

At the start of the Reformation of the Church in Scotland in 1557, John Knox wrote to his congregation before going into exile and said,

*“You are bishops and kings; your wife, children, servants, and family are your bishopric and charge. Of you it shall be required how carefully and diligently you have instructed them in God’s true knowledge . . .*

*And therefore I say, you must make them partakers in, exhorting, and in making common prayers, which I would in every house were used once a day at least.”*

# Let’s Worship God

10th-15th March 2014  
Philippians



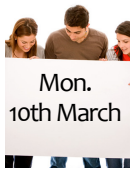
Let's Worship God is a ministry of



Airdrie Reformed Presbyterian Church

[airdrierpcs.org](http://airdrierpcs.org), 01236 620107  
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**Family worship, a joy to be experienced every day!**



# Let's Worship God

## Verse To Learn

Rejoice in the Lord always;  
again I will say, rejoice.  
Let your reasonableness be  
known to everyone.  
The Lord is at hand;  
Philippians 4:4-5

**reading** Acts 16:12-15 - The Church at Philippi

**notes** For the next several weeks we are going to use various commentaries to look at Paul's letter to the church at Philippi. Whenever we study one of these letters it always helps to look at the background information: who is the letter written by, to whom is it written and why, and what is it saying.

The book of Philippians is written by Paul while he is in prison in Rome awaiting trial before Caesar. Despite the fact that he is writing from prison, while on trial for his life, the letter is filled with joy and peace in all circumstances and has been an encouragement to suffering Christians for hundreds of years.

Philippi, 10 miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea (in present day Greece), considers itself a Roman city. Its citizens are Roman citizens who enjoy all the rights of such. Luke tells the story of the founding of the church in Philippi in Acts 16. From the very beginning this church is very generous in giving to the Lord's work. The first convert, Lydia, insists on lodging Paul and his companions in her home, and the church, at least twice, sends generous gifts to Paul. When Paul leaves Philippi, Timothy and Luke stay behind to build up the new congregation, but Timothy soon follows Paul while Luke works on in Philippi. Paul himself is in Philippi three times as he goes back and forth on his journeys.

Paul seems to be writing this letter for a variety of reasons. He wants to thank the church for their gift, he wants to assure them that Epaphroditus has recovered, he wants to send news of what is happening in his life, he wants to address the issue of the quarrelling women, and he wants to encourage and teach the church.

**questions**

1. Where was Paul writing this letter from?
2. What had the church at Philippi done for Paul?

**praise pray**

Ps. 130B:all

1. Give thanks for our minister and elders.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



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**reading** Philippians 1:15-18 - Christ Preached

**notes** All that is happening in Rome isn't good. Some people (whom Paul calls brothers, so we must assume they are Christians) are preaching the Gospel motivated by their envy of Paul. These men are not just divided from other Christians, but they are divided internally; their hearts are at war with their testimony. Paul does not elaborate on why they are envious and angry with him, but he makes it clear that they are not preaching sincerely. They are trying to take the attention off Paul and onto themselves.

Contrast this with Paul's attitude towards them. He shows not the least resentment. He rejoices in the main thing which is that Christ is preached as widely as possible. This doesn't mean that he is indifferent to their sins, but he is going to focus on Christ and the Gospel in this situation.

Some, however do understand Paul's place in the plans of God. They see what his imprisonment has meant for the Gospel, and they are bold to speak of Christ. They are not ashamed to be identified with their brother in the Lord who is suffering for the Gospel. They are in direct contrast with those who are acting for selfish reasons trying to make Paul envious of them.

Little do these selfish preachers realise the kind of man Paul is. Paul's main concern is that in every possible way Christ be proclaimed. The faults and sins of Christians can't distract him from his joy in the way that the Lord is building His Church.

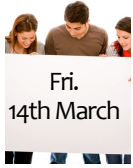
**questions**

1. What were the motives of some in their preaching?
2. How did Paul respond to these men?

**praise pray**

Ps. 133A:all

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



Fri.  
14th March

# Let's Worship God

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**reading** Philippians 1:12-14 - Suffering

**notes** Paul has thought first of the spiritual state of the Philippian church but now he turns to his own situation. But instead of giving a detailed update on how his trial is progressing, he focuses on the effect of what is happening to him on the Gospel. For Paul it is all about what is happening to the Gospel in this situation, and the news is all good. First of all the men appointed to guard him are hearing about Christ, probably both from Paul speaking to them himself and from their overhearing Paul's other conversations. The fact that Paul is in chains for his belief in the Lord Jesus Christ is making an impact in the capital city. But Paul's imprisonment is having a second effect - it is stirring up the Christians in Rome to speak with greater boldness of Christ. Paul is an example to the Christians that Jesus is Lord, to be trusted even when everything appears to go wrong, in sovereign control even when His servants seem to fall into the power of men, and this makes them more confident to speak of Christ to all they meet.

Many Christians suffer without exercising any influence for good. What makes Paul different? Why is his suffering so fruitful? First, Paul doesn't use his suffering to focus on himself or make himself the object of other people's attention and interest. His focus is on Christ. Second, even in suffering Paul is still witnessing to Christ. The only way it could have been known that he was imprisoned for Christ was if he talked about it. He used his suffering as an opportunity to tell people about Christ. Finally, Paul's attitude in his suffering is that he is a man under orders. Instead of thinking that God had forgotten him, he knew that right there is exactly where God wants him to be and is the task God has put before him.

**questions**

1. What is the good news about Paul's suffering?
2. Who does Paul focus on in his suffering?

**praise** Ps. 132:7-11

**pray**

1. Pray that we would glorify God in suffering.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



Tue.  
11th March

# Let's Worship God

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**reading** Philippians 1:1-2 - Slaves and Saints

**notes** In verse 1 Paul and Timothy call themselves servants of Christ Jesus, but the word for servant is often translated slave. Paul and Timothy are saying that they are slaves of Christ Jesus. Christ has bought them and taken them into His service. They are men who in all they do have no will of their own but only their Owner's will and Word. That is why the Philippians should read what they have to say. They are not pushing their own agenda here, but they are slaves, doing and writing what their Master has told them. What is true of Paul and Timothy is true of every Christian. We have all been bought, bought from Satan and death, and now we belong to our Lord and Master Jesus Christ to live as His obedient slaves.

Paul also describes the believers in Jesus Christ as saints. This word gets misunderstood a lot today with people thinking only dead men and women who live a very good life are saints. But actually the word saint means called-out and set-apart ones, and this is precisely what all Christians are. They have been called out of sin and death and set apart to love and serve God, and the more the Holy Spirit works in them, the more they deserve the name saint. They are not perfected men and women. Paul makes very clear that they are saints in Christ Jesus. They haven't earned sainthood - they are saints because of what Christ has done for them.

It's no easy job to live as an obedient slave and saint in Christ Jesus. Where does the ability come from? Paul answers by pointing to a giver and a gift: grace and peace coming from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord is the one who enables us to live as a slave and a saint. The Lord gives us grace to be obedient and peace which gives us strength and steadfastness in hard times.

**questions**

1. What is a saint?
2. What do we need to live as a slave of Christ?

**praise** Ps. 131A:all

**pray**

1. Pray that we would live as joyful slaves of Christ.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



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**reading** Philippians 1:3-7 - Assurance

**notes** Every time Paul remembers the believers in Philippi, he is grateful to God. Paul knows what God has done for them in bringing them from death to life, and he is so thankful for that. But that is not all. Remembering what God has done for the Philippian church in the past, spurs Paul on to pray that God will be with them, strengthening and growing them, in the future.

Paul can make these joyful prayers because he knows the Philippians are believers in Jesus Christ. They are his brothers and sisters working together for the kingdom of God. They are his partners - they share his faith in the gospel, they confess the truth of the gospel, and they are living and worshipping in the grace of the gospel.

Paul has assurance - assurance that God is going to complete the work He has begun in the lives of these men and women. This assurance is based on the fact of who God is. Christ is the one who has saved us, we haven't saved ourselves. The ground of our salvation is based on what God has done for us, and so we don't need to worry that we'll lose it, because it's in His hands, and He never leaves jobs half done. God never gives up, He always has a plan and a purpose, and He always completes those plans and purposes. The outcome of faith in Christ is guaranteed. But the experiences of every day are also guaranteed. Good news, bad news, difficulty, blessing, unexpected happiness, unexpected trouble - it all has a purpose - it's part of God completing the work He has started in us.

As believers the Philippian church is bound up in what is happening to Paul, but more than just what is happening to Paul, what is happening to the Gospel through Paul. The bond between believers should be so strong that their joys are our joys, and their sorrows our sorrows.

- questions**
1. What is Paul thankful for?
  2. What is Paul's assurance based on?

- praise pray**
- Ps. 131B:all
1. Give thanks that God will finish the work He has begun in us.
  2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
  3. Pray for family matters.



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**reading** Philippians 1:8-11 - Fruit for God's Glory

**notes** Paul is painting a picture of growth leading to a harvest, a harvest that will bring glory to God. But how does this growth happen in a Christian's life? It starts with the seed of love. God plants in their heart a love for Him, and it is this love that should pervade their whole being and mark every attitude and action. God calls us to be people who love - people who love Him and people who love others. The Christian life is an outworking of what God has already in-worked. We are called to become what we are.

Paul wants the love of the Philippians to abound more and more but controlled and directed by knowledge and discernment. We grow in proportion as we know. If we don't know the Lord, how can we love Him? And the more we know Him, the more we love Him. To grow as a Christian is to grow in our grasp of the truth, in our understanding of God's Word. But what about people that seem to grow in knowledge without growing in love or growing as Christians? This is where discernment comes in. Paul links knowing the truth with applying the truth to life. We shouldn't just ask, 'What does the Bible teach?' but 'How does that affect my life?' We don't really know anything until we start to put it into practice in our lives.

The result of love that abounds in knowledge and discernment is a whole life that is different. It is a life that values different things, is different inside, is different outside, and ultimately results in something different from those who have no love for God. This task may seem overwhelming, but Paul tells us that for the believer this abounding in love is not a hopeless goal but a guaranteed outcome. How can this be? Because again it doesn't come from us, but it is part of the work Christ is doing in us, a work He promises to bring to completion.

- questions**
1. What is Paul praying for?
  2. Why do we need discernment?

- praise pray**
- Ps. 132:1-6
1. Pray that we would abound in love.
  2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
  3. Pray for family matters.