



PAUL'S EPISTLE  
TO THE  
PHILIPPIANS

# **Week 2 - Philippians**

## **Agenda**

- Inspiration**
- Intro to Epistles**
- Historical Context, Literary Genre, Interpretive Process**
- Philippians 1:1 - 1:11**

# **The Bible - “Inspired”**

**We say the Bible is inspired- what does that mean?**

**“The Biblical use of the word ‘inspired’- is a term used only once, in Paul’s second letter to Timothy- shows that inspiration is grounded not in the response of the hearers, nor in the subjective experience of the writers, but in the fact that ‘all Scripture is God-breathed. This is the literal meaning of the word translated ‘inspired’ ”**

## **II Timothy 3:16**

**“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man (person) of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”**

# **God is the Source**

**“The words originally written by the human writers were the words of God...”**

**The Bible is both divinely inspired and fully human.**

**People who desired to be used of God...were. They were given, instructed, guided to write in the way they did.**

**But the inspiring, originating source is God.... Breathing life into scripture for our benefit**

# **God's Word for Us**

**It is wonderful that God loves us, values us, understands us; and out of that understanding gives us God-breathed words to guide us, so we can live lives that honor the God who has made a way for our salvation.**

# **Introduction: Letters - 1st Century**

**Letters comprise about a third of the New Testament.**

**They tell us what the Apostles and their associates taught.**

**They combine teaching about God and the Christian Gospel with instruction on life and behavior.**

**They are “Situational” or “Occasional”; written to address specific concerns.**

# Captivity Letters

**This group of New Testament letters includes Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon. In each Paul notes his incarceration.**

**Where - We are not specifically told. Most support for his Roman imprisonment. Some think Caesarea; others Ephesus.**



# **Setting of the Letters**

**Ascertaining the historical setting, or context, of each of the letters is often times difficult.**

**Acts becomes our historical keystone.**

**The letters are not systematic or progressional, with the exception of I & II Corinthians, I & II Timothy, I & II Thessalonians in which ideas or concerns carry from one book/ letter to the next.**

**The letters are dynamic- set in the life of the church - “not stereotyped”.**

# **Guidelines for Understanding Epistles**

# **Last Week - Historical Context**

**Establish the Historical Context.**

**As told by one Holy Spirit inspired author, Luke, in the Book of Acts.**

**Take Aways**

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**God is changing the game** - fulfilling the O.T. Promise - Messiah come to set them free (from sin)

**Holy Spirit is directing traffic** - empowering - comforting - signs and wonders - Growing the Church

**Believers** are living life in unity and in the power of the Spirit - Rejoicing!

# **Rejoicing! However,...**

**There were constant challenges to the Good News**

**True in Philippi - Acts 16 - Gentiles threatened Paul - beaten**

**Book of Philippians - both from within and outside the church**

# **Goal: Historical Context**

**“...to form a tentative but informed reconstruction of the situation that the author is speaking to.”**

# **Literary Interpretive Guidelines**

**Ancient Letters were written in the following form:**

- 1.Name of the writer**
- 2.Name of the recipient**
- 3.Greeting**
- 4.Prayer wish or thanksgiving**
- 5.Body**
- 6.Final greeting and farewell**

# Occasional Documents

**These letters are “arising out of and intended for a specific occasion.”**

**“Although inspired by the Holy Spirit and thus belonging to all time, they were first written out of the context of the author to the context of the original recipients.”**



# **Task Theology**

**These letters are not theological treatises.**

**What we learn is theology at the service of a need.**

**Also theology that is grounded in the Old Testament and transformed by the saving act of Christ, fulfilling the promise of the Father to anoint, baptize, fill believers with the Holy Spirit and empower them/ us to serve God.**

# **Interpretive Approach**

**Use the information gleaned from our historical and literary research**

**Comfortable knowledge of the Book/ Text**

**Reading and re-reading the Book (best in one sitting)**

**Develop an outline of the book**

**Paragraph divisions (natural/logical divisions)**

**One-two sentence synopsis of the paragraph (What's the point?)**

**Progression of the authors thought/ argument**

# **Benefit**

**Understanding what the original author conveyed to his readers allows me to see if there is an application I can make, as I attempt to live a God-honoring life.**

**God-honoring application is based upon right understanding of the text.**

# **Example: Philippians 1:1-11**

# **Form - 1st Century Letter**

- 1.Name of the writer**
- 2.Name of the recipient**
- 3.Greeting**
- 4.Prayer wish or thanksgiving**
- 5.Body**
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**1.Name of the writer - Paul and Timothy**

**2.Name of the recipient**

**3.Greeting**

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**1.Name of the writer - Paul and Timothy**

**2.Name of the recipient - All the saints at Philippi, bishops/deacons**

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- 1.Name of the writer - Paul and Timothy**
- 2.Name of the recipient - All the saints at Philippi, bishops/deacons**
- 3.Greeting - Grace to you and peace from God/ Christ**
- 4.Prayer wish or thanksgiving**
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# **Prayer wish or thanksgiving**

**Look at 1:3-11 as a paragraph/ section/ that delineates Paul's desire for his readers:**

**3 Paul has fond feelings for the Philippians**

**4-6 He prays joyfully and thankfully for their partnership**

**6 He is certain God will continue developing them**

**7-8 Whatever Paul's situation he maintains a kindred spirit with them**

**9 Prayer specifics: Their love may grow with knowledge and discernment. They approve the excellent, being filled with the fruits of righteousness. Resulting in being pure and blameless at Christ's return.**

# **What's the Point?**

**1-2 Standard Greeting**

**3-11 I love you and am thankful for our partnership. I pray, with certainty, God will develop you into those who abound in knowledgeable and discerning love, so you embrace what is Godly, are filled with righteousness and stand pure and blameless at Christ's return.**

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**Issue: Cultural Relativity**

**We want to clearly understand the text to distinguish "... what is cultural and therefore belongs to the first century alone and what transcends culture and is thus a Word for all seasons".**

# **Obstacles to Application**

**Central: “...our lack of consistency”.**

**Bring “...theological heritage, our ecclesiastical traditions, our cultural norms or our existential concerns...” to the interpretive process.**

**The result: selectivity. We emphasize one verse, concept, principle at the expense of others.**

# **Application Guidelines**



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**Distinguish the cultural options available.**

**Distinguish differences between 21st century and 1st century culture.**

**Exercise Christian charity for those with a different emphasis.**

# **Look Again..1:1-1:11**

**Anything from the central core message of the Bible?**

**Any delineation of New Testament morality?**

**Anything uniform and consistent throughout the New Testaments?**

**Any New Testament principles? Unique ideas or application?**

**Any cultural issues?**

**Any clear differences between 21st century and 1st century culture.**

**Anything about which to extend charity?**



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**Possible principle: As we “abound” in knowledgeable and discerning love we will live righteously, blamelessly and purely. This results in bringing glory and praise to God, when Christ returns.**

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Psalm 119:11

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**“I have laid up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”**

# **For next time...**

**Read Philippians in one sitting (often).**

**Develop a skeletal paragraph driven outline for chapter 1 (or more)**

**Write a one-two sentence statement for each paragraph**

**Write a brief statement regarding Paul's progression of thought in chapter 1.**