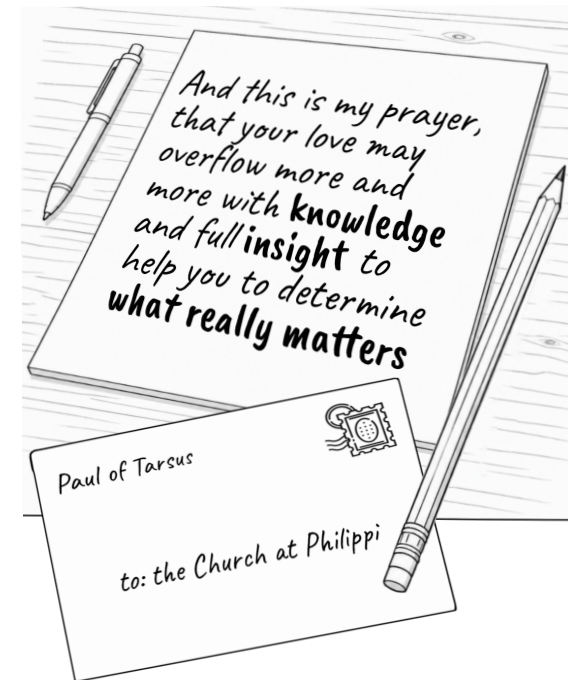


# PAUL'S LETTER to the PHILIPPIANS



Week 1, Lesson 2

*"Making the Best Out of  
a Bad Situation"*

## REVIEW (and a little more context):

1. Paul definitely wrote seven letters in the New Testament; for certain Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, Philippians and Pilemon. Three more, Ephesians, Colossians, and 2nd Thessalonians are questionably attributed to him, and another three 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, are certain forgeries.
2. All new testament books and letters are written from within the context of occupation and persecution; either by Rome or the temple leadership, and all new testament books are written from the perspective that Jesus is coming back in their lifetime (except maybe Revelation). Paul's message, like Jesus', is counter-cultural.
3. Philippi is the first European city where Paul started a church, and the congregation was faithful to support Paul's ministry, especially when he was elsewhere and in prison. This letter may be interpreted as a farewell missive.
4. Keep in mind, we are deciphering a personal letter from almost two thousand years ago. It was not written to a specific church congregation, but to believers who meet in homes. There are no ordained pastors or bishops, no liturgies or choirs, no Sunday morning worship. These "saints" are following "The Way" of Jesus in the midst of a clash of cultures and religions and Empire.

## VOCABULARY:

**Douloi** δούλος: Slavery. It refers to someone of servile condition, often in opposition to free individuals, typical of ancient Greek and Roman society. One who gives himself up wholly to another's will. Like a doula, whose aim is to sit with Birth and Death in their own terms.

**Hagios** ἅγιος: Set Apart for the Divine, used to describe things dedicated to the gods, such as temples, altars, or sacred places. It marks a distinct boundary between the everyday, mundane world and the divine, consecrated realm. It often refers to objects or people that are pure and ritually prepared, making them acceptable to the gods.

**Episkopoi** ἐπίσκοπος: Episkopoi were inspectors or commissioners sent by to oversee the implementation of Athenian regulations. The word was used to mean guardians or curators. Homer uses the term for "guardians" of a covenant, and in Greek literature generally in reference to watchers, superintendents, or protectors.

**Diakonos** διάκονος: A waiter at a table or an attendant providing food and drink. One who executes the commands of a master or king. Hermes is often called a diakonos of the gods, acting as a messenger. The term was used to describe intermediaries, including human prophets, serving as messengers between humans and the divine.

**Splagchnon** σπλάγχνον In Greek literature, splachna represents the seat of violent passions, including intense love and yearning. It can mean the deepest part of one's being, such as learning a person's inward nature. It does not exclusively imply tender mercy or pity as it later does in Christian literature. The Greeks often associated this "gut" area with stronger, more volatile emotions.

## Read Philippians 1:1-2

1. Note vocabulary: Paul and Timothy, **Douloi** of Christ Jesus, To all the **Hagios** in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the **Episkopoi** and **Diakonos**.

## Read Philippians 1:3-11

2. What stands out to you, or makes you wonder in this passage?
3. Things of note:
  - a. Adjectives in verses 3-5
  - b. Who's doing the "work" (v5) and when will it be complete?
  - c. "Partners in God's Grace"
    - i. partners in imprisonment
    - ii. partners in defense of the gospel
    - iii. partners in confirmation of the gospel
  - d. "Tender affections" Jesus' bowels – **Splagchnon**
4. Parse Paul's prayer – what is he wanting for his Philippian friends?
5. Is there a universal takeaway for us?

## Read Philippians 1:12-18

6. What stands out to you, or makes you wonder in this passage?
7. Things of note:
  - a. Making the best of a bad situation (v12-14)
  - b. What might have driven people to preach Christ out of envy, rivalry, selfish ambition, insincerity, and harrassment to Paul's imprisonment? (Keep in mind, they all still thought Jesus was returning in their lifetime.)
  - c. "What matters?"
8. Is there a universal takeaway for us?

## Read Philippians 1:19-26

9. What stands out to you, or makes you wonder in this passage?
10. Things of note:
  - a. Salvation? (v19) *sótéria σωτηρίαν*: Deliverance
  - b. How might Jesus be exalted by Paul's life or by his death?
  - c. Paul's attitude toward death.
  - d. What is Paul getting at in vv25-26?
11. Is there a universal takeaway for us?

## Read Philippians 1:27-30

11. What stands out to you, or makes you wonder in this passage?
12. Things of note:
  - a. standing in ONE spirit; striving with ONE mind
  - b. without fear of opposition
  - c. what is "the **evidence** of their destruction but of your deliverance?"
  - d. the privilege of believing AND suffering
  - e. what might be the "struggle" (v30)
13. Is there a universal takeaway for us?