

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT ~ February 26, 2012



PHILIPPIANS: To Know Christ and Make Him Known

“Loving Others on Your Knees” Philippians 1:1-11

This weekly lesson guide complements the teaching at UPC on Sunday morning. Use it in your own private time with God, in your family, or with your Life Group or Bible study group. If you ever miss a sermon, you can listen to it online at www.upc-orlando.com.

This week, we begin a careful study of Paul’s letter to the Philippians. It’s a short letter, but it radiates Paul’s passion to know Christ and make him known to others.

One of the big themes of Philippians is joy in times of suffering. The word appears sixteen times in the letter. Paul wrote this letter around A.D. 60 during his first imprisonment in Rome. Ten years earlier, he had visited Philippi and established a church. The Philippians loved Paul dearly, and he loved them. He was concerned about the false teaching, persecution, and interpersonal conflict happening in Philippi. He urged the believers to rejoice at all times and stay faithful to God and to each another.

May this study of Philippians reignite your ambition to know Christ better and share his love with those around you.



KNOWING GOD

Read Philippians 1:1-11. In verse 7, the author (the apostle Paul) casually mentions being “in chains.” The fact is, Paul wrote this letter to believers in Philippi from prison in Rome. He was awaiting trial before Caesar (see Acts 28:11-31 for background). Despite his difficult circumstances, Paul exudes joyful confidence. What can you identify as the source(s) of that joyful confidence?

What gave Paul hope, as he prayed for his friends in Philippi, that he was heard by God?

What role does prayer play in God’s redemptive plan?



GROWING TOGETHER

How do you normally respond to stressful circumstances? That is, what is your default coping strategy?

Identify a stressful circumstance you are dealing with right now:

Which of the following phrases best describes where prayer fits into your spiritual life: as natural as breathing, daily discipline, last resort, or not even on the radar? What obstacles prevent prayer from being more important to your day?



SERVING OTHERS

This week's sermon title, "Loving Others on Your Knees," shows what Paul discovered during the two years or more that he spent imprisoned in Rome. He knew that prayer is a powerful way to love others. Do you pray regularly for other people? Why or why not?

Jot down the names of one or two people you know who need "grace and peace" (vs. 2) from God. Commit to praying every day this week for them.



IN YOUR FAMILY...

Prayer is a family affair. As a family, come up with a realistic plan for making prayer a daily priority in your home. You might consider taking turns leading in prayer, creating a prayer list or journal, praying for specific concerns on different days of the week, and the like.

SERMON NOTES