorified forever and ever. The third reminder is that one of the great gifts that God has given to man is the church. The church isn't perfect yet, but it is the Body and Bride of Christ. It is that which Christ paid for with His blood. If you are a Christian, the church contains your brothers and sisters in the faith. Love them. Pray for them. Serve with them for the glory of God. The fourth reminder is that the Gospel always wins and God will see to it that it gets to where it needs to be. You just have to be faithful to what He has given you. In verse 22, Paul notes that even those within Caesar's household have been changed by the Gospel. The Gospel found its way into the household of the very emperor and power that had Paul imprisoned. God is the God of the impossible and He will do impossible things to reach the lost. The final reminder that we have is that we need the grace of God. We need God to show His gracious favor to us. He owes us nothing and yet He freely gives us everything. May we boldly ask for grace that we do not deserve and do it confidently because we know

that our God is a God full of grace and mercy. Jesus has shown tremendous grace to us. Now go and show that grace to others.

Questions

Elementary Age	Middle & High School Age	Adults
1. What place did Paul say that the Gospel was able to reach where it wasn't able to reach before?- Caesar's household 2. What is something that you learned from spending 1 month in Philippians? 3. What is the greatest need that every single person in the world needs?- A Savior.	1. Which of the five reminders did you need to be reminded about the most today? 2. What is something that you learned from spending 1 month in Philippians? 3. What is something from this study that you want to share with someone else?	1. In what ways is the church a gift of God to the world? 2. What is something that you learned from spending 1 month in Philippians? 3. Which of these five reminders have you found to be the most helpful?