

## **Philippians Chapter 1 (Material taken from N. T. Wright's Study on Philippians for Small Groups)**

### **Opening Question**

- Who in your life are you thankful for right now and why?

### **Background and Context for Philippians (Lifted from The Bible Project Video on Philippians)**

The church in Philippi was the first one that Paul started in eastern Europe. It was a Roman colony known for patriotic nationalism. Paul's visit there is mentioned in Acts 16vv11-16. After Paul moved on from Philippi the vibrant community there continues to meet resistance for announcing Jesus as the true king of the world.

Paul sent this letter from one of his many imprisonments and for a very practical reason, the Philippians had sent one of their members Ephaphroditus to take a financial gift to Paul to support him in prison. Paul sent back this letter with Ephaphroditus to say "thank you" and to do a whole lot more.

### **Verses 1 – 11: Ask someone to read these verses out loud**

There is a strong **partnership** between Paul and the Philippians. Paul uses very emotional language in relation to the church in Philippi, which is unusual in letters written at that time. They are constantly thanking God for one another and praying for each other.

### **Questions and Application**

- What would happen in our lives if we thought of "partnership/fellowship in the gospel" like Paul did?

### **Verses 12-18: Ask someone to read these verses out loud**

Paul is in prison when he writes this letter, but what could easily have been thought of as a situation that would hamper his efforts to preach the gospel, actually the reality is very different.

### **Questions and Application**

- What are some difficult circumstances you are facing and how might God be using them to advance the gospel?

### **Verses 18-26: Ask someone to read these verses out loud**

Paul thinks deeply about the 2 roads before him, life on earth preaching the gospel and building church and death, which means being with Jesus.

### **Questions and Application**

- What fruitful work does the Lord have for you to do? In your home, school, work, neighbourhood, church, etc.?
- How does Paul's outlook on life and death challenge our own sense of the value, dignity and importance of life with Christ in body?

### **Verses 27-30: Ask someone to read these verses out loud**

In these verses Paul encourages the church to strive for unity, in the Message translation, the word "contend" is used. Unity is a powerful sign to the world, and the enemy will attempt to bring division and discord at any opportunity. This requires each of us to be watchful and ready to contend for that which Christ paid the price for; he was separated from the Trinity, so that we didn't have to be.

### **Questions and Application**

- Paul's teaching challenges us fight for unity within the community of faith. How can you personally contribute to unity within your community?