

## Study 01

### *“Slaves of Christ”*

Acts 16:6-40 and Philippians 1:1-2



### Dwelling in the Word

1. As we begin the teaching series, we would encourage you to read through Paul’s letter to the Philippians in one sitting and reflect on the following questions:
  - a. What were your first impressions of the book? How would you say it was organized?
  - b. Were there some themes that stood out to you? Are some themes repeated? Which ones?
  - c. Was there anything difficult to understand?
2. Prayerfully read through the account of Paul’s work in Philippi in Acts 16:6-40 as well as Philippians 1:1-2 and reflect on the following questions:
  - a. What words, phrases, or images stood out to you?
  - b. What does this say about what God desires to accomplish in you?
  - c. How could you respond to what God says in this passage?

### Digging Deeper

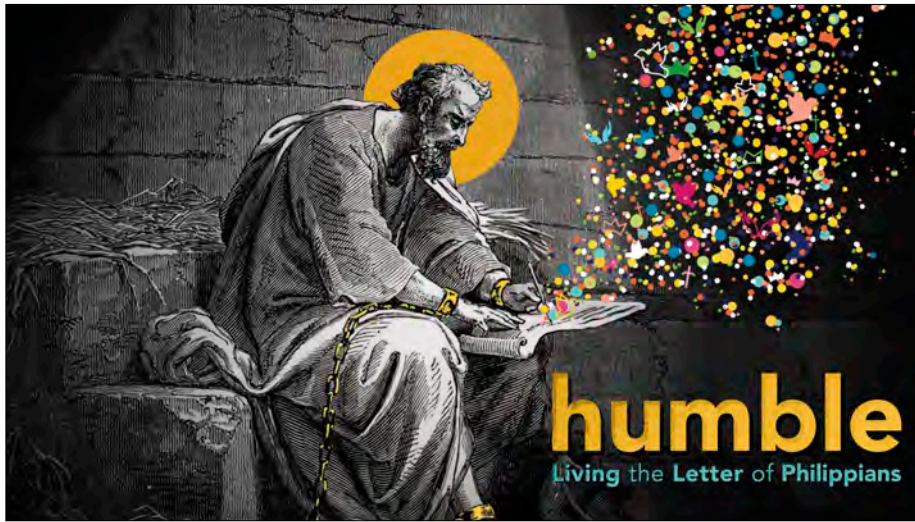
1. As part of his second missionary journey, Paul visited Philippi and founded the church there (Acts 16:9-40). What spiritual, social, and religious attacks did he and his coworkers experience there?
2. What do you think is the significance of the first European to believe in and start following Jesus was Lydia, a prominent woman of some status in Philippi? What was Lydia’s response to the gospel? (see Acts 16:13-15).
3. Paul identified himself and Timothy as “servants of Christ Jesus” (lit. “slaves”) in the first verse (also with “apostle” in Rom 1:1; Titus 1:1). What tone does this set for the letter? (note another occurrence of “slave” is also found in reference to Jesus in 2:7). How is this identification an example of humility? How does this run counter to today’s culture of church leadership?
4. Think about your relationships with other Christ followers. Who in your Christian life has been to you like Timothy was to Paul? Or like Paul was to Timothy?

### For Groups


1. If this is your first time together as a group, spend some time getting acquainted with one another. As an opener, you could ask people to share their favourite passage from the letter of Philippians and why it’s their favourite.
2. Go through the questions in “Digging Deeper” section above (feel free to pick some if you don’t have time to go through them all).
3. End with a time of prayer where you pray for the different things that people identified they want to work on through their study of Philippians.

### Living it Out


1. When Paul refers to himself as a “slave of Christ Jesus” he is deliberately identifying himself with the lowest status in Roman society. Reflect on some ways you may express similar humility in your day to day interaction with others.
2. There are many amazing passages in Philippians (e.g., 1:6, 1:27, 2:1-4, 2:5-8, 2:12-13, 4:6-8, 4:19). While we always want to understand individual verses in their context, Scripture memorization is a good spiritual discipline as God can bring to mind those passages when needed. I’d encourage you to select some passages to memorize.
3. Consider starting a journal, noting your thoughts and impressions of your read through, as well as any questions you may have as we study this letter together as a church.



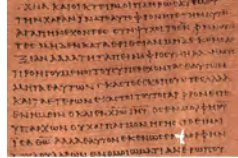
## Paul's Letter to the Philippians



The City



The Church




The Letter

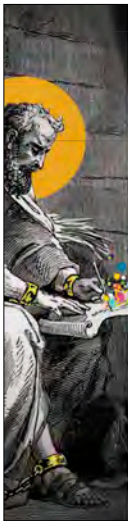
## The City of Philippi



## The City



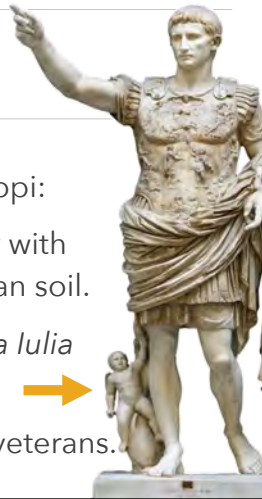
- Philippi (Krinides) founded in 365 BC by Philip II of Macedon.
- Heightened strategic significance in Roman times due to building of the *Via Egnatia* and major victories by Octavian.



## The City

Augustus (Octavian) honoured Philippi:

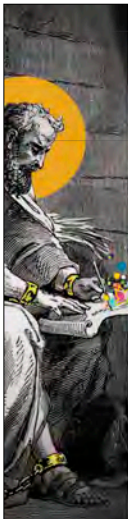
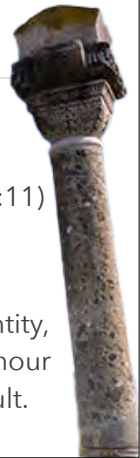
- Refounded it as a Roman Colony with the same status of a city on Roman soil.
- Renamed it after himself (*Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis*). →
- Repopulated it with discharged veterans.



## The City

By the time of the Apostle Paul...

- It was the “leading city” of Macedonia (Acts 16:11) with a pop of around 10,000, and few Jewish people (no formal synagogue).
- A very “Roman” city with a proud “Roman” identity, including a strong emphasis on civic pride, honour and status, social hierarchy, and the imperial cult.



## The Church

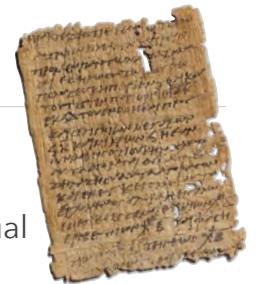
- Founded by Paul and a number of god-fearing women, including Lydia (Acts 16:12-40).
- Paul had a close relationship with them (1:4-8; 4:1); saw them as siblings (1:12; 3:1, 13, 17; 4:1, 8), loved ones (2:12; 4:1), and partners in the gospel (1:5).
- And in turn, he was supported by their prayer (1:19) and generous gifts (2Cor 8:1-5; 11:8-9).



## The Letter

Kinship Letter

- Like a family letter, from a spiritual brother to his younger siblings.
- Fits the affectionate language found throughout.
- Also more of an “epistle”, meant to be read aloud, more than studied by reading eyes.





## The Letter

### Paul's Circumstances

- Written from imprisonment, likely a form of house arrest (1:7, 13, 14, 17).
- Most see his imprisonment in Rome (ca. 61 AD) as the most likely, though some suggest Caesarea (ca. 57-59) or Ephesus (ca. 53-55).



## The Letter

### Purpose 1: Update them...

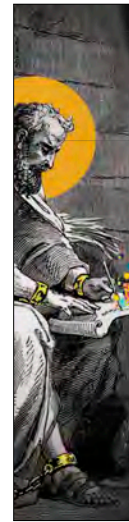
- On his own circumstances (1:12-26; 4:10-19).
- Of his plans to send Timothy (2:19-23), send back Epaphroditus (2:25-30); and perhaps for himself to visit (1:27, 2:24).
- And to thank them for the gift they had sent (4:18).



## The Letter

### Purpose 2: Encourage them to maturity...

- To stand firm together in unity (2:1-4), despite pressure and potential threats from without (1:28, 3:2) and tensions from within (2:14; 4:2-3); and rejoice regardless of circumstances (1:18; 2:17; 3:1; 4:1, 4).
- To live worthily of the gospel by having the same humble mindset of Jesus Christ (1:27; 2:5).



## The Letter

All of this undergirded with an unshakeable confidence that God will continue to do his good work in and through them (1:6; 2:12-13).






# Slaves of Christ

Philippians 1:1-2

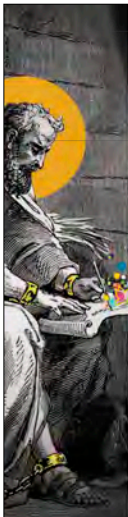
September 8, 2024  
Pastor Tyler Williams  
Greenfield Community Church



## Letter Opening

Paul and Timothy, *slaves of Christ Jesus*,  
To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at  
Philippi, together with the overseers and  
deacons:

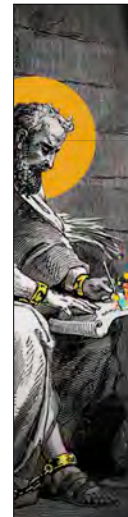
Grace and peace to you from God our Father and  
the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1-2).



## Jesus Christ - The Centre

Followers of Christ...

- Are "in Christ" (1:1).
- Confess Jesus as Lord (1:2).
- Identify as "slaves of Christ Jesus" (1:1).



## Paul's Humble Posture

"Paul and Timothy, *slaves of Christ Jesus*" (1:1).

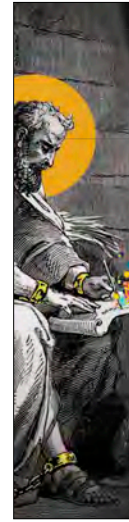
- Identifies himself as a slave (*douloi δουλοι*), not a "servant" as some modern translations.
- Point is that a slave has an owner: Christ Jesus.



## Paul's Humble Posture

An example of Humility:

- A deliberate humbling of oneself and identifying with the lowest status in Roman society.
- Follows the example of Jesus who "made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a slave... (2:7).



## Paul's Humble Posture

Paul desires us to live out our corporate calling and unity in Christ with one another by following the example of Jesus (and others) who embody the countercultural virtue of humility expressed in acts of sacrificial love.



## All Based on God's Grace...

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.