

Philippians

Who, When, Where

Written by Paulus (Paul). Paulus was originally a fanatical Pharisee, persecuting, imprisoning, and even killing Christians for teaching what he thought was heresy, that Yeshua was the Anointed, (The Jewish Messiah). After meeting Yeshua in a miraculous way on the road to Damascus, Paulus became not just a Christian but one of Christianity's most fervent preachers and teachers. He spent most of his life as an itinerant missionary, with all the life threatening perils that that brought with it, to the towns and cities which lay along the route between Jerusalem and Rome. Paulus died in Rome somewhere in the 60'sAD, and he wrote most of the letters which we have in the New Testament.

Paulus and Timotheos had visited Philippi somewhere around 49-51AD after Paulus received a vision calling him to Macedonia. You can read a little about it in Acts 16. He visited again around 56/7AD.

The letter was written after the Philippians had sent Epaphroditus to Paulus with a gift of support for him. (Most likely while he was under house arrest, awaiting trial by caesar in Rome.) Epaphroditus had nearly died while doing the work, and Paulus was sending him back so the Philippians could stop worrying. He sent this letter with him.

Philippi was a major city in Macedonia, (now part of Greece), established about 350BC and had since been taken over by the Romans.

Summary

My friend has a magnet on the fridge. "Sometimes I wake up grumpy, but most days I just let him sleep."

Isn't it wierd how sometimes we just wake up with a bad attitude?

What can we do on those days? How can we get that under control? What causes it anyway?

How would your attitude change if Yeshua appeared to you and gave you a mission, a big mission?

Would that help you get through your day?

Before You Read

Why does God let bad things happen to you?

Why are you so determined to avoid any discomfort in your life?

Why is the Bible so spiritual but not very practical on a day to day level?

Why are other people so selfish?

Are you glad that at least when you're struggling you have friends who will listen to what's happening?

Do you care that some people just don't like you?

Why is there so much politics in church?

What was life really like for Paulus in prison?

What's the point of life anyway?

Key Verses

Philippians 1:1

To all the holy in Anointed Yeshua in Philippi, together with watchmen and servants.

Would you call yourself holy?

Would you call yourself righteous?

The Greek word we translate as "holy" means "set apart for the exclusive use of God". So if a cup was used in the temple of Yahweh, it was considered holy. If it was just for you and me to drink from, it wasn't.

The Greek word behind "righteous" is just as you would expect. It means your behaviour lines up with what is considered right and good.

So if you're a Christian then you **are** holy. Because Yeshua has purchased you to be dedicated to serving Yahweh.

Based on your actions, you may not be righteous. But again, if you're a Christian, then you **are** righteous because your righteousness is a gift from God, through Yeshua.

Philippians 1:10

So that you'll be able to discern the things of consequence, so that you may be sincere and inoffensive to others, until the day of the Anointed.

What a powerful thing, to be able to tell what things are important and what aren't. So much of our lives, so much of our effort is wasted on things that just don't matter.

Can you tell?

Do you even think about it?

If you recorded where all your time goes, and then coloured every hour based on whether it was spent on things of consequence or not... What colour would your day be?

How can you change that?

Philippians 1:12

And I intend you to perceive brothers, that my circumstances have actually come to be for the progress of the good news.

Anything bad ever happen to you?

Did it have anything good come about because of it?

Paulus is saying here, that his being in prison was actually a good thing because it encouraged the other Christians to speak out.

He says the same thing in Romans 8:28.

We are so self focused. We are so "now" focused.

We judge events as good or bad depending on how they affect **me** right now.

If only we were focused on the long term.

If only we were focused on the whole assembly of Christians, and on the kingdom of God.

Philippians 1:21-24

For to me – to be living is the Anointed, but to have died is gain. But if for me to live in the flesh will be a fruitful work, then which will I choose? I don't know, for I'm torn between the two – having the desire to depart and to be united with the Anointed, for that's far better, but it's more necessary for you that I remain in the flesh.

Paulus is having a Shakespear moment... "to be or not to be".

If he dies, he knows he will be with Yeshua forever. Which is his heart's desire.

If he lives, he can continue working on behalf of Yeshua, and to the benefit of other Christians.

So for their sake, he is willing to keep working.

Where was his focus? On himself? On "now"?

Philippians 1:29

For it's been granted to you on behalf of the Anointed, not only to trust in him, but also to suffer on his behalf

How do you feel about that?

You have special permission from God to suffer on behalf of Yeshua.

Not everyone is allowed to do that, but you may.

If you get the "not me, not now" focus of life. If you really get that. Then I think you're probably really excited about this verse. I think you're blown away by the idea that your suffering can be used by God to be a good thing.

Are you excited?

Philippians 2:3

Don't do anything out of self interest or vanity, but in humility consider one another to be more important than yourselves.

Imagine the list of everything you did today.

Cross off everything on the list that was motivated by your own self interest.

Put a line through everything that was driven by your pride.

Blank out everything you did today where you didn't put others first.

Anything left?

Do you really think other people are more important than you?

No you don't.

If you did you would stop being so selfish.

Philippians 2:5-7

For let this way of thinking be among you that was also in Anointed Yeshua – who, being inherently in the form of God, didn't think of equality with God as a treasure to be stolen, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in the likeness of mankind.

Yeshua **was** more important than everyone else. He, of all people, could honestly treat others as less important and be right.

But even then, he left what he could rightfully claim as his behind, and became a slave. God became a man, because **he** considered you to be more important.

Philippians 2:13

For God is the one who works among you – so that you want to and do, work on behalf of his delight.

Left to yourself you would stay lazy and self-centred.

But God is working in your life to change that. He is working to make you want to do better. And he is working in your life to make you do better.

Don't think you can't do it. God is working in you to make you able.

Philippians 2:14

Do everything without murmuring and arguing

It seems to me that everyone grumbles these days. We complain about our politicians, our leaders, our pastors.

In our own pride and arrogance we judge whether they are right or wrong and we criticise every mistake we think they make.

We gossip behind their backs, we slander them on social media, we complain openly with our friends.

When the Israelites were wandering in the desert they murmured and complained ... and God killed them.

Philippians 3:7

Whatever was a gain to me, these things I've assumed to be a loss, because of the Anointed.

Paulus has just listed all the status he achieved in the Law. In the old covenant.

But now there is a new and better covenant and those old things have become worthless. Don't be deceived into chasing them. Don't be tricked into going back to the old way of rules and regulations and judgement.

Philippians 3:9

... not having my righteousness by the law, but through faith of the Anointed – a righteousness from God by faith.

Even Paulus, who from the sound of it might have actually been getting somewhere in his quest for righteousness under the Law...

Even he realised that it was dung compared with the free righteousness which is ours through faith in Yeshua.

Philippians 3:13-14

... forgetting those things which are indeed behind me, and reaching out to the things in front, I pursue the goal ...

How about you? Focused on the future?

Focused on the goal?

Or are you still caught up in the past.

Some people just can't get over some past failing.

From men's point of view Paulus' past was incredibly successful. But from his it was a complete letdown. He had been pursuing the wrong things. He was ashamed of the things he had done.

But Paulus' took on the attitude of Yeshua and kept his focus on the goal, on the future, on the long term, not just on what was happening to him today.

The other way I've seen some people get caught up in the past... They did something for God once. And it's all they ever talk about.

They're not doing anything for him now, but they did this one thing.

Let me say this - if you're still breathing, then God has **more** things he wants you to do. It's time to move on. It's time to sacrifice yourself again.

Are you willing?

Or should he end it for you now?

Philippians 3:17

Be fellow imitators of me brothers! And take note of those who walk in this way, according to the model you have from us.

I think this verse gets taken out of context quite a bit.

Paulus isn't saying, "copy everything you see me do". He isn't saying, "I am perfection itself."

It is so dangerous to read a single verse by itself. Always read the chapter at least.

This verse is in a context. Look back to verse 13...

Paulus is saying "I am focused on the goal. Be like me."

Are you seeing this in Philippians? There is a lot here about where your focus is. There is a lot here about focusing on the long term goal, on the big picture, on what you're achieving for the kingdom of God, and not just on what you're achieving for yourself, not just on today and how comfortable you are...

Philippians 3:18-19

... Many walk as enemies of the stake of the Anointed... Their thinking is on earthly things.

The enemies of Yeshua have their minds set on earthly things, not on the things of God. If I took you to court, could I make a case that you're an enemy of Yeshua? Would I find evidence that your thinking is on earthly things?

Can you prove you're not?

Philippians 4:6-7

Don't be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thankfulness, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Anointed Yeshua.

Stressed? Anxious?

Praying?

Thankful?

Huh? Thankful? If everything works together for your good. If everything that happens to you is part of God's plan. If it is your **privilege** to suffer. Then shouldn't you be thankful when you do? Even if you're asking God to take it away, (if that's OK with him).

Philippians 4:8

Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is auspicious, if there's anything of virtue, if there's anything of praise – account these things.

Do you always assume the worst? (About other people I mean, not about you of course).

Do you assume other people have wrong motives when they do something you don't like? Anthony Robbins has some great teaching. One thing he asks is, "Is there any possible explanation for what that other person just did, that could have been well intentioned?"

Even if it's unlikely, can you even think of a possible reason for what they did?

OK, You've got one? So why not assume that is the truth instead of the bad motive you assumed they had before?

Philippians 4:13

I'm strong in all through the one who empowers me – the Anointed.

Another verse which is so often taken out of context.

The context here is Paulus saying he's been through a lot of circumstances, both "good" and "bad". But in all of them, he has been strong through a lot of Yeshua.

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

So what do you think?

No, literally, what do you think?

What do you think about?

Yourself? Your circumstances? Your comfort?

Or are you focused on Yeshua, on serving him, on being a part of his long term plan for mankind.

Paulus is asking us to stop thinking just about ourselves, and our own comfort. He's asking us to accept our circumstances and use them to advance the good news of Yeshua.

He's asking us to accept suffering as temporary, and as an honour, and to keep the our mind focused on what we are achieving for God.

Everything in Philippians is about our attitude. It's either telling us what it should or shouldn't be, or it's someone with a right attitude - an example we can follow, or it's a way of living that our correct attitude should be bringing about.

Forget the past, forget your comfort, forget your anxieties about life, put others first, and get your attitude right.

The rest will follow.