

A SERIES IN
PHILIPPIANS



UNITY / HUMILITY /
SUFFERING / JOY

“Why the bowl on the front cover?”



'Kintsugi' is the practice of mending broken pottery with gold, acknowledging that things that are used and broken and mended are made more beautiful. In such a simple, little object there are:

*Echoes of **unity** in being held together by Christ.*

*Echoes of **humility** in using broken things.*

*Echoes of **suffering** in the gold-filled cracks.*

*Echoes of **joy** in seeing purposefulness despite harm.*

Philippians: UNITY / HUMILITY / SUFFERING / JOY

Why *this* letter, to *this* people, at *this* time?

The Philippian Converts, Church and City

Philippi was located at the far eastern end of a large fertile plain in central Macedonia. Along with all Macedonia, Philippi came under Roman control in 168, and according to Luke it was 'the leading city of that district of Macedonia' (Acts 16:11). Modelled on the mother city, Rome, it was laid out and styled similarly. It was located near Mount Pangaion, which had large deposits of gold and other valuable minerals. By the time Paul came to the city in 49 CE (Acts 16:11-15), Philippi had become the urban political centre of the eastern plain, one of the most important cities in the region.



Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke himself (one of the 'we' passages, it actually begins in Acts 16.10 – returns to 'they' at the end of the chapter, some suggest this means that he may have been left in Philippi and may be the 'true companion' of Philippians 4.3) were amongst the entourage that went to Philippi and founded the church. Acts 16.11-40 gives a well-detailed description of the founding of this church. We know very little of the socio-economic makeup of the congregation aside from the initial converts.

The first convert was a wealthy god-fearing Gentile woman named Lydia. She had been attracted to the Jewish faith and due to having no synagogue inside the city walls, she along with others met informally by the river Gangites. Paul explained the gospel to Lydia and the 'Lord opened Lydia's heart' and she responded to the truth (Acts 16:14). She and her whole household are baptized and then welcome Paul and his companions to stay with her. That she could extend such hospitality suggests she had a villa aiding in our understanding of her wealth and the mixed socio-economic range.

The second convert was a slave girl with an 'evil spirit.' Her exorcism by Paul and the subsequent events give an insight into the religious climate and political sensitivity in Philippi. She is exorcised, at the name of Jesus, enraging the masters of the slave girl, who made their livelihood from her future telling abilities. Paul and Silas are accused of

sending the city into 'uproar,' having been dragged into the marketplace, they are stripped and beaten at the order of the magistrate and thrown into gaol.

The third convert, the gaoler. Whilst in prison, the suffering they experience for the name of Christ produces great joy in both Paul and Silas. With incredible faithfulness they pray and sing hymns to God in prison. After an earthquake allows for the opportunity to escape the men stay within the prison and prevent the once sleeping gaoler from killing himself. Paul and Silas have the opportunity explain to him what he must do to be saved; 'believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved – you and your household.' The gaoler and his family are baptised and demonstrates his newfound faith, ministering to Paul and Silas, filled with joy.

Women seem to have played a significant role in the Philippian church, providing for the missionaries physical needs as well as working side by side with them in preaching the gospel. The status of women in Macedonia, of all the Greek provinces, the status and importance of women was well known. Acts 16:40 makes it clear that there are other believers, 'other brothers,' referring to both men and women. But these individuals give us a snapshot into the Philippian church – a mixed bag of believers.

The Philippian church is also mentioned in 2 Corinthians 8 where they are one of the Macedonian churches Paul writes warmly about. Thought in extreme poverty and severe affliction they gave according to their means and beyond! An attitude that came out of first giving themselves to the Lord, and then Paul, producing in them an abundance of joy despite their situation of suffering. Paul's relationship with the Philippians appears very warm. He had maintained links with them through Timothy (Acts 19:21-22) and stayed with them on at least two other occasions (see Acts 20:1-3 and 2 Cor 1:16, 2:13). It is no surprise, then, that this letter has such a personal tone, one full of love and concern but also joy and thanksgiving for and in them.

Purpose:

Paul sought to encourage his dear Christian brothers and sisters in their 'progress in the faith' (1:25); to stand firm united in the gospel of Jesus, to live humble lives full of joy within difficult circumstances, just as they saw Paul living.

'Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.'

Phil 1:27

Paul clearly writes this letter 'in chains,' meaning imprisonment. This imprisonment was serious, for his trial could result in life or death. Most commentators suggest that it was written toward the end of his two year imprisonment in Rome, in the early 60s CE

(between 60 and 62). The occasion of the letter appears to stem from the Philippians sending Epaphroditus with a gift, continuing the commitment of 'friendship' through 'giving and receiving.' The situation within Philippi is reported by Epaphroditus, which involved suffering and opposition at the hands of their pagan neighbours and some internal unrest. As a result of Epaphroditus illness, Paul has an opportunity to send a letter to the Philippians where by he can express his gratefulness and encourage them to progress in their faith amid the opposition and unrest. Paul uses his own circumstance and trial, of which the church in Philippi was concerned, to explain the advancement of the gospel. Paul also warns them strongly regarding Jewish propaganda that sought to pervert the gospel of grace.

Although this is a personal letter, it has been constructed very carefully. It may well have used Greco-Roman rhetoric to convey the full import of his message to the Philippians.

Structure:

- 1:1-11 Introductory matters: Thanksgiving and Prayer
- 1:12-26 The priority of the Gospel: Paul's affairs
- 1:27-4:3 – *The main body – unity, humility and joy for the gospel***
- 1:27-2:11 Conduct worthy of the gospel
 - United in and by Christ (1:27-30)
 - Christ like humility (2:1-11)
- 2:12-18 Advancement despite opposition, obedience and joy
- 2:19-30 The examples of Paul, Timothy and Ephaphroditus
- 3:1-11 Have confidence in the cross through submission to Christ
- 3:12-4:1 Pressing on, striving toward glory
- 4:2-23 Rejoicing together in peace, partnering in the gospel

Our series in Philipians:

3/05	Phil 1:1-11	THANKS / LONGING / JOY / CHAINS	Brett
10/05	Phil 1:12-26	GROWTH / CONDUCT	Brett
17/05	Phil 1:27-2:11	UNITY / HUMILITY	Brett
24/05	Phil 2:12-18	AVOID DISUNITY / SUFFER JOY	Andrew
31/05	Phil 2:19-30	BELIEF / BEHAVIOUR	Ange
7/06	Phil 3:1-11	CONFIDENCE / SUBMISSION	Brett
14/06	Phil 3:12-4:1	EFFORT / EXAMPLE	Luke

How to use this booklet:

1. Personal Reading

- Use this guide to help you read your Bible every day.
- Scribble down your thoughts and questions each day.
- The 5 daily studies for each week are *in preparation* for the upcoming sermon on Sunday.
- Although some days you will be focussing on just a couple of verses, it is always great to read the whole chapter again to help put what you are reading into context.
- Each devotion should take approximately 10 minutes - if you would like to dive deeper: ask more questions, read back over yesterday's points, or read the surrounding text. If you can make and take more time, go for it!
- By spending 8 weeks studying this letter, the goal is that you will have read it many times and have studied it in depth.
- Take your time and enjoy God's word.

2. Prayer

- In some places, prayer ideas are given as a suggestion. In other places, the prayer has been left blank. This is for you to complete with your own requests, confessions and thanks. At times your prayers may be prompted by the passage, but there is room to pray for whatever is happening in your life each day.

3. Church

- Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to church.
- Scribble down sermon notes in the space provided after each week.

Sermons and digital booklet available at:

www.narweebaptist.org.au

Week 1 - Philippians 1:1-11

THANKS / LONGING / JOY / CHAINS

Monday

Read Philippians 1

- What are your first thoughts when you read this chapter?
- What stands out?
- What questions do you have?

Note: Paul is "in chains". If you were imprisoned, would your writing tone be like his?

Tuesday

Read Philippians 1:1-2

- How does this introduction compare to other letters that Paul wrote?
(see Eph 1 & Rom 1 and make a list of similarities and differences)

Similarities	Differences

Unlike in other co-sent letters, in Phil 1:1 Paul refers to both himself and Timothy as 'slaves' or 'servants' - already demonstrating the humble equality and unity he will speak of.

- To help us understand why Paul went to Philippi and a little about the beginning of the Philippian church, **read Acts 16:6-40.**
- What is the significance of the "grace" and "peace" mentioned in v2? Who is it 'from'?

Wednesday

Read Philippians 1:3-6

- Who does Paul say he is praying for?
- With what attitude is he praying?
- Why is he praying these prayers?

Now apply these 3 questions to your life:

- Who are you praying for?
- With what attitude are you praying?
- Why are you praying these prayers?

One last thought: v6 says it is God who will complete the good work that He began in you. How does this change the way you will face your day today?

Thursday

Read Philippians 1:7-8

- What is Paul's attitude toward the Philippians?
- Why would Paul mention his circumstances?
- Like Paul says in v7, you "share in God's grace" with other Christians. How does this affect the way you treat others?

Friday

Read Philippians 1:9-11

- What aspect of this prayer stands out to you?
- What does Paul want them to abound in? Why?
- What do you think the following terms mean:
 - Pure -
 - Blameless –
 - Fruit of righteousness –
- Why would Paul want these to be such a high priority for the Philippians?

Pray that God will continue to teach you from this part of His word this Sunday at church.

UNITY / HUMILITY / SUFFERING / JOY

Sermon notes - 3/05/15

Philippians 1:1-11

THANKS / LONGING / JOY / CHAINS

Week 2 - Philippians 1:12-26

G R O W T H / C O N D U C T

Monday

Read Philippians 1

- What are your thoughts when you read this chapter, after studying the first part last week and hearing the sermon yesterday?
- What stands out now?
- What questions do you have?

Tuesday

Read Philippians 1:12-14

- How has Paul's imprisonment affected other Christians (v14)?
- How might this have given others the confidence mentioned?

Pray for the persecuted church, that they may be encouraged to continue to proclaim the gospel.

Wednesday

Read Philippians 1:15-18

- What preaching motives are mentioned here?
- What ultimately matters?
- Are you glad when Christ is preached (regardless of the motive)? Why is this reaction significant?

Thursday

Read Philippians 1:19-24

- What does Paul “know” and “hope” for? How are these two things related?
- Paul wants Christ to be honoured in his body (v20) – what does this mean, and to what extent is he willing to go?

- Although Paul knows dying and being with Christ is the better option (v23), what does he see as a higher priority?

Memorise v21. Pray that God will further develop this selfless attitude in you so that you can live/die for His glory.

Friday

Read Philippians 1:25-26

- Recap from yesterday - what is Paul "convinced of"?
- What outcomes (v25 and v26) does Paul intend to see by being with the Philippians?
- What is the object of their joy? Why is so Paul concerned about what brings them joy?

Pray that God's living and active word (Heb 4:12) will continue to have an impact on you as we focus on these verses on Sunday at church.

UNITY / HUMILITY / SUFFERING / JOY

Sermon notes - 10/05/15

Philippians 1:12-26

GROWTH / CONDUCT

Week 3 - Philippians 1:27-2:11

UNITY / HUMILITY

Monday

Read Philippians 1:27-30 and Philippians 2

- What are your initial thoughts when you read this next section of the letter?
- What are the highlights?
- What questions do you have?

Tuesday

Read Philippians 1:27-30

- Why does Paul want the Philippians conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ?
- What does this behaviour look like (v27-28)? What does it reveal regarding God's people?

- What things are granted to believers? (v29)
- How does Paul know this to be true for the Philippians? (v30)

Pray specifically for the other people in your Home Group that they may live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Wednesday

Read Philippians 2:1-4

Philippians 2 starts with a 'therefore' followed by a list of 'ifs':

- What is the word "therefore" there for?
- Make a list of the 'ifs'; what is the source of these things?
- Make a list of all of the instructions Paul gives in v2-4.
- If you had to use one word to describe what Paul is talking about, what would it be?

Pray that you might look to the interests of others.

Thursday

Read Philippians 2:5-8

- Have a go at writing these verses out in your own words:

- If the Lord and Saviour you follow “humbled himself” and was “obedient” (v8), how important are the attributes to you?

Pray that God would be glorified as you humble yourself and obey Him.

Friday

Read Philippians 2:9-11

- What does it mean that God gave Jesus the “name above every name”?

- How does it make you feel that all will bow before and confess that Jesus is Lord?

- How do your words, actions, habits and thoughts reflect that Jesus is Lord?

Pray for those you know who don't already acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

UNITY / HUMILITY / SUFFERING / JOY

Sermon notes - 17/05/15

Philippians 1:27-2:11

UNITY / HUMILITY

Week 4 - Philippians 2:12-18

AVOID DISUNITY / SUFFER JOY

Monday

Read Philippians 2

- What are your first thoughts when you read this chapter?
- What stands out?
- What questions do you have?

Tuesday

Read Philippians 2:12-13

- How does Paul encourage his friends to be obedient? (v12)
- What enables the Philippians to do this? (v13)
- With these things in mind, try to write these verses in your own words.

Today, pray boldly and specifically for the people closest to you. Having considered verse 13, pray this for yourself.

Wednesday

Read Philippians 2:14-15

- Why are the people encouraged to do everything without complaining or grumbling? (v15)
- What might complaining and grumbling reflect about the community?
- What do you think “shine among them like stars in the sky” could be referring to?

Thursday

Read Philippians 2:16

- What is the link between verse 15 and verse 16?
- What does Paul hope to boast in?

- What might it mean for Paul to “run or labor for nothing”?

In light of all this, pray for perseverance for one of the missionaries listed in this week’s church bulletin.

Friday

Read Philippians 2:17-18

- What is a “drink offering”? (See Numbers 28:7)

- It is appropriate that there is mutual joy between Paul and the Philippians. What reasons did Paul have to rejoice?

Rejoice in prayer for all the things that you have to rejoice in.

UNITY / HUMILITY / SUFFERING / JOY

Sermon notes - 24/05/15

Philippians 2:12-18

AVOID DISUNITY / SUFFER JOY

Week 5 - Philippians 2:19-30

BELIEF / BEHAVIOUR

Monday

Read Philippians 2

- What are your thoughts when you read this chapter again?
- What stands out this time?
- What questions do you have?

Tuesday

Read Philippians 2:19-21

- Why does Paul hope to send Timothy?
- How is Timothy like no other?
- How does this relate to verse 4?
- How does verse 21 provide more insight into Timothy's character?

Wednesday

Read Philippians 2:22-24

- How has Timothy proved himself?
- What might it mean that Timothy has served like a father-and-son team with Paul?
- What is Paul confident of?
- Why is this striking?

Pray for opportunities to serve in the work of the gospel alongside your brothers and sisters in Christ like Paul and Timothy did.

Thursday

Read Philippians 2:25-27

- What is the significance of Paul calling Epaphroditus:
 - a. His “brother”?
 - b. His “fellow worker”?
 - c. His “fellow soldier”?

- Verse 27 mentions God having mercy on Epaphroditus and on Paul. Why would Paul write this?

Pray that each person in your Home Group would love God and others, following this example that we have read about today.

Friday

Read Philippians 2:28-30

- Why is Paul “all the more eager to send” Epaphroditus?

- Why should the Philippians welcome Ephaphroditus in the Lord with great joy and honour men like him? (v30)

Pray that we will be a church that is welcoming and expresses great joy and honour to help others. Also pray that God would continue to teach you more from this week’s passage and that you will be able to apply His word for His glory.

UNITY / HUMILITY / SUFFERING / JOY

Sermon notes - 31/05/15

Philippians 2:19-30

BELIEF / BEHAVIOUR

Week 6 - Philippians 3:1-11

CONFIDENCE / SUBMISSION

Monday

Read Philippians 3

- What are your initial thoughts when you read this chapter?
- What stands out in this section of the letter?
- What questions do you have?

Tuesday

Read Philippians 3:1-4a

- What is Paul referring to when he says, “it is no trouble for me to write the same things” in verse 1?
- Why is repeating himself a safeguard?
- Why do you think Paul is so strong in his language in verse 2?

- Who does Paul call “the circumcision”? What might he mean by this?

Pray that God will continue to transform each of us at Narwee as we explore the rest of the letter over the next 3 weeks.

Wednesday

Read Philippians 3:4b-6

- Paul explains his pre-Christian confidence, rooted in his Jewish heritage, privileges and attainments (tomorrow we’ll start looking at his confidence in Christ). Why would Paul explain his ability to boast?

Today, pray this verse from the song, “How Deep the Father’s Love For Us”:

***I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ
His death and resurrection***

Continue praying that you will not boast in the confidence you might have “in the flesh”.

Thursday

Read Philippians 3:7-9

- What is Paul’s testimony in verse 7?

- What does Paul consider “rubbish”? Why?
- How does Paul say righteousness is attained?

Pray that you might resound with Paul’s testimony in verse 7. Spend some time reflecting on “the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus [your] Lord”.

Friday

Read Philippians 3:10-11

- What does Paul want?
- What does that achieve for him?
- Does this section portray confidence or doubt?

Pray verses 10 and 11.

UNITY / HUMILITY / SUFFERING / JOY

Sermon notes - 7/06/15

Philippians 3:1-11

CONFIDENCE / SUBMISSION

Week 7 - Philippians 3:12-4:1

EFFORT / EXAMPLE

Monday

Read Philippians 3 and 4:1

- What are your thoughts when you read this part of the letter to the Philippian church?
- What are the highlights in this section?
- What questions do you have?

Tuesday

Read Philippians 3:12-16

- What is Paul “pressing on” toward? Why?
- How does this relate to 3:10-11?
- What is “the prize”?
- How is that we have already attained this but must “press on” toward it?

Pray for our pastors that God will strengthen them as they “press on”.

Wednesday

Read Philippians 3:17-19

- Who is Paul saying that the Philippians should imitate?
- Use verse 19 to fill in the description of “enemies of the cross of Christ”:
 - Their destiny is _____
 - Their god is their _____
 - Their glory is in their _____
 - Their mind is set on _____
- Why is Paul upset in verse 18a?

Pray that as a church we will follow and set godly examples.

Thursday

Read Philippians 3:20-21

- Where are Christians citizens of?
- In verse 20, Jesus is described as Lord, Christ and Saviour. What do these words mean?
 - Lord –
 - Christ –
 - Saviour –

- Why is Paul eagerly awaiting for Jesus return? (v20b)

- What will Jesus do when He returns from heaven? (v21)

Praise God for His plan!

Friday

Read Philippians 4:1

- What words and phrases does Paul use to describe the Philippians? What does this remind us again of the type of relationship he had with the Philippians?

- Looking back over this week's devotions, summarise how Paul is telling them to "stand firm".

- Matthew Henry comments on the call to *stand firm*: "The believing hope and prospect of eternal life should engage us to be steady, even, and constant, in our Christian course." How does an eternal perspective lead to steadfastness?

Pray that God will continue to grow you from this section of His word on Sunday at church.

UNITY / HUMILITY / SUFFERING / JOY

Sermon notes - 14/06/15

Philippians 3:12-4:1

EFFORT / EXAMPLE

Week 8 - Philippians 4:2-23

THINK / DO / REJOICE / SACRIFICE

Monday

Read Philippians 4

- What are your thoughts when you read this last chapter of the letter?
- What stands out?
- What questions do you have?

Tuesday

Read Philippians 4:2-7

- In verse 2, Paul pleads for Christian unity. Why would he do this?
- Can you see connections to other parts of this letter?
- When does Paul say to “rejoice in the Lord”? (v4)
- Instead of being anxious, what does Paul instruct in verse 6?
- What is the outcome of this? (v7)

Wednesday

Read Philippians 4:8-9

- What is Paul asking them to consider? How is this broadening the scope but keeping it limited?
- The thoughts in verse 8 are preparation for the purposeful action in verse 9. What is the call to purposeful action in verse 9?

Thank God that He is the God of peace. Let that idea guide your prayers today.

Thursday

Read Philippians 4:10-14

- In Phil 4:10–20 Paul returns to a theme of chapter 1—the Philippians’ partnership in the gospel (1:5), especially their financial support. In verse 11, what does he say that he has “learned”?
- Why is this such a powerful thing to read?

- Who provides Paul with strength to “be content whatever the circumstances”? (v13)

Reflect on if you are currently “in need” or “have plenty” (v12). Praise God for strengthening you to be content in any and every situation.

Friday

Read Philippians 4:15-23

- How does Paul see the Philippians’ gifts? (v18b)
- What does verse 19 mean?
- How does Paul’s final greeting (v20 and v23) relate to Paul’s initial greeting in chapter 1?
- Having studied the entire letter, how does this provide depth to these words?

Pray that what you have learnt in this series will lead to further growth. Thank God for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. “To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

UNITY / HUMILITY / SUFFERING / JOY

Sermon notes - 21/06/15

Philippians 4:2-20

THINK / DO / REJOICE / SACRIFICE

Notes:

Other Events:

The Alpha Course is an opportunity to explore the Christian faith over dessert and coffee. It will be running over five Mondays, starting May 18th (May 18 and 25, June 1, 15 and 22) and will be held in the Upstairs Meeting Rooms.

To join, please contact the church office by Sunday May 17, by email (churchoffice@narweebaptist.org.au) or by calling 9534 2699



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A SERIES IN
PHILIPPIANS

NARWEE BAPTIST CHURCH, 2015