

NEW TESTAMENT LETTER: PAUL'S MESSAGE TO PHILIPPI

Philippi was the site of Paul's first church in Europe, which he founded during his second missionary journey. Paul and Silas were first arrested in Philippi for sharing the gospel. While imprisoned, Paul shared the message of Jesus with the prison guard, who became a believer and follower of Jesus (Acts 16). When he was imprisoned again in Rome, Paul wrote to encourage and empower the Philippian church.

Throughout the letter, Paul focused on Christ as the source of joy, peace, and strength. Despite his circumstances, Paul found contentment and trusted that God was using his life for the advancement of the gospel. Through the peace of God, Paul could view his suffering as a necessary experience, in imitation of Jesus. Paul deeply cared for the Philippians and showed confidence that God would finish what he started in Philippi.

MAIN IDEAS: REJOICING IN SUFFERING

- **Paul trusted God's plan in life and death, in being with Jesus or sharing the gospel.** (Philippians 1:21)
- **Paul encouraged believers to live their lives in response to the good news of Jesus.** (Philippians 1:27)
- **Christ's followers will share in both His suffering and redemption.** (Philippians 3:10)
- **Believers should train their thoughts to be praiseworthy, noble, and pure.** (Philippians 4:8)

EXAMPLE OF GOD'S PROVISION: THE SOURCE OF CONTENTMENT

Philippians highlights Paul's incredible trust in God's sovereignty. Paul, who had previously been arrested in Philippi, was imprisoned again when he wrote this letter. Despite his harsh circumstances, Paul trusted God in both life and death. Although he stated that he would prefer to be with Christ in eternity, he was able to continue sharing the gospel by being alive. Paul wanted his suffering to end, but he trusted that God would complete the good work that He started.

Paul wrote that he had learned to be content in all situations through Christ's strength. Although Paul had many reasons to feel defeated, discouraged, and uncomfortable, he praised God and rejoiced! Paul's entire life revolved around following Jesus and sharing the news of the resurrection. Because he shared in the redemption of Jesus, he willingly shared in the suffering as well.



JESUS IN PHILIPPIANS: THE HUMBLE, SUFFERING SERVANT

Paul highlighted the humility of Jesus throughout his writing to the Philippians. Paul emphasized how God exalts the lowly and humbles the proud. Jesus did not seek equality with God but instead took on the role of a humble servant. In His human form, He humbled Himself to the point of dying an excruciating, humiliating, and unjust death.

Paul had previously been a Jewish Pharisee (a religious leader and scholar). Despite his status, he considered all of his credentials as garbage compared to knowing Jesus. Everything that made him righteous in the eyes of others he considered a loss. Paul didn't see knowing Jesus as simply important; he saw knowing Jesus as everything!