

Philippians

Written during Paul's imprisonment in Rome. He had first been to Philippi on his second missionary journey with Silas and Timothy. He was having trouble finding the direction he was to go and felt the Spirit continually check him not to go certain directions. (ever been there?) Finally he gets clarity in a night vision. He sees a man of Macedonia calling for him to come to his area. (Some think this may have been Luke as there was nothing unusual to indicate a Macedonian by their style or dress but not all agree) The record of that first visit is found in Acts 16. There was no synagogue so there are few Jews. When there is no synagogue the Jews or Jewish converts would gather by the river to pray. Here Paul met Lydia and other women who received the Gospel.

Later in that same city a young servant girl kept shouting after Paul and Silas that they were servants of the Most High declaring the way to God. She had a demonic spirit and her owners used her to make money through her divination. Paul cast the demon out and the owners were furious. They were taken to Roman leaders and told that they were preaching another God. Paul and Silas were scourged like Jesus was and thrown in prison. As they sang songs of praise an earthquake opened all the doors. The jailer was going to commit suicide but Paul stopped him and told him about Jesus, and his whole family was converted. I wonder how many in jail that night were converted too.

It was illegal to scourge a Roman, both Paul and Silas were Romans, and so Paul would not leave without the leaders acknowledging their error. They humbly came, asking them to leave the city. And so began the church of Philippi. From this letter we have the names of four other church members, Epaphroditus, Clement, Euodia, and Syntyche. From the tone of the letter they are one of Paul's favorite churches.

He may have written 2 Corinthians there while waiting to meet with Titus. After the riot in Ephesus he went there again. From there he went to Greece but three months later was back again to celebrate the feast of Resurrection in the year 58. And after his first Roman imprisonment he went there again. The letter to the Philippians was probably written near the end of his imprisonment 62-63 AD some time after writing Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon. It has a much more personal and less theological flavor than most of Paul's letters.

¹ Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is one of the few letters Paul writes jointly with Timothy and refers to them both as servants - - doulos -one who gives himself up to another's will those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing His cause among men. And they specifically mention the two church offices of the time. Episcopos – to oversee, interchangeable with elder in Acts 20. Deacons from diakonea which means to serve. See the institution of the office in Acts 6. Verse 2 is Paul's common greeting but that does not mean that is without sincerity and conviction. These are two of the realities of Christ he wished to be in every brother and sister's life. Grace resulting in salvation and the peace that comes from being made right with God - could you wish anything better for those you love?