

# Philippians: Introduction

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Date: 25 May 2025

Preacher: Nathan Rambeck

[ 0 : 00 ] Just a few little logistical things. You can see up here that we're going to have the Lord's Supper today. And by the way, it's interesting. I don't know if I really planned this intentionally, but today is Memorial Day.

It's Memorial Day weekend. And it's a time, like Joe said, that we remember those who pay the ultimate sacrifice in our country to serve our country, to protect our nation from those who would take away our way of life, the freedoms that we enjoy.

And, you know, I'm sure many of us have people somewhere in our lineage, in our family, that have served in that way and that have laid down their lives.

And my family, think of my father's uncle, Uncle Oscar, who was shot down over there in Europe and is buried to this day out in France.

I forget exactly, but it's one of the larger grave sites that they've put over there for American soldiers out in France. We actually, when we lived out there in Germany, got the opportunity to go out there and visit his grave site, which was really neat.

[ 1 : 11 ] But, as Joe also mentioned, you know, today we are taking the Lord's Supper, which is, it's a memorial. It's also a memorial in which we remember what Christ Jesus did.

And, you know, the soldiers that have defended our country, one of the things that the Bible says about what Jesus did is it's different from what those of us have done. And he doesn't make light at all, but he says, you know, there are certain people who were willing, who had the boldness to lay down their life for their friends.

And that's what we are remembering this weekend. But he said about Jesus, he was willing to lay down his life for even his enemies. And isn't that amazing?

And so that's what we're going to be doing after the message. And like Joe said, we also have the Benevolence Fund that we'll be taking an offering up for. If you want to prepare for that and write a check, just write it to the church.

Everything that's given today is going directly to that Benevolence Fund. Which, by the way, just so you know, well, what is a Benevolence Fund if you're not familiar with that? It's just a small fund. It can grow over time, but then it gets spent.

[ 2 : 23 ] We use it for just helping people out. Benevolence, just if there's somebody, whether it's in the church or maybe somebody that somebody in the church knows that's really struggling, having a hard time.

You know, we try to do it wisely. We don't want to enable people's bad behavior or anything like that. But if somebody's just, they just, something happened and they don't have the means to, you know, replace a water heater that went down or a car that broke down and they're trying to get to work.

We want to be able to have something that we can be ready to help them out when those needs arise. So we'll be doing that at the very end of the service.

And by the way, Sophie, I forgot to talk to you before, but when we do the, when we pass these elements out, would you be willing to play some music for us? Maybe that song that you all were practicing the other day.

I think that would be great. But whatever you'd like would be wonderful. Thanks so much. By the way, I'm just so grateful for all the musicians and those who lead us in singing. It's just, it's just such a blessing, such a blessing to me.

[ 3 : 30 ] It's not easy, by the way. They make it look easy, but it's, it's not that easy. And so thanks for putting in all the effort. So all the logistics out of the way.

I think that's it. So we are ready to start a new series in the book of Philippians. We're going to be studying the book of Philippians. And I want to start off with a question.

How many of you are readers? I hope, I hope all of you raise your hand. Everybody should be a reader of some kind. I think that is kind of becoming less and less common.

I talked to a lot of people, you know, in the last many years, whatever, that, who just don't read on a regular basis. I think, you know, the literacy rate is, is high enough. Everybody knows how to read. But not a lot of people, not as many people, at least as in the past, read on a regular basis. And it is important to read. But here's the question. Are there any books that you've read in the past? Now, not including the Bible.

[ 4 : 32 ] That's cheating. But any books that you've read that you, you've decided, I need to read that again. And you, you've read this book over and over because of the impact maybe that it had in your life.

Or did you find it just to be that important? Are there any books like that that you can think of? You don't have to answer out loud just to think, think of. And then I'd like to, as we get into this book, the study on the book of Philippians, I'd like to make a claim for us to consider.

And this is a pretty bold claim. And the claim is this. That the book of Philippians, in our Bibles, should be read ten times more, or many times more, than most of the other books in the Bible.

Now, the book of Corinthians, Corinthians, boy, get my books right. The book of Philippians should be read ten times, or many times more, than other books in the Bible.

And I would even dare to say, even more than the Gospels. Now, to some, that might be heresy. That might be a bridge too far. But I'm going to make that case this morning.

[ 5 : 46 ] And we'll see what you all think at the end of it. You know, there are many books in the world, right? Solomon speaks of that. I think it's in Ecclesiastes, right?

About all the books. There is no end of learning. And so, if we want to be readers, we should be reading regularly to grow, to be educated. But you can't read them all. And so, you have to be discerning and make a decision.

Which books am I going to read? And which ones am I going to pass on? And you have to make a similar, not the same, but a similar decision when it comes to how you read the Bible.

So, when you read the Bible, you can maybe read through the entire Bible in a year. And I know many people have done that. Some of my kids have done that.

And that's a wonderful exercise to do. Read through the whole Bible in a year. But there are some books in the Bible that are more impactful, more of a priority, and should be more of a focus to our daily Christian lives.

[ 6 : 53 ] Should we read them all the same amount, or should we prioritize some more than others? And it will require, using good judgment, to know which books of the Bible should I focus more on, should I spend more time on, than others.

Today, we're just going to look at an overview of the book of Philippians. And really, there's a title for this message.

It is, How to Read the Book of Philippians. You know, some books are easy to read. I think of children's books, for example, like The Tale of Peter Rabbit.

The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter. And when you read The Tale of Peter Rabbit, do you have to do any preparation to prepare? No, you just open it up and start reading, and the context is right there.

It's a story with a lesson to it. But other books with more depth that have more to it can require some preparation. There's actually a book called, the title of the book is How to Read a Book.

[ 7 : 59 ] It's become some of a classic by a guy named Mortimer Adler, I think was his name. And he gives some instruction on how to read a book for all it's worth, to invest in reading of that book.

And so, the Bible's not really any different. As we read through the Bible, we need to do our best to try to get the most out of it. Whether reading the Bible as a whole, but looking at specific books in particular.

And so, we're going to be looking at what can we do to make sure that we get the most out of reading this book of Philippians. There are three important things that we must consider in understanding any verse, any passage, or any book of the Bible.

Three important things to consider. The first one is the context. The context is the who, what, when, where, and why.

The second thing that we need to consider is the context. And the third thing that we need to consider is the context.

[ 9 : 17 ] Yeah. And so, just like when it comes to real estate, the three most important things when it comes to real estate is location, location, location. The three most important things when it comes to understanding the Bible, whether it's a verse, a passage, a book, the Bible as a whole, is knowing the context.

Context, context, context. And so, what we're going to be doing today, a big part of it, is exploring the context of this letter to the Philippians to help us understand what it is that we're reading and why it is so important.

So, let's jump in. The first thing regarding context that I have to share, it's been shared many times at this church over the eight years that I've been here. And that is a quote from one of the early translators of the Bible into English from the 1500s.

His name is Miles Coverdale, and this is a quote from him. And here's his quote. It shall greatly help you to understand scripture if you mark not only what is spoken or written, but of whom and to whom and with what words at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goes before and what follows.

That's a lot of detail, but all of it important to understanding any passage or any book of the Bible. And so, we are going to endeavor to follow Coverdale's advice this morning and consider many of these points of context.

[ 10 : 51 ] The first thing that I would like us to think about is just a big picture context in general.

Here at this church, for most of the history of this church, we have taken what's called a dispensational approach to scripture. That's a big word, dispensational.

It's a biblical word. It's a word found in the Bible. The word dispensation, a synonym for dispensation, is an administration. And that's maybe a word that we are more familiar with, an administration.

And we actually use that term primarily as what I am familiar with that word from is thinking about presidential administrations, right?

When you have a change in president, the way the country operates changes. Now, the laws don't necessarily change, right? They may.

[ 11 : 47 ] But when you have a new president, he has different ways that he runs things. And so, the principles, the Declaration of Independence doesn't change.

The Constitution, none of those things change. But the way things operate do change. And so, administration is a good synonym. The actual kind of root meaning of the Greek word for dispensation actually literally means house rules.

So, the rules of a house. Every home has different rules for how they operate. Some people, you walk into their house and you have to take your shoes off, right? And they're going to make sure you take your shoes off at the door.

Other homes, they're like, ah, no big deal. You can leave your shoes on. You know, no biggie. But every house is different. And it doesn't have to do with right and wrong. It just has to do with how things work in that home.

And so, in the Bible, we find different dispensations. Again, the morality hasn't changed. God hasn't changed.

[ 12 : 57 ] His character hasn't changed. He is still the same God yesterday, today, and forever. But how he operates with his people has changed.

And we need to keep those things in mind. Here's an example I like to give just to provide some clarity with how this has happened throughout biblical history.

And I think about the concept of diet and what Christians, or what believers, I should say, are allowed to eat and not eat. If you go back to the very beginning into the garden, God told Adam and Eve, I have given you every herb for food.

They were vegetarians. He gave them plants. And he says, you shall eat the plants. The animals were not on the menu. It was just the plants. But you fast forward to that great flood that occurred. And right afterwards, after they landed back on dry land, the flood, that judgment was complete. God made a change. And he said to Noah, Every animal shall be food or meat for you, as the King James says.

[14:11] That was a change. That was a big change from what they were allowed to do. From just plants only to vegetarians to now you can eat meat. Later on, we fast forward a little bit to Moses who gave the law to Israel.

And there was another change that happened with those people of Israel. And you can still eat meat, but not all of it. Now there's a division. You have clean animals and unclean animals. And there are instructions on how to identify a clean animal versus an unclean. And under that law of Moses, if you are an Israelite, if you want to be part of the people of God, only eat clean animals. And you have to reject the unclean ones. You're not allowed no bacon for the Jews. And then we fast forward on to the epistles of Paul, which is what we're looking at here in the Philippians. And Paul says to you believers, you Christians, all food is okay for you to eat. And that's a difference. And you can see these different points in history.

[15:13] Things change. And it's not like fundamental morality change, but how God works with his people and the things that he lays on the table as far as his covenants with his people and how to become the people of God, those have changed throughout history.

When it comes to a dispensational approach to Scripture, I think the two big things that need to be considered are the first one is that there is a difference between Israel, the nation of Israel, and the body of Christ.

You have Israel as a people and the body of Christ. And those are two different groups, yet there is an overlap because you can be a Jew and part of the body of Christ.

Isn't that true? Right? But over time, God worked exclusively with this nation through a law and specifically identified them through circumcision.

And then there was a change at some point, which we'll talk about in more detail in a second, to where now he's working, his people are no longer the Jews who are circumcised, but is now this group he calls the body of Christ.

[16:25] And so making that distinction is important to understanding the big picture of the Bible and as we get into individual books as well. The other big thing which is related that we need to make a distinction or a contrast between is the difference between law and grace.

Law and grace. See, in Israel, in that dispensation of law or the age of law, how you operated as a believer, how you operated being part of the family of God was paying very close attention to all these rules, regulations, and rituals.

But there's been a change. And today, how God operates as part of being part of the family of God is under grace and grace alone.

And so there are no rituals. There are no days to observe. But we have a work that was accomplished that, and we need to live under that grace.

And so this book, Philippians, who was it written to and in what age? We're going to make the case here that Philippians was written to believers in the dispensation of grace.

[17:46] And we need to keep that in mind. Well, how do we know that? How do we know that this was written to believers in that dispensation of grace? Because this book was actually written pretty close to the time period in which there was this transition from working exclusively with Israel to now working with these Gentile people under grace.

If you've got your Bible, open up to Philippians. We're just going to look at two verses this morning, at least two verses in Philippians. We're going to be looking at other verses elsewhere. But in Philippians chapter 1, here is how it starts.

Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi with the bishops and the deacons.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. So the first thing to keep in mind, and here's more important context, is that this is written by the Apostle Paul.

And we have to take some notes here. Who is the Apostle Paul anyway? He is the foremost apostle of the whole New Testament. He's written about, or I think more than half, of the New Testament are his letters.

[19:04] But there's something in particular about Paul, because there were many apostles in the Bible, right? Some people say that, well, there was the 12th apostle, and then Paul was the 13th apostle.

Some actually say, well, they made a mistake. He should have been the 12th one, right? Remember, they drew straws for who was going to replace Judas. But I don't think that's the case.

But Paul was unique from the other apostles.

On the road to Damascus, when Paul was first converted and the Lord appeared to him, the Lord told him what his plan was for his life. And this is what it says in Acts 9, verse 15.

But the Lord said to him, go, for he is a chosen vessel of mine to bear my name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.

He had a special plan for him. Now, the 12 apostles, what Jesus had sent them to do was to go to the nation of Israel in Jerusalem, in Judea, and to the Jews that are at the ends of the earth.

[ 20 : 15 ] And so it was actually a surprise to Peter when God first sent him to go to the house of Cornelius because he's like, I'm not supposed to be here. What am I doing here? God told me to go, so here I am, but I'm not supposed to be here in this house of Gentiles.

But God was giving a hint about what was to come. But he chose this man, Paul, to specifically go to the Gentile people. In Romans 11, verse 13, it says this, Paul himself says this, for I speak to you Gentiles inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles.

I magnify my ministry. He's saying, my ministry is to you guys, to the Gentiles. That is what God called me to, is my primary purpose is to come and minister to you Gentiles.

And I'm going to magnify my ministry. I'm not going to make light of it. I'm going to actually make a big deal about it. When he was writing to Timothy, this is 1 Timothy 2.7, he says this, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle.

I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. And then in his second letter to Timothy, this is 2 Timothy 1.11, he says this, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

[ 21 : 44 ] And so Paul was sent to a particular group of people. The other thing, though, that we need to keep in mind is it wasn't just a different people, but actually Paul was given some new information that had not been provided before this time.

Notice that when, in this passage that we read in Philippians, the second verse, here's how he starts his letter. It's grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace. And those are two hallmarks of the dispensation of grace. There's a focus on grace. It's not like there was no grace in the Old Testament or under the Old Covenant, but a hallmark of this dispensation in which we live is grace instead of law.

And then also peace. Peace is reconciliation with God. Instead of enmity between God, that conflict, now for those of us who trust in Christ, there is peace with God.

And so these are two hallmarks. of the dispensation of grace. And this is how Paul starts, I think, all, or at least most, of his books. In Ephesians 3, verse 1, and I'm going to have you turn there because I think this is a key one.

[ 23 : 10 ] Ephesians 3, verse 1. Ephesians 3, verse 1.

For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles. Again, he's pointing out, I'm doing this for the Gentiles.

If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you. He's saying, listen, God gave me a dispensation or an administration that is called the administration of grace.

He gave it to me to give to you. How that by revelation he made known to me the mystery.

And we'll stop it right there because he starts to get into a lot of details. But, God revealed to Paul a mystery and a mystery just means something that wasn't before revealed.

[ 24 : 17 ] The opposite of mystery is a prophecy. God foretold many things. Especially to the Jews about their future and their kingdom. But this was actually hidden.

His plan for the Gentiles and for this age of grace. It was a mystery. But God revealed it to Paul and then Paul's job was to be the administrator, the dispenser of this to God's new people group.

These Gentiles who are under grace. And by the way, not just Gentiles but Gentiles and Jews. There is no difference Paul says elsewhere.

In Galatians, just a couple more verses to hammer this point home. Galatians 1.12 Paul says this, For I neither received it, he's talking about the gospel message which he preaches.

He says this, For I neither received it from man nor was I taught it but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. God revealed to Paul something new for this new age that he needed to dispense.

[ 25 : 26 ] He needed to share with this new people. And then a chapter later or a few verses later in chapter 2, Galatians 2.2, he says this, And I went up by revelation and communicated to them, he's

talking about the other apostles, that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles but privately to those who were of reputation lest by any means I might run or had run in vain.

So God orchestrated this event where he went to the apostles, the original twelve apostles, those leaders who were in Jerusalem doing what they were supposed to be doing, ministering to the Jewish people there and sharing with them this is what God is doing through me.

He's saying I was a little concerned because what if they rejected me but ultimately we know because we read about this in Acts chapter 15 that they had this council called the Jerusalem council in which Paul shared what God was doing through him through the Gentiles and the Jewish leaders agreed and they said this is of God we know it is and they gave him the right hand of fellowship.

They shook his hand and he says alright you're one of us. The next thing to look at we just looked at Paul is well who is this written to and this is written to the people of Philippi.

Philippi was part of Gentile territory this is not a part of Israel and it's a church primarily of Gentile believers but it's not Gentile converts to Judaism as we read through especially the gospels we read about certain people who were Gentile they were born Gentile but they had decided to convert to Judaism and in order to do that you had to become circumcised and start keeping the law but these believers are different these are all uncircumcised Gentiles in that verse 1 of Philippians Philippians 1 here's how Paul addresses the people in Philippi he calls them saints who are in Christ Jesus saints who are in Christ Jesus under the administration of law a saint or a holy one somebody who was set apart you had to be a Jew you had to be circumcised you had to keep the law in order to be set apart unto God but now there's a change and these

[ 27 : 58 ] Gentiles who are uncircumcised who do not keep the law of Moses Paul calls them saints holy ones and he describes them that they're saints they're holy because they are in Christ Jesus and that is another hallmark of the dispensation of the grace of God is that all the benefits that we have all the things that are assigned to us are because we are in Christ a little bit of history here on how this church in Philippi got formed we're not going to go there I would encourage you though to take time as we go through Philippians to maybe go back on your own and read Acts chapter I think reading Acts chapter 15 about the Jerusalem council would be helpful but then Acts chapter 16 right after it is all about the founding of the church in Philippi after they had this Jerusalem council in which they agreed

Paul we're not going to hassle your converts anymore and tell them they have to keep the law of Moses we are going to ask them to do a few things just to keep things kind of kosher between the Jewish believers but other than that we're not going to ask them to keep the law and so they actually sent a letter with Paul and the other people that went with them out to deliver to these churches to let them know hey if anybody comes from us and they tell you you have to keep the law they're they're not on board with what we decided here so this is our decision at this council but then after that Paul went on what we call today his second missionary journey he had already gone on one missionary journey this big loop throughout Asia and Europe he'd established some churches preached the gospel of Christ bringing in many Gentile people and then they had this Jerusalem council because there were all these questions and then he starts his second missionary journey his second loop around Europe and Asia to establish more churches but also to build up the existing ones but as he started on his journey he got a visit or a dream

I think it was a dream and somebody in his dream called him said please come to Macedonia and so he knew this must be from the Lord and so he stopped the direction that he was going and they decided to go to this region called Macedonia and the capital city of Macedonia is guess what the city of Philippi and so I'm just going to give a quick summary he goes to Philippi and the first thing he does is he goes to where the Jewish people meet they didn't have a synagogue there they probably didn't have enough people but there were these Jews who met by the river and it was led by this lady this woman whose name was Lydia evidently a very wealthy because she sold purple things that was something you do!

if you! you! But they preached the gospel to her about Christ and what he did and she became a believer then they preached Christ throughout the whole city and then at one point there was a fortune teller slave girl that was going after them saying oh these are the people of God and Paul kind of got fed up and turned around and he cast the evil spirit that was within her and that caused all kinds of ruckus in the city and ultimately Paul and his compadres his his the people that were with him were beaten and sent to jail and then finally ultimately through a miracle there was a

miraculous earthquake that happened and they were released and the jailer who was about to kill himself because oh man I failed at my job here they came to him and and preached Christ to him and he believed and throughout that whole event

Paul makes note to the leaders who put him in jail that he was a Roman citizen and they did a boo-boo because they were not supposed to do that to a Roman citizen without a fair trial anyway and so they were pretty upset about that so they asked him ultimately could you just leave you're causing so much turmoil in our city and I know we didn't do the right thing but do you think you could just move along and so Paul did and that is kind of the big picture story of how that church in Philippi was originally established and that is really all the information that we have other than what we can read in this book of the Philippians and I think there are mentions in other books about their giving and things like that but that's all the history that we have and so here is a book written by Paul the apostle to the Gentiles to Gentile believers who were saved in this dispensation of grace in which they didn't have to keep a law of

[ 32 : 57 ] Moses they didn't have to become circumcised but just through God's grace alone they could come to Jesus Christ believe on him and be saved and receive all the benefits that!

And so this living in this dispensation and these are people that are in the same dispensation that we are right we today are living in the dispensation of grace and so when Paul writes instructions to the people in Philippi the things that he writes almost everything in here is directly relevant to us to how we ought to live to the kind of administration the way that God is operating with his people today and that's why we should spend more time and more focus on and it's not just Philippians but all of Paul's letters all of his epistles because he is the apostle to the Gentiles is speaking things that are directly relevant to them now if you were a Jew living in the kingdom of

Israel back 3,000 years ago then the most important books for you are going to be Deuteronomy and Leviticus and maybe the Psalms right those are very directly relevant to how you ought to live your life the kind of sacrifices that you need to offer the kinds of foods that you should and shouldn't eat how you ought to plant your fields the kind of clothes that you should wear even those are very important back during exile living in Babylon then you need to pay close attention to some of the prophets during that period of exile Jeremiah and Zechariah and Ezekiel and Malachi you need to give a special focus and attention to those because they're being written to you if you are a Jew and this is looking into the future who's going through this seven year tribulation that is coming then you need to attention to other books like the book of

Revelation or some of the well specifically the gospels actually Jesus spoke a lot in fact a lot of his teaching was focused on Israel and the things that they must do as they go through the tribulation he who endures to the end shall be saved and a lot of people think well that applies to us in this age of grace well no he's not talking about he's talking about this seven year tribulation and the one who remains faithful the Jew who remains faithful during that seven years he who endures all the way to the end and makes it to the end he will be saved when that kingdom comes but today as Gentiles in the age of grace we need to give special focus and attention to these books written by Paul and specifically the book of revelations now that doesn't mean that we ignore any of the rest of the Bible in Romans 15 4 Paul says this for whatever things were written before were written for our learning that we through the patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope the whole Bible is relevant not as directly relevant but it gives a big picture information right about where we came from what God has been doing through all of history about what kind of a God is this anyway what is his character like and also in 2 Timothy 3 16 Paul says this all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine for reproof for correction for instructions and righteousness that the man of God may be complete thoroughly equipped for every good work so all of scripture from the very beginning to the very end is profitable for us and we shouldn't ignore any of it by any means but I think we would do us well as we dedicate our lives to reading and studying the scriptures to give extra focus to these letters written to the churches who are under grace because this is where we are living right now these are the instructions!

[ 37 : 21 ] specific to us the next thing that I want to look at as far as context is really the theme of this whole book it's helpful to know before you read a big book what is this book all about anyway what's just the general idea because if you start to jump into the details you might get confused pretty quick modern books you might have a dust jacket right you look at the back and read about the author who he was and what the book is about or the inside whatever you call that thing where it gives a synopsis or a summary about what is the purpose of this book why is it being written what's

it for now the Bible itself doesn't really give us that context but you can get that from others who studied the Bible right there are tools that you can go to I have at home something called the Bible knowledge commentary and for every book of the Bible you can get an outline and a summary and gives you just kind of big picture about what it is before you dive into the details you can also just google it what is a summary of the book of

Philippians and you know it will give you some pretty good information or today now in the modern modern area you can ask chat GPT anybody do that yet a few people all right my kids and ask what is a summary of the book of Philippians now by the way so it's gathering it's using data from all over the internet for and books that have been written hundreds of years ago and all of that is part of the kind of knowledge base of these AI things providing an overview so that can be helpful I actually saw a video recently about how to use chat GPT in your Bible study it's actually very good maybe that's something we could do at Sunday school at some point or another place you could get a summary of the book of the Bible is from a pastor or teacher and so that's what I'm going to do here real quick the theme the theme that I would identify here for this book of Philippians and sometimes books don't have just one theme but

I think this one is an overriding theme and it's this rejoice in the Lord rejoice in the Lord it's a phrase that's used several times throughout this letter rejoice in the Lord and the words joy and rejoice are found 16 times in this small four chapter book 16 times that's a lot of times for just a single word or word group to be used and this theme is going to be repeated over and over again and I'm going to repeat the lessons of rejoicing!

in the Lord over and over again in fact it might be so often that some of you might get annoyed it's like we heard this last week and you know what I'm in fact I'm going to make this point throughout this 12 14 week series is that rejoicing in the Lord is the very foundation of how we ought to live the Christian life how could that be well what does it mean anyway to rejoice in the Lord well to rejoice is to be joyful to take joy to be glad to be happy right and that's a good thing everybody wants to happy about a very specific thing rejoice in the Lord in what Jesus Christ our Lord did and accomplished for us to be joyful to rejoice that he provided for our forgiveness to rejoice that he saved us from the day of judgment to rejoice that he made you and

I his sons and his daughters to rejoice that he has declared us as righteous to rejoice that he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places to rejoice that he is for us and not against us that we have peace with God and to rejoice that he promises you and I immortality that we will live forever the Bible calls eternal life and he contrasts rejoicing in the Lord with a different approach to living the Christian life and that is the approach of the old covenant of commandments to keep of certain days to observe of certain rituals to perform but because of that transition because of that change accomplished through the death burial and resurrection of

[ 42 : 20 ] Jesus Christ there's a transition of this way of operation that is do do do to now it is done done done and our obligation our duty as Christians is to enjoy the work that has been done for us to enjoy the Lord himself to enjoy our salvation each and every day throughout our Christian lives from one day to the next whether things are going really well or things are not going so well in the victories and in the tragedies until the final day when we breathe our last breath and then even after that on into eternity we will continue to rejoice in the Lord and that is how we will live our lives forever and ever that is the foundation of living the

Christian life so this will be our theme throughout this series rejoice in the Lord I'm going to repeat it over and over again and we're just going to look at specific ways on how we rejoice in the Lord to give a little bit of instruction here for those of you who have never done the Lord supper with us every church does it a little bit differently so I don't want anybody to be confused what's going on we're going to pass out the elements we'll start with the bread and then we'll do the juice we'll take them separately but we'll all do it together and so we'll pass it out everybody just hold on to that element and then we're going to read some scripture and then we'll take it all together and then we'll move on to the next one we got bread we got juice we're not we don't we don't do wine so just FYI in case that's a concern for you and then who is this for this is for any believer anyone who trusts in Jesus Christ you don't belong to our church be a member anything like that there's a question sometimes about kids are the kids allowed to do this and I just leave that up to the parents this is an opportunity to remember the Lord and what he did for us you!

do that! and so we'll leave that up to the parents if you want to do that with your kids but what is this for I want us to remember keep this in mind what is this for this is for this is what Paul says in

Corinthians when he was writing to the Corinthians he says there's two reasons why we do this one is to remember what Christ did for us and the number two is to proclaim his death until he comes one is looking to the past what's been accomplished two is what's coming in the future to remember the Lord or to proclaim his death until he comes so this is a time of celebration of joy which might seem counter intuitive usually when we remember somebody's death it's somewhat somber and even when we do this as Christians the Lord's Supper it seems like there's and I think the mistake that we make many times is we ask people to focus on well how am I doing as a Christian do I have any sins that I need to confess and you know what that is not what this time is for our focus is not looking at our navel navel gazing our focus is looking to the Lord and remembering him and rejoicing in what he did for us regardless whether we're doing really well or whether we're living the Christian life our Christian life just stinks regardless we can rejoice in him because of what he accomplished for us and you know that the Bible even says that Jesus himself rejoiced in his own death despite the suffering involved the turmoil the agony this is what it says in Hebrews for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross he rejoiced in his own death and so let's do this together I'll have the elders come up and let's see these guys right and they'll pass these out and then we'll once everybody's got some we'll take it together here go ahead and grab one and then so yeah feel free to play while they're passing those out and remember we're not we're not thinking about our own sins we're thinking about the [ 47 : 31 ] Lord and what he's done as Sophie's playing! to to to to!

to Amen. Amen.

Amen. You guys got it? Oh, she's got it.

All right. So, according to Paul, this is the instruction that he received from the Lord.

This is in Corinthians. For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the same night in which he was betrayed, he took bread.

[ 49 : 24 ] And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, Take, eat. This is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me. Let's do this together. Amen.

Thank you, Jesus. All right. And we'll pass these out. Thank you. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. All right, he continues on. In the same manner, he also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

This do as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. Let's remember him. Amen.

[ 52 : 16 ] Aren't you glad for what he accomplished for you? Without any work on our part, he just asks us to do one thing. Just trust him.

Trust him. Let's end in a word of prayer. Father, I thank you for your work, your work that you accomplished on the cross, the agony. Yet, it says there in Hebrews that it was your joy.

It was a joy that was set before you. It's hard for me to comprehend. I don't get it. I don't understand it fully. But I'm grateful nonetheless, and I ask that you would help us to have the same joy that you had in giving up your life, that we would enjoy you all the rest of our days from now into eternity.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Oh, the offering. Thank you very much. Well, I almost forgot. We'll, yeah, take up that offering, and then if you want to just, well, actually, maybe we can sing a song together while we do that.

Is that all right? Can you put money in the plate and sing at the same time? How about, Oh, How He Loves You and Me? You guys know that one?

[ 53 : 30 ] And I don't, you don't have to play it, Sophie. We can do that acapella. I didn't give you any warning. Oh, how He loves you and me. Oh, how He loves you and me.

He gave His life. What more could He give? Oh, how He loves you.

Oh, how He loves me. Oh, how He loves you and me. We'll do the second verse.

Do you know it? Jesus to Calvary did go. His love for sinners to show. His love for sinners to show. What He did there. What He did there. Brought hope. Brought hope from despair. Oh, how He loves you.

[ 54 : 31 ] Oh, how He loves me. Oh, how He loves you and me. Amen.

Thanks, everybody. Thanks, everybody. You're welcome.