

PHILIPPIANS

An introduction: the city, the people and the letter

Tonight

1. Why Paul?
2. Getting to Philippi
3. The city of Philippi
4. Lydia by the river
5. The prison and the jailer
6. A ten-year friendship
7. Paul in Rome
8. The heart of the letter
9. Military language

What makes you happy?

What gives you joy?

Write it down. Keep it to yourself. We'll come back to it.

"He is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel."

ACTS 9:15



Why Paul?

I. The Jew

A Jew: "A Hebrew of Hebrews… a Pharisee" (Phil 3:5), taught by Gamaliel (Acts 22:3)

II. The Greek

A Greek: born in Tarsus, a Greek university city (Acts 21:39)

III. The Roman

A Roman: a Roman citizen by birth (Acts 22:28)

IV. The Craftsman

And a tentmaker (Acts 18:3)

The Greek word: skybalon

STRONG'S G4657

σκύβαλον

skybalon

Refuse. Rubbish. The scraps thrown out to the dogs.

What it covered

Paul's whole résumé (Philippians 3:5–6).

Philippians 3:8

*"...and do count them but **dung**, that I may win Christ."*

"Come over to Macedonia and help us."

ACTS 16:9

"And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia..."

ACTS 16:10



Philippi

- 356 BC: Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, takes the town and names it after himself. Gold mines nearby.
- 42 BC: The Battle of Philippi. Antony and Octavian defeat Brutus and Cassius.
- After: Retired soldiers settle there. Augustus makes it a Roman colony.



A Roman Military Diploma

Bronze tablets given to an auxiliary soldier after about 25 years of service: his proof of Roman citizenship.



Two bronze tablets, wired together and sealed · The Met, New York

This one dates from AD 149. The Emperor Antoninus Pius granted citizenship and the right to a legal marriage to foreign-born veterans. It belonged to an infantryman named Dasmenus Azalus.

"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

PHILIPPIANS 3:20

The Greek word: politeuma

STRONG'S G4175

πολίτευμα

politeuma

Citizenship. A commonwealth. A colony living far from home.

SHARES A ROOT WITH

politeuomai: to live as a citizen (1:27).

PHILIPPIANS 3:20

*"For our **conversation** is in heaven."*

A miniature Rome

- Latin was the official language
- Roman dress and Roman coins
- Roman law and Roman-style magistrates
- Treated as "Italian soil," exempt from some taxes



The forum at Philippi, with the theatre behind

"A leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony."

ACTS 16:12

PHILIPPI TODAY



The Via Egnatia

The actual paving stones running through Philippi



"Paul's prison"

The site traditionally called "Paul's prison"



Mosaic: ΠΑΥΛΟ

A church floor mosaic with Paul's name in it: ΠΑΥΛΟ

"And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together."

ACTS 16:13

Three very different people

THE MERCHANT

Lydia

A wealthy businesswoman from Thyatira, a seller of purple (16:14–15)

THE ENSLAVED

The slave girl

At the bottom of society, "a spirit of Python" (16:16–18)

THE VETERAN

The jailer

A Roman working man, perhaps a retired soldier (16:23–34)

"You are all one in Christ Jesus."

GALATIANS 3:28

"The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul."

ACTS 16:14

"Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."

PSALM 119:18

The Greek word: parabiazomai

STRONG'S G3849

παραβιάζομαι

parabiazomai

To constrain. To urge so strongly that nobody can say no.

ACTS 16:15

*"...And she **constrained** us."*

LUKE 24:29 · THE ONLY OTHER USE

*"But they **constrained** him, saying, Abide with us."*

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GALATIANS 3:28

"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them."

ACTS 16:25



The site traditionally called “Paul’s prison,” Philippi

Psalm 137 and Acts 16

Psalm 137:1

"By the **rivers** of Babylon, there **we sat down**."

Psalm 137:4

"How shall we **sing** the LORD's song in a strange land?"

Acts 16:13

"We went outside the gate to the **river**side… and **we sat down**."

Acts 16:25

"About midnight Paul and Silas were… **singing** hymns to God."

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

ACTS 16:30

A TEN-YEAR FRIENDSHIP

About AD 49–50

The ecclesia begins (Acts 16)

"they… departed" (Acts 16:40)

1

About AD 56–57

Paul returns to Philippi

"we sailed away from Philippi"
(Acts 20:6)

2

About AD 60–62

Paul writes from Rome

"when we came into Rome" (Acts 28:16)

3

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you... because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now."

PHILIPPIANS 1:3, 5

The Greek word: splanchnon

STRONG'S G4698

σπλάγχνα

splanchnon

The inward parts: heart, lungs, liver. Where the Greeks felt things most deeply.

ALSO IN

Luke 1:78: "tender mercy"

PHILIPPIANS 1:8

*"I long after you all in the **bowels** of Jesus Christ."*

"...known throughout the whole imperial guard."

PHILIPPIANS 1:13

"What has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ."

PHILIPPIANS 1:12–13

"...he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life..."

PHILIPPIANS 2:30

Epaphroditus risking life and health to minister to Paul's necessities in Rome.

The Greek word: paraboleuomai

STRONG'S G3851

παραβολεύομαι

paraboleuomai

To gamble. To throw the dice with your own life.

LATER

The parabolani: "the gamblers."

PHILIPPIANS 2:30

*"...nigh unto death, **not regarding his life**."*

Themes to watch for

PHILIPPIANS 1:5

Fellowship

A shared partnership (1:5)

PHILIPPIANS 2:5

The mind of Christ

Humble, serving, obedient (2:5)

PHILIPPIANS 3:20

Citizenship (politeuma)

"Our citizenship" (3:20)

PHILIPPIANS 3:14

Pressing on

"I press on toward the goal" (3:14)

Is joy the same thing as happiness?

The Greek word: chara

STRONG'S G5479

χαρά

chara

Joy. A calm, steady, lasting gladness.

SHARES A ROOT WITH

charis, meaning grace.

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

*"**Rejoice** in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."*

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ... that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

Military words in Philippians

PHILIPPIANS 1:12

Furtherance

An advance party clearing the road

PHILIPPIANS 1:17

Set for the defence

A soldier posted on duty

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

Stand fast

Hold your position, don't break ranks

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

Striving together

Fighting side by side

PHILIPPIANS 1:28

Terrified

A horse spooked in battle

PHILIPPIANS 2:25

Fellowsoldier

What Paul calls Epaphroditus

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

PHILIPPIANS 4:7

LOOK AT YOUR LIST

Joy from circumstances:

health, money, holidays, the weather, how your team did

Joy in the Lord:

"Rejoice in the Lord always" (4:4) · "I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to be content" (4:11)

Is my joy built on my circumstances, or is it in the Lord?