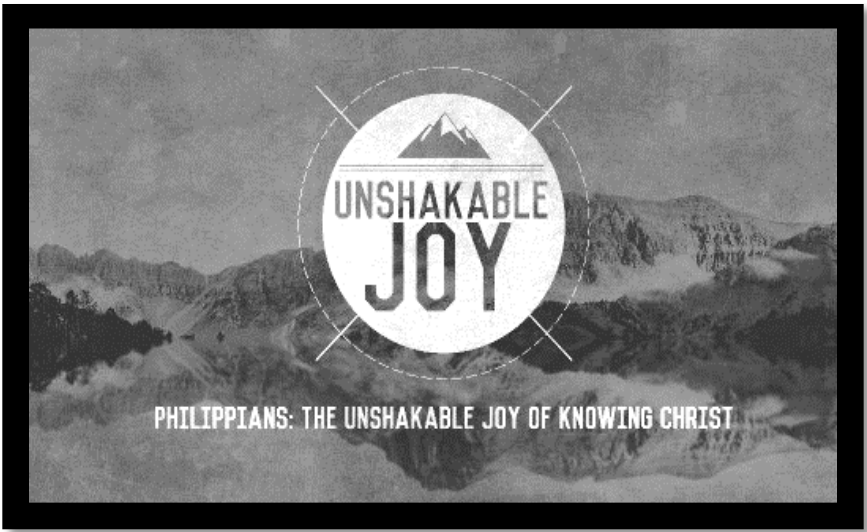


Philippians:
Unshakable Joy
Companion Devotional



Redeemer Baptist Church
at Romeo

Week 3:
January 10-16, 2022

WHY USE THIS GUIDE?

We are going to be covering a very rich letter by Paul in just four weeks. That means that there will be details that will not be covered from the pulpit, but we want you to walk away from this study with an understanding of the book of Philippians as a whole and the tools to feel confident to study the Bible on your own or with your family.

Try to stay on track with the readings because they will build to the message on Sunday. If you do this preparation, you will be in the best place to hear and understand all that is going on as we open the text together in corporate worship.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE: FIVE STEPS

1. Before you do anything, pray. This isn't some magical incantation to utter, it is a recognition that we are not in the right frame of mind and attitude often when we come to Scripture. Prayer helps us to humble ourselves to be teachable by the Holy Spirit.
2. Read the day's introduction then take your time reading the assigned passage. These are usually short passages, so read them more than once or write it down in a journal to help grasp what Paul is saying.
3. Remember that Paul is writing to a real group of people in a real time and place. Ask yourself, "What did Paul's words mean to the people that originally heard it?" Put yourself in their shoes. What is the theme, and what encouragement or criticism is being offered in this passage?
4. Work through the questions in the booklet. Ask yourself what this passage is teaching you about Jesus or about yourself. Although Paul was writing to those people in Philippi, the Holy Spirit intended this passage for you here and now.
5. Pray again. Ask God to help you live out the teachings and truths that you have learned. These could be things about the character of God in Christ, the ministry and zeal of Paul, the situation of the Philippians, or something else that God has impressed upon your heart.

Monday, January 10 – Week 3 – Day 1

As chapter 3 begins, we see the word, “Finally.” Now, we might be used to that marking the end of a message, but for Paul that’s not what he meant; he’s only halfway through his letter. I think he meant it more like, “As for the rest of your concerns,” and he addressed them all with a simple yet profound statement, “Rejoice in the Lord.”

Read Philippians 3:1

In chapters 1 & 2, Paul encouraged the Philippians to be unified in their humility, and now, as he is transitioning to warn them about legalistic false teachers, he tells them to rejoice in the Lord.

Is this just Paul telling the church they should smile more, or does it have a deeper meaning? What does it really mean to rejoice in the Lord?

How does rejoicing in the Lord show our unity?

How does rejoicing in the Lord show our humility?

How does rejoicing in the Lord help ward off legalism?

Both the command to rejoice in the Lord and the command to watch out for false teachers are things that Paul has written them before, but he wants them to know that he is not annoyed to repeat these things knowing it will help to keep them safe. Do you sometimes feel like we repeat the same message over and over again in church? Don’t worry. We aren’t growing tired of proclaiming it and it will keep you safe.

Tuesday, January 11 – Week 3 – Day 2

Paul has some very strong words to say against false teachers. But some wonder about the abrupt shift in Paul's tone and subject matter. However, this matches his habit of shifting his focus between positive and negative examples: those who preach for love of Paul versus those who preach from selfish motives (1:15–17), God's blameless children versus the "crooked and twisted generation" around them (2:15). Now we see a shift from those who follow Paul's example to those who live as enemies of the cross.

Read Philippians 3:1-3.

Paul warns the Philippians about the Judaizers that were telling Gentiles that in addition to Christ, to be saved, they had to follow all the Jewish rites and rituals including circumcision, kosher diet, etc.

Why would Paul call them dogs? (Hint: dogs weren't "man's best friend" during this time. Think wild dogs.)

Why would Paul call them evildoers? (Hint: Read Galatians 6:13)

Why would Paul call them mutilators? (Hint: Think about the context of 1 Kings 18:28)

Do you think Paul lost his temper here and is speaking too harshly? Why/Why not?

What does Paul mean when he says, "We are the circumcision?" (Hint: Read Deuteronomy 10:6 and Romans 2:29.)

Wednesday, January 12 – Week 3 – Day 3

Paul tells the Philippians to watch out for those that put their confidence in the flesh, then he proceeds to list some of the things that he would have previously boasted in.

Read Philippians 3:4-7.

In this passage, Paul contrasts two ways to attempt to get right with God: Either resting in our credentials or in Christ. In what ways have you trusted in your credentials (family, societal status, obedience, desire, comparison to others)?

When Paul writes of what he used to consider “gain” (v. 7), what does he have in mind? Is he thinking in terms of spiritual gain or of the practical benefits (the “creaturely comforts”) of his former way of life?

Imagining the respectability, familiarity, and comfort of his former life as a religious leader, what might Paul have lost in embracing Christ? How does 2 Corinthians 11:23–29 further highlight this cost?

When you consider your life, can you honestly say that you have or would move all of it to the loss column for the profit of just knowing Christ? Are there things that you still hold back? How is Christ better?

Thursday, January 13 – Week 3 – Day 4

Paul doesn't just express that he *would* count those things loss if he needed. He moves on to explain that he *has* regarded all those credentials to be rubbish. That is a very weak translation. The word is not very polite. Think rotting garbage, excrement, or as the KJV puts it, "dung."

Read Philippians 3:8-11

Verse 9 uses the word "righteousness" in two different ways. One is so-called righteousness, and the other is true righteousness. Describe the difference.

The gospel is infinitely glorious, rich, and expansive, but here Paul condenses the gospel message to a few short lines, making clear what it is and is not. How would you describe the gospel in your own words. Imagine a friend asked you what he or she must do in order to be made right with God; what would you say?

What did Paul mean when he wrote of his longing to know "the power of his resurrection" (v. 10)?

The Philippians share in Paul's ministry and suffering (1:29–30). Now, Paul similarly seeks to share Christ's suffering. Explain the relationship between sharing the missionary sacrifice of others and sharing in the sufferings of Christ.

Friday, January 14 – Week 3 – Day 5

Yesterday's passage ended on a high, exultant note (vv. 1–11) while today's begins with a more tempered tone.

Read Philippians 3:12-16.

How might verses 12–14 be a clarification of verses 1–11? Looking through the rest of the passage (vv. 15–21), do you see any other reason why Paul writes about his imperfect pursuit of Christ in verses 12–13?

Verse 12 provides three motivating factors in Paul's pursuit of Christ. Why does Paul "press on," according to this verse?

Paul writes that his aim in pressing on is "to make it my own" (v. 12). What does he mean by this phrase? How does it relate to the next phrase, "because Christ Jesus has made me his own"?

What "lies behind" that Paul resolves to "forget" (v. 13)? (Hint: don't limit your consideration to negative things of the past.)

Paul attests that he is constantly "straining forward to what lies ahead," "toward the goal," which is "the prize of the upward call" (vv. 13–14). What is he referring to here?

In verses 15–16 Paul addresses those who "think otherwise"—i.e., other than his view of the Christian life in verses 12–14. What does he say to them? What doctrinal and pastoral assumptions stand behind Paul's approach?

Saturday, January 15 – Week 3 – Day 6

As Paul writes, “our citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. 3:20), he is not only encouraging us to think about where we will go, but also about where we are now. It is a concept as majestic as it is mysterious.

Read Philippians 3:17-21

Remarkably, after fully acknowledging his imperfection (vv. 12–13), Paul calls the Philippians to “join in imitating me” (v. 17). This is a call Paul uses frequently (Phil. 4:9; 1 Cor. 11:1; 2 Thess. 3:8–9; 1 Tim. 4:12, 15–16). Why do many of us find it remarkable?

Why are we often leery of watching and imitating imperfect Christians, let alone serving as models ourselves?

Paul warns of false teachers in 3:2 and 3:18–19. Do you think that these two passages refer to the same group? Why or why not?

Paul uses five powerfully descriptive phrases for the false teachers in verses 18–19. What are they? In what ways might these phrases be contrasts of previous themes in Philippians?

Paul ends this section by writing of our heavenly “citizenship” (vv. 2–21). We are already now citizens of heaven, and yet we “await a Savior” and the transformation of our bodies. How should we think of our heavenly citizenship as an already-but-not-yet reality?

Sermon Notes - Sunday, January 16
