

## Who wrote the book

## PHILIPPIANS overview

Paul ministered at Philippi during his second missionary journey, spending about three months in the city. The ministry at Philippi marked Paul's entrance into Macedonia, which came about as a result of a vision he had in the city of Troas, just across the northeastern corner of the Aegean Sea from the port city of Neapolis and its close neighbour Philippi ([Acts 16:8–12](#)).

During this first stay in Philippi—he later briefly visited the city on his third missionary journey Paul brought to faith in Christ people who would form the core of the burgeoning congregation in the city. Among them were Lydia, a businesswoman who opened her home to Paul and his co-workers ([Acts 16:13–15](#)), and the Philippian jailer, who was converted under Paul's ministry after an earthquake miraculously broke open the prison ([Acts 16:22–34](#)).

## Where are we?

Of the four Prison Epistles, Paul likely wrote Philippians last, near the end of his Roman imprisonment in AD 61 or 62. Paul sent the other three Prison Epistles—Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon—by the hand of Tychicus, as their destinations were near one another. However, the letter to the Philippians was to be delivered by Epaphroditus, who had come to Paul in Rome with financial help from the church at Philippi ([Philippians 2:25; 4:18](#)). But during his time in Rome, Epaphroditus took ill, which delayed his return home and, therefore, the delivery of the letter ([Philippians 2:26–27](#)).

## Why is Philippians so important?

The apostle Paul did not write Philippians in response to a crisis, as he did with Galatians and Colossians. Instead, he wrote to express his appreciation and affection for the Philippian believers. More than any other church, the believers in Philippi offered Paul material support for his ministry (2 Corinthians 8:11; [Philippians 4:15–18](#)). Paul's affection for these people is clear throughout the letter as he encouraged them to live out their faith in joy and unity ([Philippians 1:3–5, 25–26; 4:1](#)).

## A basic idea of this letter!

Philippians brims over with often quoted passages: “He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” ([Philippians 1:6](#)), “To live is Christ and to die is gain” ([Philippians 1:21](#)), and “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” ([Philippians 4:13](#)) are just a few. But the portrait of Jesus Christ as a humble servant serves as the core of Paul's teaching in this letter ([Philippians 2:5–11](#)).

Paul's joy at the mere thought of the Philippian church is undeniable in the letter, and it's that same joy that he wanted the recipients to possess as well. To lead the Philippians to this truth, Paul took them directly to Jesus, teaching them that a community of believers living in harmony with one another comes only through mutual humility modelled after the Saviour. Paul wrote that he poured out his life as an offering for the sake of Christ, leading Paul to find great joy and contentment in Christ's service. His letter to the Philippians showed them that by centring their lives on Christ, they, too, might live in true joy.

## How do I apply this

Though we all have much to be thankful for, the pace and the pressure of life often squeeze the joy from us. Our shoulders slumped and our heads bowed, we find some days—or months—very difficult to get through. Desperate, we often search for joy in all kinds of ways—acquiring possessions, visiting places, or seeing people. But none of these can provide lasting joy. Where do you find joy in the midst of a trying circumstance?

Paul knew, as did the Philippians, that true joy comes only through humble faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ, joining ourselves in harmony with His followers, and serving others in the name of Christ. This was the life experienced by the Philippian believers, and it is a life available to us today. Allow the joy you find in Christ to keep you from useless quarrels and divisions and to instead guide you into harmonious relationships with God's people.

## THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE

### Philippians

Lord's Words Red Old Testament reference blue man's words pink

**1:1** Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons :

**1:2** Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**1:3** I thank my God every time I remember you.

**1:4** In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy

**1:5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,

**1:6** being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

**1:7** It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me.

**1:8** God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

**1:9** And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,

**1:10** so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,

**1:11** filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

**1:12** Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.

**1:13** As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.

**1:14** And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

**1:15** It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill.

**1:16** The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defence of the gospel.

**1:17** The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains.

**1:18** But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,

**1:19** for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

**1:20** I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

**1:21** For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

**1:22** If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!

**1:23** I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;

**1:24** but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

**1:25** Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith,

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**1:26** so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

**1:27** Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel

**1:28** without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God.

**1:29** For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him,

**1:30** since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

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## Chapter 2

**2:1** Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,

**2:2** then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

**2:3** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,

**4 2:**not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

**2:5** In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

**2:6** Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

**2:7** rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

**2:8** And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

**2:9** Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

**2:10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

**2:11** and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**2:12** Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,

**2:13** for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose.

**2:14** Do everything without grumbling or arguing,

**2:15** so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky

**2:16** as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labour in vain.

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**2:17** But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.

**2:18** So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

**2:19** I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you.

**2:20** I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare.

**2:21** For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

**2:22** But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.

**2:23** I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me.

**2:24** And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

**2:25** But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.

**2:26** For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill.

**2:27** Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

**2:28** Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety.

**2:29** So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honour people like him,

**2:30** because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

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## Chapter 3

**3:1** Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.

**3:2** Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh.

**3:3** For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh

**3:4** though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:

**3:5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee;

**3:6** as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

**3:7** But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

**3:8** What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ

**3:9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

**3:10** I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

**3:11** and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

**3:12** Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

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**3:13** Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,

**3:14** I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

**3:15** All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.

**3:16** Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

**3:17** Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.

**3:18** For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

**3:19** Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.

**3:20** But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

**3:21** who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

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## Chapter 4

**4:1** Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

**4:2** I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

**4:3** Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

**4:4** Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

**4:5** Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

**4:6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

**4:7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**4:8** Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

**4:9** Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

**4:10** I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

**4:11** I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

**4:12** I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

**4:13** I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

**4:14** Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

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**4:15** Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only;

**4:16** for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need.

**4:17** Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account.

**4:18** I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

**4:19** And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

**4:20** To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**4:21** Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings.

**4:22** All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

**4:23** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.