The Salutation of Paul's Letter to the Philippians
Philippians 1:1-2

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. It is significant that the term, "overseer," is plural.

2. It is significant that only two church offices are mentioned.

Practical Application

1. Are you a saint or an ain't?

Questions

1. Discuss Paul's circumstances at the time he wrote this letter.

2. How did the Philippian church come into being?

3. What was the problem that prompted Paul to write this letter?

4. What are overseers responsible for? What are deacons responsible for?

5. What is the biblical line of spiritual authority for the local church?

Answers

1. This letter was written during Paul's first Roman imprisonment in the early 60s A.D. Under house arrest, although he was chained to a Roman guard, Paul was able to preach, teach and write. See Acts 28:16.

2. The church was founded on Paul's second missionary journey, about ten years this letter was written. After having received the Macedonian vision to bring the gospel to Europe, Paul, Silas, Luke and Timothy sailed across the Aegean Sea and came to Philippi. The missionary team joined a group of people by the riverside, where they customarily prayed. Lydia was one of this group, and the Lord opened her heart to the gospel. She and her household were baptized. Soon imprisoned for preaching the gospel, Paul and Silas led the Philippian jailer to a saving knowledge of the Lord. He and his household were baptized. See Acts 16:9-34.

3. Epaphroditus came from Philippi to visit Paul in Rome, bringing a gift from the church and news about them. A minor rift was beginning to develop within the church. Paul wrote this letter urging the Philippian believers to work hard at coming to unity.

4. Overseers are responsible for guiding, teaching and disciplining the flock. Deacons deal with the more temporal matters of the church.

5. The line of spiritual authority proceeds from Christ to the spiritual leaders of the church. Overseers are also known as elders, pastors, or bishops.

Discuss / Consider

1. How does the problem in the Philippian church affect our churches today? Give specific examples.

2. What does it mean to be submissive to the line of authority of the church? Is your attitude toward the leadership pleasing to God?

Challenge

1. Consider your spiritual position before God. Are you a saint or an ain't? Think what it means to be a saint. Think what it means to be an ain't. How does God see you?

Paul Gives Thanks for the Philippian Believers
Philippians 1:3-8

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Salvation and sanctification are guarantees for every Christian.

2. Defense and confirmation are privileges of every Christian.

Practical Application

1. Are we distorting the gospel by not showing love to all our fellow believers?

Questions

1. What does Paul thank the Lord for concerning the Philippian believers?

2. What was the problem in the church at Philippi?

3. What is "*the day of Jesus Christ*"? When will it come?

4. Salvation and sanctification are guarantees for every Christian. What does this mean?

5. Defense and confirmation are privileges of every Christian. What does this mean?

Answers

1. For their faith and their help in spreading the gospel.

2. A minor rift was beginning to take place, causing disunity. We are not told what it was.

3. It refers to the coming of Christ for His church, and the events associated with it. This is called the Rapture. The Rapture can occur at any time. Perhaps today!

4. See Philippians 1:6. The “good work” is the believer’s salvation and sanctification. When we become Christians, we are saints by position (salvation). Sanctification is the process whereby we become more saintly in practice, only by God’s help.

5. The defense of the faith answers questions from the critics. Confirmation establishes the faith more firmly in the hearts of believers.

Discuss / Consider

1. How can you defend the faith? How can you confirm the faith? Do you consider it a privilege to defend and confirm the faith?

2. How do you show impartial love to all believers? How do you fail in showing impartial love to all believers?

Challenge

1. Pray according to the pattern of Paul’s prayer in Philippians 1:3-5. Are there people in your life who give you this kind of joy? Do you give others reasons to pray for you like this?

A Prayer for Unity
Philippians 1:9-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Prayer for love that is knowledgeable, and discerning is in the will of God.

2. Prayer for wisdom to make the best choices is in the will of God.

3. Prayer for character that is sincere and blameless is in the will of God.

4. Prayer for the life that is filled with the fruit of righteousness is in the will of God.

Practical Application

1. Let's pray more Philippian 1 type prayers for ourselves and for one another.

Questions

1. What is "agape" love?

2. "*That you may approve the things that are excellent…*" What does this mean?

3. Define "sincere" as used in Philippians 1:10.

4. What does it mean to be blameless?

5. What does it mean to be filled with the fruits of righteousness?

Answers

1. It is the love of God, and it is a matter of the will. It is a love of knowledge and discernment that has depth of insight and moral perception.

2. Paul prayed that the Philippians might be sensitive to what really counts.

3. Sincere comes from a Greek word combining sunlight and judgment. Recall from the lecture the first century application with pottery.

4. Blameless as to your motives. God wants no hidden agendas.

5. This is the fruit which righteousness produces. See Galatians 5:22-23.

Discuss / Consider

1. Check your fruit according to Galatians 5:22-23.

2. Do you fight pruning? Or do you welcome it, knowing that the Lord wants you to bear more fruit? See Hebrews 12.11 and John 15:1-12.

Challenge

1. How sensitive are you to the things that count for God? Are you making good choices or the best choices? Determine to become more sensitive to the things that are eternal. Determine to make the best choices.

The Good Results of Paul's Imprisonment
Philippians 1:12-18

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Adverse circumstances can advance God's purposes.

2. Bad motives cannot thwart God's purposes.

Practical Application

1. Let's develop a big picture mentally like Paul.

Questions

1. What was the rippling-out effect when Paul was chained to the Roman guards?

2. Explain, in light of Paul's imprisonment, "Adverse circumstances can advance God's purpose."

3. "Some preached Christ from envy and strife…" Could God use this for good?

4. How could Paul rise above the circumstances of his imprisonment?

5. Why was Paul imprisoned?

Answers

1. Each guard would have heard Paul's preaching, teaching, and testimony. Some would have become Christians, and the gospel rippled out beyond the ranks of the guards into Caesar's household, where others became Christians. See Philippians 4:22.

2. From the human perspective, Paul had run into some very adverse circumstances after having a successful ministry. Thrown into prison, Paul's travels were cut off and he was chained to a Roman guard. It was in this situation that God's purposes were being advanced; the gospel was making its way into the imperial ranks. The prison became a pulpit. Also, the Christians in Rome were emboldened by Paul's position.

3. Yes. Regardless of bad motives, Christ was preached. Paul could say, "Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice…"

4. Because he looked at the big picture, knowing that God was in control and that He was able to turn tragedy into triumph. Paul believed what he had written in Romans 8:28.

5. Not because he had done anything wrong, but because of his faith in Christ and his bold testimony.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you dread adverse experiences, or do you look for God's greater plan in them?

2. What is your response when you hear some preaching out of envy or strife, or with wrong reasons? Can you say with Paul, "Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice?"

3. Have you ever emboldened others because of your strong stand for Christ?

Challenge

1. How real is Romans 8:28 to you? Can you cite specific instances when you realized this truth? Remember "all things"

Paul Speaks of His Possible Release
Philippians 1:19-26

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. For the spiritual Christian, to live is Christ.

2. For the spiritual Christian, to die is gain.

Practical Application

1. Are you ready and willing to die?

2. Did you ever think of your life as a lens?

Questions

1. When Paul says, "*I know that this will turn out for my salvation,*" does this mean that he was not saved?

2. What would bring about Paul's deliverance?

3. What did Paul mean when he prayed, "*That in nothing I shall be ashamed*"?

4. What was Paul's dilemma concerning life or death?

5. How was Paul's life a lens?

Answers

1. No, rather he was speaking about his possible deliverance from some hardship, possibly being released from prison.

2. The prayers of the Philippians, the operation of the Holy Spirit, and the combination of circumstances.

3. Paul did not want to deny Christ, even if he were to be tortured for this faith. He prayed that he would be delivered from bringing any dishonor to the name of Christ.

4. See Philippians 1:20-26. Dying would mean being with Christ, a great desire for Paul; but if living would benefit the Philippians, then he would desire that.

5. A lens focuses and magnifies. Paul wanted his life to be a lens for Christ – so people would see Christ, not Paul. His desire was that Christ be magnified, whether by his life or in his death.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you pray for God's deliverance from certain hardships? How does God answer you? Do you pray for deliverance from dishonoring the name of Christ?

2. Give yourself the spirituality test. What is your bottom line for living? Is it happiness, home, pleasure, money, family, success, recreation, travel, being pain-free? Or is it to please Christ above all else?

Challenge

1. Paul's life was a lens, magnifying Christ. Determine to make your life a lens, magnifying Christ.

A Call to Unity
Philippians 1:27-30

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Unity in Christ is a sign of God's salvation.

2. Suffering for Christ is a sign of God's favor.

Practical Application

1. Do you want a prosperity gospel or Paul's gospel?

2. Let's fight together and not fight each other.

Questions

1. Explain the word, "conduct," as used in Philippians 1:27. Why did Paul use this word here?

2. What prompted Paul to exhort the Philippians to strive for unity?

3. How is unity a sign of God's salvation?

4. Is unity the same as uniformity?

5. Does persecution necessarily mean physical suffering?

Answers

1. It is a word that has to do with citizenship. Paul used it because Philippi was a Roman colony and the Philippians were Roman citizens. As such, they knew the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. Now, as citizens of heaven, they were to conduct themselves worthy of the gospel of Christ.

2. The rift and resulting disunity growing within the church. He was concerned that the rift be healed before it grew larger.

3. See Philippians 1:28. It is sign from God that enemy forces are fighting a losing battle.

4. No. Christians differ in many ways, but they are to be unified in purpose when it comes to the gospel.

5. No. Christians can be persecuted in many ways, especially verbally, when they take a stand for Christ.

Discuss / Consider

1. Read Philippians 1:29 and 2 Timothy 3:12. In what ways have you suffered for Christ?

2. How do you strive for unity within your fellowship?

3. Do you know people who have been deluded by the prosperity gospel? Have you ever faced this problem? How would you deal with it?

Challenge

1. "*Let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ…*" Philippians 1:27 Determine to make your conduct reflect your position as a heavenly citizen.

A Call to Unity, continued
Philippians 2:1-4

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There are four realities of spiritual unity.

2. There are four characteristics of spiritual unity.

3. There are four steps to keeping spiritual unity.

Practical Application

1. Stop looking around for the perfect church.

Questions

1. What is the main theme of the epistle to the Philippians?

2. According to this portion of Scripture, how was Satan defeated?

3. List the four realities of spiritual unity.

4. List the four characteristics of spiritual unity.

5. List the four steps to keeping spiritual unity.

Answers

1. To strive for unity amongst the brethren.

2. Satan was sowing seeds of disunity, but God overruled by allowing this letter to be written and to become part of the Bible. This book has been a help to innumerable churches through the ages as they have dealt with discord and disunity.

3. a) There is consolation in Christ.
   b) There is comfort in love.
   c) There is fellowship of the Spirit.
   d) There is affection and mercy.

4. a) Being of the same mind (like-minded).
   b) Having the same love (not of self, but for the Lord and His people).
   c) Being of one accord (united in spirit).
   d) Being of one mind (in intent and purpose; not our agenda, but God's agenda).

5. a) Do nothing from selfish ambition (no hidden agenda).
   b) Do nothing from conceit (do not look for credit when you give).
   c) In lowliness of mind or humility, esteem others better than yourself.
   d) Let each look out for the interests of others.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are the four characteristics of spiritual unity evident in your life?

2. Review the four steps to keeping spiritual unity. Take them one step at a time to see how you measure up.

Challenge

1. Read Psalm 133:1 and Ephesians 4:3. What do these verses tell you about God's desire for His church? What is your part in this? Determine to esteem others better than yourself.

A Great Christological Passage of Scripture
Philippians 2:5-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The eternal Son did not empty Himself of deity.

2. The eternal Son took on humanity.

Practical Application

1. Bow now or bow later.

2. What is the distance of our self-giving attitude?

Questions

1. What does “kenosis” mean? What does it mean concerning Jesus?

2. What other word could be used for “mind”?

3. How would this mind-set help the problem in the Philippian church?

4. When the Son of God became man, did He empty Himself of deity?

5. What is the meaning of the word, “form”?

Answers

1. Kenosis means “to empty.” Jesus did not hold onto or grasp the glories and majesties associated with deity when He left heaven to become man on this earth.

2. Attitude (the humble self-giving attitude that characterized our Lord).

3. If they would show this attitude toward one another, the problem of disunity would evaporate, and the rift would be healed.

4. No. Christ was and is God, by His very nature and essence. He never stopped being God.

5. Essential nature, referring in this passage to the nature of humanity. The eternal Son of God became human without ceasing to be God.

Discuss / Consider

1. Think of all who will bow the knee to Jesus Christ and of all who will one day confess His name. Think about those who have not yet bowed the knee or confessed Jesus as Savior. What is your responsibility here?

2. Our Lord is the supreme example of having a humble, self-giving attitude. Think of the downward steps He took when He left the glories of heaven. What is the distance of your self-giving?

Challenge

1. The way up is down. This was true of the Lord Jesus. It is also a principle for us. How have you humbled yourself to serve Him now?

A Call to "Work Out Our Salvation"
Philippians 2:12-13

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Work out your salvation does not mean that salvation is obtained by working for it.

2. Work out your salvation means that unity is obtained by working for it.

Practical Application

1. You can work it out.

Questions

1. Concerning this epistle:
   a. From where was it written?

   b. When was it written?

   c. Who was the Emperor?

   d. Why was it written?

2. Does "work out your own salvation" mean that one can obtain salvation by good works? Explain.

3. How could the word, "salvation," be translated in Philippians 2:12?

Answers

1. a. Rome
   b. The early 60s A.D
   c. Nero
   d. Because disunity was emerging in the Philippian church and Paul wanted to deal with it before it grew.

2. No. Refer to Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5 and Isaiah 64:6. By God's standard of purity and perfection, even the best of our good works are as filthy rags, and they mean nothing concerning salvation. There is only one way to be saved, and that is to believe in Christ's death for you. See Acts 16:30-31.

3. Deliverance or solution, as in Philippians 1:19, when Paul was referring to his position as a prisoner.

Discuss / Consider

1. Have you prayed about a specific deliverance in your life? How was your prayer answered? What did you have to do to bring it about?

2. God wants to see problems removed that cause disunity in church fellowships. If your church has a problem, what is your responsibility? See Psalm 133:1.

Challenge

1. Consider God's will and His good pleasure as He works in your life. Does this motivate you to live on a higher level?

Do All Things without Grumbling or Disputing
Philippians 2:14-16

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Grumbling and disputing affect the status of a child of God.

2. Grumbling and disputing affect the testimony of the church of God.

Practical Application

1. Let's not turn out the lights.

Questions

1. How does grumbling and disputing affect the status of a child of God?

2. How does grumbling and disputing affect the testimony of the church of God?

3. What is the mission of the believer, as stated in this passage?

4. According to this passage, what kind of a world is out there?

5. A good dose of Philippians can be preventive medicine for a church. What does this mean?

Answers

1. When a Christian grumbles, he is not without fault before God. All Christians will stand at the judgment seat of Christ, and their lives will be reviewed at that time. See Matthew 12:36 2 Corinthians 5:10.

2. When unbelievers see Christians grumbling, they fail to see Christ. As such, Christians fail in their mission, dishonoring the name of Christ.

3. To shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life.

4. A crooked and perverse generation.

5. Paul desired that the rift in the church be healed, for little problems can lead to bigger ones, even to church splits. When unity reigns a church is healthy.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you grumble? Think how this hurts God. Think what it means to unbelievers when they hear you grumbling.

2. Do you dispute or fail to defend the faith? Think of what this means in God's eyes. Think of what this means to an unbeliever.

Challenge

1. Shine as a light in this dark world so as to glorify your Father in heaven. Be a child of God without fault.

Christians Who Followed the Self-giving Model of Christ
Philippians 2:17-24

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. A gracious concept of fellow believers tends toward unity.

2. A genuine concern for fellow believers tends toward unity.

Practical Application

1. As sacrifices, let's not call all the shots.

2. As servants, let's try to serve as children.

Questions

1. What did Paul mean by saying that he was a drink offering and that the Philippian believers were the sacrifice?

2. What is the proper concept of yourself with regard to fellow believers?

3. How does a genuine concern for fellow believers tend toward unity?

4. Who does Paul set forth as examples of those who have a genuine, unselfish concern for the Philippians?

5. Why did Paul plan to send Timothy to the church at Philippi?

6. What does it mean that all seek their own, not the things of Christ?

Answers

1. Paul's concept was that he was a drink offering and the Philippian believers were the sacrifice. He based this on the Old Testament sacrificial system, where a container of wine was poured out on the regular sacrifice, a sweet aroma to the Lord (Numbers 15). The drink offering was not the sacrifice, but an addition to the sacrifice. Paul viewed the Philippians as the big sacrifice, and he viewed himself as only an addition.

2. That nothing should be done through conceit, but in lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than yourself.

3. When someone knows that you have a genuine concern for their wellbeing, they are motivated to work with you.

4. Himself and Timothy.

5. Paul wanted to know how they were doing in reference to the problem of disunity. Paul trusted Timothy because of his like-mindedness. He not only knew the Philippian believers, but he had a genuine concern for them.

6. Generally, people are more concerned about themselves than they are about putting Christ first.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss how Christians, as servants, are to serve as children.

2. How can you demonstrate a genuine concern for fellow believers?

Challenge

1. View yourself as a sacrifice, or even as a drink offering. Think of all that this could mean as you relate to others.

Epaphroditus: Another Example of a Self-Giving Christian
Philippians 2:25-30

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Sickness is not necessarily the result of sin.

2. Sickness is not necessarily an alarm for healing.

Practical Application

1. You don't have to become a martyr to get a martyr's reward.

2. Who are your heroes?

Questions

1. Is sickness necessarily a result of sin? Can it be because of sin?

2. Discuss the sickness of Epaphroditus.

3. How were the believers to receive Epaphroditus?

4. Do you have to become a martyr to receive a martyr's crown?

5. Why does Paul use the phrase, "you all," more in this epistle than in any of the others?

Answers

1. No, it can be for the glory of God. See John 9:3. Yes, it can be disciplinary. See 1 Corinthians 11:28-30.

2. Epaphroditus got sick in the line of duty, giving himself to the point of risking his life.

3. See Philippians 2:29.

4. No. Epaphroditus will be rewarded in line with his motives and attitudes, and so will many Christians who have sacrificed their health and well-being for the sake of the gospel.

5. Because this exhortation for unity in the Philippian church was meant for the whole church to practice.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss a self-giving attitude. As you look around you, do you see some believers being excellent examples of this attitude? What makes them different from others? Consider the extent of your self-giving attitude.

2. Some Christians believe that a sick person should seek healing. Why, then, didn't Paul have a healing service for Epaphroditus? We know from Acts 19:11-12 that God used Paul to bring healing to many. How did Paul deal with the sickness of Epaphroditus? What does this say to us today?

Challenge

1. Look around you and see the quiet Christians who are self-giving. Hold them in high esteem.

A Warning Against the False Teachers
Philippians 3:1-3

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Bible describes legalistic false teachers as
a. Dogs.

b. Evil workers.

c. The mutilation.

2. The Bible describes liberated Christians as those who
a. Worship God in the Spirit.

b. Rejoice in Jesus Christ.

c. Who have no confidence in the flesh.

Practical Application

1. Don't get turned off by repetition.

Questions

1. How do each of these descriptions characterize the legalistic false teachers?
   a. Dogs

   b. Evil workers

   c. The mutilation

2. How is the true believer described in contrast to the legalistic false teacher?

Answers

1. a. The Judaizers referred to the Gentiles as dogs, and now Paul turns the tables, using the same term. Scavenger dogs of the cities were always yelping and fighting and attacking the passers-by. That's the way the legalistic teachers are, both yesterday and today.

b. The Judaizers of the first century worked hard to gain proselytes, but their work was evil, taking away from a Christ-centered faith. Legalism appears more spiritual because rules are kept, but the legalistic Pharisees of Jesus' day were denounced as white-washed tombs because they looked good on the outside, but were full of dead bones within. They were hypocrites, leading people away from the truth.

c. Paul is playing on the word "circumcision," which means "cut around." Here he says "mutilation," or literally "cut off." Paul likened the Judaizers to the pagans of heathen religions who cut and mutilated themselves during religious rites.

2. God intends the true believer not to be a legalist, but a liberated Christian. Liberated Christians know how to use their liberty properly.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss each aspect of the liberated Christian: those who worship God in the Spirit, those who rejoice in Jesus Christ, and those who have no confidence in the flesh.

2. What does it mean, "Don't get turned off by repetition?"

Challenge

1. Are you a liberated Christian in every positive sense of the term? Consider where you stand right now, and how you could attain a higher standard.

Judaism Counted for Nothing in Righteousness
Philippians 3:4-9

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. A person can have a relationship with Christ on the basis of faith alone.

2. A person can have the righteousness of Christ on the basis of faith alone.

Practical Application

1. For the non-Christian; there is only one item needed on your personal resume.

2. For the Christian, there should be only one item on your personal ledger.

Questions

1. Who were the Judaizers of Paul's day?

2. What did the non-Christian Judaizers say about salvation?

3. What did the Christian Judaizers say about sanctification?

4. How did Paul know so much about Judaizers?

5. Can a person be saved on the basis of the following?
   a. A religious ceremony?
   b. Through religious connections?
   c. Through a religious party?
   d. By a religious record?
   e. Through religious righteousness?

Answers

1. The Jewish false teachers who distorted the simple gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. They said that you could not be saved apart from the law of Moses.

3. They said that you could not be sanctified or become spiritual apart from keeping the law and traditions.

4. Paul was once a Judaizer himself.

5. a. No, not by circumcision or by infant baptism, for example.
   b. No, not by tribe, stock, or family.
   c. No, not by being a Pharisee, a Baptist, a Presbyterian, or a Catholic, for example.
   d. No, not through zeal or advancing in Judaism or any religion.
   e. No, not through righteousness within the law, or keeping the commandments.

Discuss / Consider

1. How can a person have the righteousness of Christ?

2. How would you deal with someone who believes that he is saved on the basis of a religious ceremony, through religious connections, through a religious party, by a religious record, or through religious righteousness? Look at these beliefs, one at a time, and consider how you would deal with them.

Challenge

1. Seriously contemplate the only item you need on your personal resume and on your personal ledger.

The Goal of Christian Living
Philippians 3:10-14

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There is a present goal for the Christian.

2. There is a future prize for the Christian.

Practical Application

1. Make a fresh start every day.

Questions

1. Why couldn't Paul visit the Philippians at the time he wrote this letter?

2. What was Paul's great concern for the Philippians?

3. What is the present goal for the Christian?

4. If a believer really wants to know the Lord in greater measure, what are the three areas of Christian experience that need to be practiced?

Answers

1. Because he was a prisoner in Rome.

2. They were in danger of false teaching, which was around them and could distort sound doctrine.

3. To know Christ (Philippians 3:10) and to live for Him.

4. a) The power of His resurrection.
   b) The fellowship of His sufferings.
   c) By being conformed to His death.

Discuss / Consider

1. What is the future prize for the Christian? Differentiate between the goal and the prize. Refer to Philippians 3:14, Hebrews 3:1 and Hosea 6:3.

2. Consider how a Christian can practice the power of Christ's resurrection. What does this mean practically?

Challenge

1. Paul wanted to practice the present goal of Christian living all the way through his life. Is this your goal? Remember to make a fresh start every day, forgetting those things behind…

Paul Refutes the False Teaching of Lawlessness
Philippians 3:15-19

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Spiritually mature believers do not modify Christian doctrine.

2. Spiritually mature believers do not abuse Christian liberty.

Practical Application

1. Let's keep in step together.

2. What kind of a person would a new Christian be if he/she imitated me?

Questions

1. List the three primary concerns of Paul when he wrote this epistle.

2. What does it mean that spiritually mature believers do not modify Christian doctrine?

3. What does it mean that spiritually mature believers do not abuse Christian liberty?

4. What is anti-nomianism? How does Paul deal with it?

Answers

1. a. To thank them for the gift they had sent him.
   b. To deal with the growing problem of disunity within the church.
   c. To deal with the danger of false teaching.

2. That believers are not to change doctrine that they do not understand, but to wait on God to reveal truth. They must live up to the content of faith that they understand and wait for God to give further insight into what is not yet understood.

3. Christians are not to use their liberty as an excuse for sin, but as servants of God. The ungodly false teachers have unrestrained physical appetites, living only for self and using the ministry for their personal gain.

4. It is known as liberalism or lawlessness – doing whatever you please. Paul dealt with this by warning the Philippians against such distorted ideas, and to set their minds on things above. He warned them not to abuse their Christian liberty.

Discuss / Consider

1. How is walking together as believers a safeguard?

2. Discuss Philippians 3:17, and how it could impact your life.

Challenge

1. Paul could say to believers to follow his example. Can you say the same? What would someone be like if he/she followed your example?

Life on Earth is Temporary
Philippians 3:20-21

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The believer's earthly life is only temporary.

2. The believer's earthly body is only temporary.

Practical Application

1. Are we watching for the Lord on our tiptoes?

2. Let's remember that our bodies are only tents.

Questions

1. How do we practice the truth that the believer's earthly life is only temporary?

2. How will the Lord transform/conform our earthly bodies?

3. What is the great future that we can look forward to?

4. How can the Christian set his mind on heavenly things as opposed to earthly things?

5. What did the term, "citizen," mean to the Philippians?

Answers

1. By remembering that our earthly life is only temporary and that this world is not our home. And by looking forward to our home in heaven.

2. Now we have earthly bodies, subject to disease, sickness, and aging, and we are subject to sin. The Lord will change our bodies, and we will have permanent, material bodies not subject to sin. See 1 Corinthians 15.

3. We will be with our Lord in heaven and look forward to the perfection of resurrected bodies, which will be conformed to the Lord's glorious body. We will be without sin!

4. By obedience to God and His word now, and by thinking of what He has prepared for us in heaven. See 2 Corinthians 10:5 and Colossians 3:1-4.

5. Philippi was a Roman colony, and the Philippians were Roman citizens. They would know the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. As heavenly citizens, they were to conduct themselves worthily of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Discuss / Consider

1. Refer to 1 Corinthians 15. Discuss what it will be like the be rid of our earthly bodies.

2. Do you consider your body as only a tent? What does this mean?

Challenge

1. Are you waiting for the Lord on your tiptoes? Do you anticipate His return? When you awake, make it a practice to consider that today might be the day, then live like it!

The Biblical Procedure for Coming to Unity
Philippians 4:1-9

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There is a biblical procedure for attaining unity.

Practical Application

1. Write up a positive think list for your fellow believers.

2. Can we say, "Not only do as I say, but also do as I do"?

Questions

1. To whom was Paul specifically speaking concerning healing the disunity in the Philippian church?

2. What did Paul implore them to do?

3. What would happen if the rift was not healed?

4. List the five step biblical procedure for attaining unity.

5. What is God's promise for believers who pray for other believers?

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Answers

1. Euodia and Syntyche.

2. To be of the same mind in the Lord.

3. It would grow deeper, possibly causing a split in the church fellowship.

4. a) Rejoice together with fellow believers.
   b) Sing songs of praise with fellow believers.
   c) Forebear with fellow believers.
   d) Pray with thanksgiving with fellow believers.
   e) Think positively about fellow believers.

5. That they will have a peace of heart and mind to keep them from anxiety.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you have the peace of God that guards your heart and mind from anxiety? If not, why not?

2. Write up a positive think-list for your fellow believers.

Challenge

1. Next time you're irritated by a fellow believer, make an intentional effort to rejoice, pray, and think positively about them.

2. Could you honestly say to a younger believer, "Do as I say, and do as I do" in the area of pursuing unity? If not, what step needs your attention first?

Content in All Circumstances
Philippians 4:10-13

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The secret of contentment is adjusting, not abundance.

2. The secret of adjusting is Christ, not circumstances.

Practical Application

1. Let's give our fellow believers the benefit of the doubt.

2. Let's pray for our fellow believers who are not in need.

Questions

1. What did Paul mean when he wrote, "Your care for me has flourished again"?

2. Why would Paul have need of a financial gift during his imprisonment?

3. What is the secret of contentment?

4. What is the secret of adjusting?

5. How do Christians sometimes misquote Philippians 4:13?

6. Why should we pray for those who are not in need, but in abundance?

Answers

1. Apparently, the Philippians had let some time elapse before sending Paul another gift.

2. Paul was able to rent a house during his imprisonment, and he would need finances for this, and possibly for entertaining those who came to hear him preach and teach.

3. Adjusting, and not abundance.

4. Christ, and not circumstances.

5. Sometimes when they take on more than they can handle. The verse is not promising success, superhuman strength, the miraculous, or the impossible.

6. So they will learn how to handle prosperity for God's glory and the furtherance of the kingdom.

Discuss / Consider

1. How have you learned the secret of contentment? How have you learned the secret of adjusting?

2. Do you know Christians who are emotional yo-yos? How can you avoid having this kind of a temperament?

Challenge

1. Give fellow believers the benefit of the doubt, as Paul did. Think about times when you have been quick to judge others concerning their motives. Ask the Lord's forgiveness.

God Will Supply All Your Needs
Philippians 4:14-23

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God is pleased with all the sacrifices of generous Christians.

2. God will supply all the needs of generous Christians.

Practical Application

1. Remember the little prepositions of Scripture.

2. Have you signed up for the best pension plan?

Questions

1. When did the Philippians send a financial gift to Paul?

2. How did the people of Caesar's household hear the gospel?

3. How does God view the sacrifices of generous Christians?

4. Explain, "Sacrifice loses its meaning when given out of your surplus"?

5. How can you claim God's promise to supply all of your need?

Answers

1. After Paul had been in Philippi, he traveled on to Thessalonica where he stayed two or three weeks (Acts 17:1-3). During this time, the Philippians twice sent financial help to Paul (Acts 17:16), and when he moved on to Corinth, the Philippian church supported him there (2 Corinthians 11:9).

2. Likely through the guards to whom Paul was chained during his house arrest. They would have heard him preach and teach to many, and undoubtedly some of them were saved and told others.

3. They are viewed by God as an act of worship, a sweet smelling aroma.

4. Giving is not a sacrifice unless it costs you something. If you give out of your surplus, sacrifice loses its meaning.

5. In context, which is giving sacrificially.

Discuss / Consider

1. Remember the little prepositions of Scripture. Focus on “according to” in Philippians 4:19.

2. What is your concern about the future? Have you signed up for God’s pension plan?

Challenge

1. Commit to being a generous Christian with your time, talents, and treasures. Give sacrificially in each of these areas, and watch God’s blessing pour out on you. Is your giving a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God?