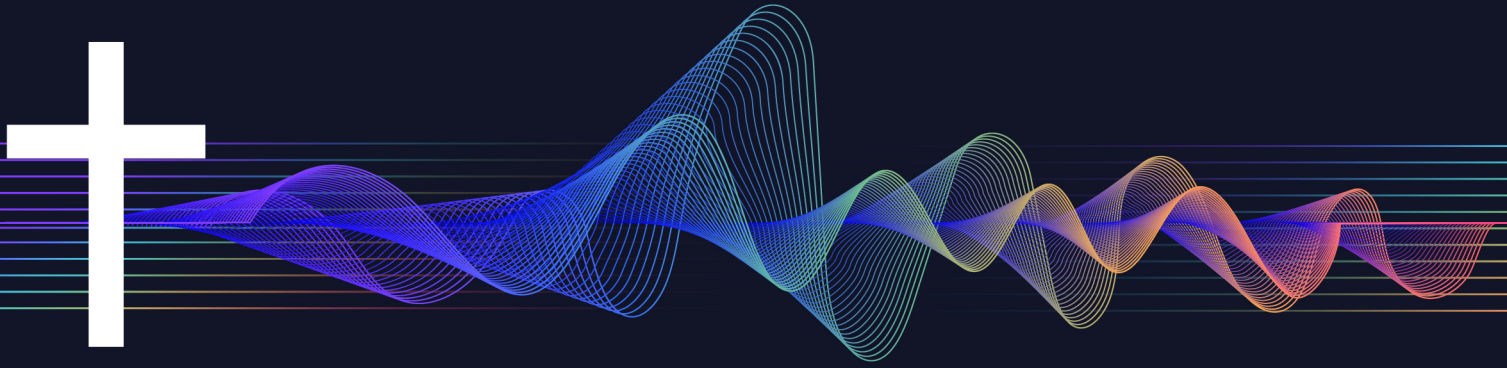


ALL TO JESUS

Commitment Series Studies 2023



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Leaders Notes

STUDY ONE - LEADERS NOTES

All to Jesus in Gospel Unity

Philippians 1:1-11

Read Philippians 1:1-11

1. How do your relationships with followers of Jesus differ from other relationships?

Discuss.

2. What we know of Paul's relationship with the Philippians (verses 1-2)?

In verse 1 the title "servants" not "apostles" suggests familiarity and humility so Paul does not need assert his authority. He has a good relationship with them (compare and contrast Paul's introduction in letters in 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians and Galatians).

3. Paul has passion for the gospel. What attitudes does Paul have as he prays with thanksgiving for the Philippians (verse 3-8)? Why does Paul respond towards the Philippians in this way?

Paul is thankful (verse 3) because God gives Paul his grace shared with the Philippians (verse 2). Paul is joyful (verse 5) and has confidence (verse 6) because God is faithful and is "continuing the good work to completion until the day of Christ" (verse 6).

Paul has attachment (verse 7) because they share in Christ and God's grace and a partnership in the gospel (verse 5). Paul has affection in his heart (verse 7), the affection of Christ (verse 8) because they share in Christ. We discover in Acts 16 and later in Philippians that the Philippians have been instrumental in their support of the early church.

4. Why does the love of Jesus create such profound and transcendent relationships among His followers?

The relationship Paul and the Philippians share in Christ transcends worldly concerns and creates genuine unity. The concerns

they share are of a spiritual nature, not of a worldly nature. Their relationship is not "feelings" based, but shaped by their partnership in God's grace. Even in the face of worldly limitations (e.g. Paul is in chains) their relationship continues, "for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel" (verse 8).

5. What specifically does Paul pray for in relation to the Philippians (verses 9-11)?

Paul prays for the gifts of the gospel and for a gospel centred future for the Philippians.

6. How do Paul's priorities in prayer differ to yours?

Discuss

7. Why does love require knowledge and depth of insight (verse 9)?

Love is a fruit of the gospel and as such is derived from God and not from the world or worldly wisdom.

8. What is Paul's desire for the Philippians?

Paul longs that they are filled with the fruit of righteousness and, consequently, all glory goes to God.

9. How can we learn to give thanks and to pray for the one's we love based on Paul's prayer for the Philippians?

Discuss

Sermon Bonus Question - What does **Excellence** look like in my life?

Finish with a prayer based on Paul's prayer.

STUDY TWO - LEADERS NOTES

All to Jesus in Gospel Humility

Philippians 2:12-30

Read Philippians 2:12-30

1. Why is it such good news (and an incentive to bow the knee before Jesus now) that authority and humility are found together in Jesus?

Because it means that the One in charge is looking after the interests of others (including ours!) That's a comfort and cause for celebration.

2. Why must authority and humility go together in the kingdom of God? (cf. Mark 10:35-45)

Because in God's kingdom, authority and service are very closely related: Jesus is the best example. The number one principle of God's kingdom is love which is not self-centred but other person centred. In God's kingdom, you must descend into greatness. Consider and compare how greatness is perceived in the eyes of the world.

3. Should we 'let go and let God' to effect the changes in us so that we can live a life worthy of the gospel? (Verses 12-13)

Responsibility for our salvation is both 100% ours and 100% God's. Paul exhorts us to "work out our salvation..." because "it is God who works in us..." (our struggle, discipline and effort). Yet Paul urges the Philippians to struggle (Phil 1:27-30), but he still prays for them (Phil 1:9-11), thanks God for their progress (Phil 1:3-5) and is confident God will finish His work in them (Phil 1:6). God works through our wills and actions to achieve our salvation. We do not earn it as Jesus already has but it's actually an incentive to work harder (it means confidence, co-operation, a sure purpose with guaranteed success!)

4. List the characteristics of the person who "shines like a star" (verses 14-16).

Being shiny means no complaining or arguing but blameless and pure, without fault as children of God (which implies a family likeness), hold out (hold onto?) the Word of life.

5. Why is complaining and arguing inconsistent with the gospel?

These come from a self-centred - worldly - attitude and are the opposite of true humility as exemplified by Jesus. Contrast the example of Paul (Chapter 1) and of Jesus Christ (Chapter 2). Complaining and arguing shows an unthankful heart for all we have in the gospel of Jesus.

6. How can one avoid the "what's in it for me?" attitude to church? Can I encourage others to do the same?

Cultivating thankfulness to God (reflect on his blessings in Jesus Christ); focussing on other-person-centredness rather than concern for self; thinking and talking the gospel; get on with serving others rather than complaining and arguing.

7. In what way is Paul an example of our ideal response as followers of Jesus (verses 17-18)?

Paul gives everything for what really matters. He is prepared to commit his all (Phil 1:20), being "poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice" (cf. Gen 35:14, Lev 23:13, 18) and he is prepared to lose his life for the gospel, "service coming from you faith" (2 Cor 12:15) and "glad and rejoice with all of you" (Num 15:1-12) (cf. 2 Cor 6:10).

Notes continue on page 4

STUDY TWO - LEADER NOTES CONT.

All to Jesus in Gospel Humility

Philippians 2:12-30

8. What kind of people does the world tend to hold in high regard in 2023?

Discuss

9. What kind of people should followers of Jesus respect and celebrate according to verses 19-20?

Consider Timothy and Epaphroditus: Timothy is presented to us as a Christ-like example "takes a genuine interest in your welfare" (2:20); contrast to those "looking out for their own interests" (2:21), not those of Christ; Timothy has "served...as a son with his father" (2:22);

Epaphroditus has more concern about the impact of his sickness on the Philippians, than on himself, being "a fellow worker who almost died for the work of Christ" (2:25, 2:30); Paul is prepared to be "poured out like a drink offering" in being executed for the sake of Christ (2:17) as self-humbling service.

Sermon Bonus Question - What heart surgery do I need God to do in me so I long to share Jesus with **Everyone**?

Finish with a prayer based on Paul's description of Jesus in Philippians 2:5-11.

STUDY THREE - LEADERS NOTES

All to Jesus in Gospel Expectation

Philippians 3:8-4:1

Read Philippians 3:8-4:1

1. Where do you want to be in 10 years' time in your walk with Jesus?

Discuss

2. What was Paul's aim for his own life? (verses 3:8-11)

To be found in Christ, that is with the righteousness that comes through faith in Jesus Christ, Paul wants to know Jesus Christ (better and better) and to be united with Christ in resurrection power, suffering, death and eventually in the final resurrection.

3. What would Paul say to someone who thinks they can relax and stop striving as a follower of Jesus? (Verses 3:12-14, Ephesians 1:3 and 2:6, Colossians 3:1-4)

If the apostle Paul has not arrived yet, then neither have we! Life for the follower of Jesus is a tension between having arrived now (in Christ), and not yet having arrived completely (when Christ returns or we go to be with Him). Paul can say "we have every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3), and that "we are seated with God in the heavenly realms in Christ" (Ephesians 2:6), and yet we still must "press on" (literally, "pursue") the goal enduring the tension we experience.

4. What security is there in Philippians 3:12-14 for the follower of Jesus?

Jesus Christ took hold of us in the gospel that we may be made perfect! This is the purpose for which God has called us heavenward to win this special prize. This is our incentive to press on, rather than a disincentive [cf.

Philippians 2:12-13].

5. According to the following Bible references, what might "the prize" be?

- Luke 19:12-17 *Well done*
- 2 Timothy 4:8 *Award of righteousness*
- 1 Peter 5:4 *Gift of the shepherd*
- Revelation 22:3-4 *Identity*
- 1 Thess 4:17 *Unending presence of God*

6. What "view of things" should mature followers of Jesus take? (verses 3:15-16)

We ought to take Paul's view which is not having yet arrived! It's the immature follower who imagines they've arrived in terms of knowledge and godliness. How does God reveal this to us? When He reveals our inadequacy! Maturity involves "living up to what we've already attained" which is living in line with the pattern of godliness Paul has already shared with them. Pressing on just going forward on the same right track!

7. Think of yourself 10 years ago, 5 years ago, 1 year ago in your understanding of Biblical truth, your personal godliness, and your ministry engagement? How have you grown? What commitments can you make to grow?

Reflect and discuss

8. Why is it necessary for a follower of Jesus to be deliberate in choosing whose example to follow? (Verse 3:17)

Because if we don't do it deliberately, we'll follow examples anyway, and possibly the unhelpful examples. We're always influenced by those around us. We need to be conscious of this process and use it for our growth in

Notes continue on page 6

STUDY THREE - LEADERS NOTES CONT.

All to Jesus in Gospel Expectation

Philippians 3:8-4:1

understanding, godliness, and engagement for the gospel.

9. Verses 18-19 describe bad role models. Why are they attractive as role models? What is their motivation?

They have appetites, earthly advancement (of various kinds), they glory in things that will eventually bring them shame at the judgement. What drives them is attractive to us in a worldly sense – wealth, health, material things, glamour, status, outward piety.

10. Verses 20-21 describe good role models. How are they contrasted with bad role models? What is their motivation?

They are self-consciously citizens of heaven, not earthly. The return of the Lord Jesus ensures that followers of Jesus live mature lives with this at the front of their mind...

The thought you're going to face Him is a powerful incentive to keep growing in Him now and know Him better. As heavenly citizens, we are waiting for our new bodies designed for eternity. We should live accordingly now - as people who belong there.

Sermon Bonus Question - What must change in my perception to see **Everything** as belonging to Jesus?

Finish with a prayer based on "Your kingdom come", "Come, Lord Jesus!"

STUDY FOUR - LEADERS NOTES

All to Jesus in Gospel Life

Philippians 4:2-9

Read Philippians 4:2-9

1. Think of someone whom you consider to be strong in faith as a follower of Jesus. What is their relationship with God like? What is their outlook on life like? Do they have enemies? What do they think about? How does this show in what they do?

Discuss

2. Do we need to be told and shown how to stand firm in the Lord?

Often we imagine we are going well spiritually. Usually until someone other than us (Jeremiah 17:9) kindly, gently and graciously (sometimes firmly) shows us otherwise. It is not a matter of making it up as you go along. Rather our commitment is to "seeing," understanding, and applying God's Word (which doesn't change) to life (which does).

Godliness is "more easily caught than taught" and as a result we need godly role models also to show us how to apply God's Word to our particular life situations.

Paul now addresses life issues – disagreement, joy, gentleness, peace:

3. What clues are we given in verses 4:2-3 as to who the women were and what the situation was?

They were followers of Jesus (whose names are in the Book of Life) and were probably mature followers (working alongside Paul with commitment and a love for the gospel).

They agreed in gospel conviction but possibly didn't get along in chemistry or had secondary issues about which they did not agree. The trouble they were having resolving the issue made it a live issue causing friction in the local church.

4. What can we learn from how Paul dealt with the situation? Why is bickering especially ugly when it is between Jesus' followers?

We share in Jesus Christ - in Him we're brothers and sisters (John 13:34-35.) Paul pleaded with them to find resolution from them sorting it out together. He could have just arbitrated a resolution, but this wouldn't have healed the brokenness. Relationships matter and followers of Jesus do well to work hard at sorting things out properly in difficult relationships. Paul asked the follower who received the letter on behalf of the church (the "loyal yokefellow") to act as a mediator. He encouraged them to work towards "agreement" based on being "like-minded" (Philippians 2:2).

It is certainly not agreement at all costs - at the expense of the truth - but it would at least have meant focusing on things about which there was agreement (the gospel) and putting Philippians 2:2-4 into practice. When the gospel is the starting point and the focus, other issues often tend to fade into the background.

5. What are the grounds for Christian joy in verse 4? How is it that Paul can tell the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord always?

Followers of Jesus rejoice "in the Lord..." knowing the gospel. Because the gospel is our grounds for joy, the truth of our salvation and transformation don't change! Situations might change (you are only as "happy" as the "happenings" around you) and they may bring great suffering - but the gospel doesn't change. The bedrock in life is this - in Christ there is always a reason for joy - we can always delight in the Lord.

In what circumstances do Christians often

Notes continue on page 8

STUDY FOUR - LEADERS NOTES CONT.

All to Jesus in Gospel Life

Philippians 4:2-9

feel the most joy in the Lord? (cf. James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:3-9) What is it that might prevent us from feeling this joy? Those things which create distance between us and the Lord rather than our circumstances. Unconfessed and enduring sin mean often we hold Jesus at arm's length in one area of our lives, but expect joy in the Lord all the same. As His followers we need to repent.

6. What impression would you most like others to have about you? What should we make known to others about ourselves according to verse 5?

We like to be regarded for our intellect, good humour, popularity, success and photogenes! Gentleness is not always our first choice! What does this mean? Patience and humility as the opposite of being argumentative and self-seeking. How do we do this without showing off our humility?! By faithfully serving other people like Jesus.

The motivation for this is given in verse 5. "The Lord is near..." could mean one (or both) of two things: Jesus is coming soon - when He comes, what do you want Him to find you doing? Self-exalting or humble? Or... He's near to us in a spatial/personal way. He's not as far away as you think so a powerful motivation is to reveal His glory rather than steal His glory by trying to make yourself look good rather than Him.

7. Do you think we have more to worry about today than people did 2000 years ago? What are we to do with our worries? What peace is promised in verse 7?

Life is much more complicated today. We have more concern and more information and more to worry about (on a global scale and on a personal scale). The concerns of the Philippians may have been more immediate

(1:29-30). Either way, followers of Jesus are to lay them before God in prayer - place them in His hands. When was the last time that you laid all your burdens out before God in prayer? "With thanksgiving?"

The peace of God is not discerning by the mind or the heart but by the Spirit. God's peace in Christ transcends all understanding. It rules and guards our hearts and minds in Him with assurance of his divine protection no matter the circumstances. It may be that our worst fears are realised in an earthly sense, but we are secured.

8. Why do you think Paul tells us what to think about in verse 8?

Change begins with our thinking (cf. Romans 12:2) and thoughts lead to words and actions. God's desire is that all of us be devoted to Him - with every last thought (Luke 10:27). God knows our thoughts (cf. Heb 4:13, Ps 139:23-24) which is either frightening, comforting, and maybe both! The real measure of a person is their thought life. We can change the things upon which we dwell in our thoughts. We can read the Bible, consider Jesus Christ, aspire to godly examples, listen to sermons or podcasts. We can choose to displace the intellectual junk food and poison from films, media, and gossip.

9. What are three things you have learned from Paul, received from Paul, heard from Paul, or seen in Paul in his letter that you could put into practice?

Reflect and discuss

Sermon Bonus Question - How can I lift my **Engagement** for Jesus?

Finish with a prayer based on Paul's assurance of peace in Christ in Philippians 4:7.

STUDY FIVE - LEADERS NOTES

All to Jesus in Gospel Contentment

Philippians 4:10-23

Read Philippians 4:10-23

1. Describe the situation in which you can see yourself being totally content.

Discuss

2. Recall and describe the situation underlying verse 10. Why is Paul quick to add verses 4:11-13 after verse 10?

There is a close bond between Paul and followers of Jesus in Philippi. They have a history of taking care of him. Epaphroditus has arrived bearing gifts to help him whilst in prison in Rome (cf. Philippians 4:18 and 2:29-30). In verse 10 Paul is rejoicing he's received their gift. Verses 11-13 explain that this rejoicing is not coming from selfish motives. Paul doesn't rejoice for his own sake, rather because he could have been content without the gift.

3. Why is it important that followers of Jesus learn "the secret of being content" as Paul did? What happens if we don't learn this?

If we can't be content in any and all situations our concern for our own well-being will hinder our capacity to care for others. (Imagine Figtree church family full of discontented people. How much kingdom ministry would get done?) Once we can be content in any situation, we are able to be selfless and humble in service (Phil. 2:1-11)

4. How do you think we might learn this "secret of being content in any and every situation"?

We look to the Lord to empower us to do His will (verse 4:13) recognising God is all we need which teaches us detachment from wealth, health, and other circumstances. Whether in plenty or want it should make very little difference to us when we know Jesus.

5. What should our attitude be towards money and all it enables us to do?

Think of what you are most lacking now. Health? Wealth? Relationships? Are you consumed by this lack? Is this issue hindering your living and ministry for God?

Think of what you value most right now. Are you consumed by it? Is this issue hindering your living and ministry for God?

A desire for more money demonstrates a lack of contentment with our current situation. God doesn't need us to be materially prosperous to use us for growing His kingdom. Consider how Paul is in prison and he is being used to good gospel effect!

6. How was Paul's expression of gratitude in verses 14-19 designed to be received by the Philippians?

He wants them to know that he's grateful, and that he appreciates their gift. Their generosity was unique and costly, both materially and in terms of persecution.

He's not thanking them with the secret hope that they'll send more! He wants them to know that he is happy because God is pleased with the way they're living out their lives in faith by being generous and supporting the work of the gospel.

7. Whom did the generosity of the Philippians benefit?

Paul received their gift so he benefited materially. But Paul notes how they too benefited because they're living out the gospel, which is pleasing to God. Their "account" in verse 17 is not their account in heaven. Paul says rather it does them

Notes continue on page 10

STUDY FIVE - LEADERS NOTES CONT.

All to Jesus in Gospel Contentment

Philippians 4:10-23

good and is glad for their generosity for their own sakes because they're expressing their relationship with God in practical life transforming ways. This pleases God (verse 4:18).

8. How is verse 19 an encouragement for us to be generous as Christians today? What opportunities is God currently giving you to be generous?

We can keep giving because God will provide for us spiritually (and materially) in Christ Jesus. Living out the gospel of grace in generous practical ways draws us closer to Jesus and leads us to experience the blessings of the gospel in deeper ways.

9. In verses 21-23, why would Paul greet the Philippians on behalf of those they've never met?

All followers of Jesus share in the partnership of the gospel so we share a bond in that we are all "in Christ Jesus." Anglicans, Baptists, Presbyterians, other denominations may be good ways to organise ourselves but God organises His children "in Christ Jesus." We could (and should) express that bond in practical ways including towards those we both have and have not met under His direction.

Sermon Bonus Question - How may I loosen my grip on temporal things to have a lasting impact in **Eternity**?

Finish with a prayer based on Paul's joy for Jesus (Philippians 4:4).



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