

Week 1

Philippians 1:3-11

We are going to start a new series today on the book of Philippians. Now frankly. We are not going to take the time that we should, to go through the book. It's a bummer, but we are going to glean what we can from this book the best we can in 6 weeks.

Here's our goal: That you would learn to love the word of God.

Introduction

So, this is a letter that was written to a church that Paul had planted.

In Acts 16 we can see the story. Paul was traveling with Silas and Timothy, and they went down to the river to pray. While they were there, they started talking to this woman named Lydia. She responded to the good news that they shared, and the church started out of that.

In fact, there is a classic Sunday School story of Paul and Silas while they were in Philippi. They were put in jail for preaching the gospel. While they were there, they started singing and there was an earthquake and the whole jail fell down.

That happened here. In Phillipi. So, Paul, now in jail, writes to them to encourage them. Their church had been started, kind of, with this emotional and spiritual high.

Like maybe the best example for us is their church had started right after camp. And camp was awesome. And we *felt* God and we saw God move. It was amazing. But as time passed, when it wasn't cool to follow Jesus anymore, we just became a little bit...bored with our faith. And we are still Christians, we still do Christian things, but it's like...eh. That seems to be where this church was. They had experienced a high!!! And now they were back to everyday life.

But what we can see, is that we can find JOY, in our life in Christ.

Me

When I was in Middle School. I had accepted Jesus. I was a Christian. But I had no idea what that meant in my life. It seemed kind of what people did. My life was stagnant. I kind of read my bible, but I didn't really know how to live. I would go to school, and I met friends that said that they were also Christians, but they lived a totally different way. At one point in high school, I was sitting at lunch, and everyone is talking, and they said, "hey Cassie, are you going out Saturday with us". And her response was, "no way. I'm teaching Sunday School on Sunday; I don't want to do it with a hangover again". That

was the kind of Christians I had in my life. People who said they were Christians, but people, besides going to church, lived no such way.

And I remember thinking, "this can't be it right".

Thankfully, I had 2 guys that really poured into my life. They showed me the way that Jesus asked us to live, Jacob and Josh were both good dudes, that showed me how I was supposed to live. And more than that, they encouraged me to live a deeper life than I was living. They expected from me, what I honestly wanted to be expected to do. I didn't want my life to be this flip flopping, worthless, selfish life. I wanted to live for something bigger, and these guys expected that from me.

Tension

So here is the question that you must ask yourself.

Take a moment and write this down. If you had to pick one word to describe your life, not your spiritually life, not your relationship, but your life. What would it be? Would it be full? Would it be flat? Would it be bouncy?

Because here is my heart for you. I probably expect more from you than you realize. I expect you to do things that I don't know if you expect you to do. I long for you to be warriors for Christ. To be encouragers in your schools and jobs.

The standard that people have for themselves is often wrong. Or! The expectation for your life, is often not thought out.

What I mean is this! Everyone wants to be important, to be valued, to be someone people respect. However, we just want that, we don't often work for it. Because it's too hard. And because of that. People often, fall short of what they could be. Specifically, spiritually.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

Let's read the first couple verses together.

Read vs 3-8

This is a true leader's prayer right here. Do you feel the emotions of what Paul is feeling for this church? It's beautiful. It's heartfelt. It's compassionate. It's a father's prayer for his children. He expects so much from them, and he longs for them to see what is in front of them the way he sees what could be in front of them.

Frankly. When I read this passage, I thought, “oh man. I could rant about this for hours”. And here is why. It’s because you guys mean the world to me. You do. I care way too much about you and your futures. Way too much. Your leaders have clipboards where they track who comes every week. I pray through those clipboards either during the week or when I put them out on Wednesdays. I pray for you. I expect great things from all of you.

I want to see all of you free from sin that weighs you down. I want to see you come to life! Many of you have decided to become followers of Jesus, and **Galatians 5 says, it’s for freedom that Christ has set us free**. That means that when we became followers of Jesus, we don’t have to be slaves to greed, pride, jealousy, lust, any of those things. Yet so many Christians cling on to it. And forget, that they are free!

I’m sad every time I see someone walk away, or not live up to their potential, and I’m not mad, I’m sad, because it means that they don’t see it! They don’t see what I see! God is not done with you yet.

If you aren’t a Follower

If you aren’t a follower of Jesus, I pray that you will become one. Not for me, but for you. I pray that you see the joy that can be in your life because of following Jesus. I pray that you understand the struggle of following Jesus, because you KNOW that no matter what, this is something that is worth standing for.

Because I can see that God has begun a work in you, and He isn’t done yet. I see it!

If you are a Follower

If you are a follower of Jesus, I pray this for you. I pray that God keeps doing a work in you. Just because you are a Christian and you can be certain that you are going to heaven when you die, and you don’t have to fear hell, doesn’t mean that God is done with you yet. He’s not done developing you. Ephesians 2 says “that God had good works prepared in advance for you to do”. Are you going to do them?

Clay Story

I have a friend that I grew up with. His name is Clay. Clay got saved about the time I did. We did a lot of the same things, but there was a point in his life where he didn’t exactly walk away from the Lord, but he was not following the Lord either. There came a point in his life when he realized he was at a fork in the road. He could keep going the way he was, or he could decide to follow Jesus with full force again. Now he is preaching at the church that I grew up in. He’s

leading lots of different ministries. He's taking Bible classes and he wants to be a pastor.

I was talking with my sister the other day and she was telling me about friends that had gone off the deep end, had eventually landed on their feet. They had scraps. They had regrets. But they were on their feet again.

Read vs 9-11

Here's what Paul's goal was for them.

- ***That they love more***
 - Love more. We are so selfish. We think other people are so selfish, no you are selfish. I'm selfish. And we can't be who we are supposed to be if we are always looking out for ourselves. That's arrogance. That's selfish. That's wrong. We don't look out for number one; we look out for those around us. That's one of the things that makes us different!
- ***That they be and develop a discerning heart***
 - You want to know how to make decisions? Draw close to the Lord. Spend time with him. Pray and ask. Spend time here at AXIS with your friends and leaders.
- ***Be blameless and pure and filled with righteousness***

Closing

God isn't done with you yet. Maybe it isn't be a CEO of a company. Maybe it isn't be a Pastor in the biggest church. But maybe it's lead that one kid at your school to Jesus. Maybe it's to be respectful to all your teachers, even the bad ones. (***insert personal story***). Maybe it's to be a kind person. Maybe it's that wherever you go, people look at you, and they say, "THAT guy is a joyful person. WHY?".

I long for this for you guys. I do.