

“Rejoice in the Lord!”

A study of the Book of Philippians

Life Group Guide for Nov. 6 – 20, 2016

(Session One)

1. Check-in and Opening Prayer:

Open your time together with a time of welcome, sharing of highs and lows, joys and concerns, etc. Make sure everyone has a chance to greet the members of the group and share a few words. Conclude this part of your time together with prayer. Central to what LifeGroups are all about is being an intentional caring community for the sake of others, the community of Christ called to care for one another, grow in faith, and seek God’s guidance together.

2. Introduction of the Philippians Series:

The church of Philippi was near and dear to Paul’s heart. We first hear of his ministry there in Acts chapter 16, while Paul and Silas are on their second apostolic tour. Philippi was a leading city in Macedonia and a military center where the predominant cultural influence was Roman. Now, years later Paul writes this letter to the church he helped begin in Philippi, while he himself is imprisoned for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a dark time for Paul as he comes not only to the end of his ministry but to the end of his life. But instead of being a letter of despair, this is one of the most joyful letters Paul ever wrote. It is a letter of thanksgiving for the Philippians’ material support of his ministry, and it is also a letter of thankfulness for God’s grace shown both to him, and to the Philippian church that he loves. This is a book of hope in the midst of a dark world, a reminder that in all things, we are members of the ‘Church,’ the ‘Body of Christ,’ and in this truth we ‘Rejoice in the Lord!’

3. Read Philippians chapter one. It is not a long chapter but you may wish to divide up the reading. Share some of the things that stood out for you in this reading.

4. Reflect upon what you heard in Sunday’s sermon. What are some of the things that stood out to you? What are some new things you heard in the sermon? What are some questions you may have from what Pr. Tim said?

5. Discussion Questions:

- A. How does this letter begin? Look at chapter one, verses one and two. This is a greeting, a rather nice one that includes a blessing for the readers. How do you begin a letter to someone close to you? Why do you do begin your letters like that?
- B. Following his greeting, Paul’s letter immediately continues with a joyful theme: **(Look again at 1: 3-11.)** Paul is thankful to God for the Philippians, why? (Hint: look

at verse five.) *Paul is grateful for the ministry they share, for the Gospel of Christ they are proclaiming in Philippi, and he is proclaiming in a Roman prison.*

- C. What else stands out for you in **1: 3-11**? What are some of the things mentioned in the sermon that dealt with this section of Philippians?
 - D. “Partnership in the Gospel” is a central theme in these verses. How do you see yourself as a “partner in the Gospel” here at OSL? In the broader church as a whole?
 - E. **Read Philippians 1: 12-18 again.** Here, Paul is speaking of how the Gospel of Christ is spreading, even within the walls of his prison. How is this possible? Can you think of a time when you yourself were in a ‘prison’ of sorts in your life? Were you, like Paul, able to see God at work in the midst of this difficult time in your life? Sometimes it’s hard to see God through the darkness of this world, but God is still there. Knowing this gave Paul the courage to proclaim the Gospel to others who otherwise might not have heard it. This gave Paul ‘joy’ even while he himself was suffering. This was a powerful witness of faith for the Philippians to see, and as Paul reminded them, to be part of.
 - F. What else stands out for you in **1: 12-18**? What are some of the things mentioned in the sermon that dealt with this section of Philippians?
 - G. As partners in ministry, how can we proclaim Christ through our words and actions, no matter where we might be in our own life at the time? Think of the way support groups work; bringing together people who are going through similar situations to offer first-hand support.
 - H. **Read Philippians 1: 19-27 again.** There are many things going on here: ‘thankfulness’ and encouragement in their shared ministry, ‘hope’ that things will turn out alright for he and the Philippians, ‘future hope’ in Christ’s return and the fulfillment of salvation for Christ’s people, etc. Although Paul is uncertain about his fate, he knows that for him, **“To live is Christ, and to die is gain.”** In this life, Paul has devoted himself to proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. If his life was coming to an end this would only be the fulfillment of the salvation through Christ that he proclaimed.
 - I. This week we celebrate All Saint’s Sunday, and we remember those from our congregation who have died since last year. Although hearing their name read in the service can be seen as a sad remembrance, how can it also be a cause for Rejoicing in the Lord? How do these verses from Philippians speak to this hope?
 - J. What did you hear in the sermon, and see in worship this “All Saints Sunday?”
6. **Wrap-Up**
Thank the facilitator of your group for this discussion and identify who will lead next week’s discussion and where your group will meet. Close your time together in prayer.