



PHILIPPIANS OVERVIEW

Stuck in house arrest, Paul writes to encourage the Philippian church to live as citizens worthy of the Gospel in the midst of their suffering. Many of us are also suffering right now. During this pandemic, we are experiencing loss, but we are not losing. We are in this together, growing in Christ and in unity, and God is refining us through suffering and purifying us through loss. To live for Christ and die to self in community in the midst of suffering and loss is to Christ's glory and our gain.

Paul's letter to the Philippians is so apt for us today. We need his words that can enable us, in light of and because of Christ Jesus, to rejoice in the midst of suffering, trial and loss. Now is the time to be a united church on mission together, willing to lose it all for Christ's fame and our gain.

WEEK 5: DOWN IS UP

Read the text: Philippians 2:1-11

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his

own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In today's passage, Paul calls the church to unity and humility by having the same mind as Jesus Christ. The key to unity as a church is that we pull together with humility. This can only be done when we remember what we have received through Jesus, when we regard others as more significant than ourselves, paying close attention to the interests of others, and ultimately when we reflect on the mind of Christ. The way towards unity is through remembering and believing the Gospel of Jesus, which says that although He was equal with God, He humbled Himself, became a man and servant of all, and died a humiliating death in our place. Jesus did this for us so that we can be forgiven and able to do it for one another. In the end, the Father highly exalted Jesus as Lord of all. But the way up was through humbling himself and coming down. Will we have this same mind that Jesus had?

Discussion Questions:

These questions are written for DNA groups, but you can use in any setting, including missional communities. Because they were written for the intimacy of DNA friendships, you may need to adjust for larger groups.

1. To walk worthy of the Gospel of Christ means to be marked by humility and unity in our relationships and especially in our church family. This is possible only when we truly

understand and believe what Jesus has done for us. Take some time to “re-discover” together what Jesus has done for you. What have you received from Jesus that you did not deserve? Share specific things that come to mind.

2. “Humility is not to think less of yourself, but to think of yourself less.” Pride is a preoccupation with ourselves and our own interests. The only way we’ll be able to stop being so focused on ourselves, whether through beating ourselves down or puffing ourselves up, is when we see Jesus and what He has done for us. His death for us says that we were much worse than we could ever imagine...our sin required His death. Yet it also says we are much more loved than we could ever know...He gave His life for us! This good news frees us from thinking of ourselves to be able to actually love and serve others as Jesus has loved us. How do you see pride, whether it's beating yourself down or puffing yourself up, showing up in your life right now? How are you preoccupied with yourself? After you share, invite your group to remind you of Jesus and what He has done for you. You may already know the truths they will share, but listen and receive the good news again from them.
3. Whose interests is God calling you to prioritize above your own right now? Maybe it's a spouse, a friend, or a family member. Or it could also be a group of people, like those who are marginalized and oppressed in some way. What would it look like to put their interests above your own the way that Jesus has done for you? Take time to share tangible ways you can pursue that this week. What is God calling you to do? How can your DNA group pray for you and support you in this?