**PHILIPPIANS**

Leader Notes - 1:1-11

**Hand out the Philippian Introduction, Paul and Timothy pages either in advance of the first session or right at the start of class. Take some time to have the class read these before going to item number 1. (You can download these two people from gene/wix.com/brunotes and click on people.**

**The discussion time may go beyond one hour. You can simply pick up where you left off at the next meeting or skip of some questions.**

1. 1:1 - Paul & Timothy - Read the individual pages on these two men. Then list some characteristics of both men.

**Answers may vary but should reflect some of thoughts found on the pages of the two men. Don’t spend too much time on this item.**

To the early Christian and even by today’s understanding, prior to his conversion, Paul was a terrorist. (Webster defines terrorism as: “The use of terror, violence and intimidation to achieve an end.” We could add the use of murder to that explanation.) Yet God used him mightily to bring the Gospel to the Gentile world. Paul’s accomplishments are legion. Think of a modern day terrorist.

1. Could God use this person to bring others to Christ? **Certainly**
2. What does that say about God? **“With God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26)**
3. What is the message for us? **Never give up on anyone.**
4. What is the comfort in this for us? **God’ kingdom will come and His will be done.**
5. What kind of a mentor was Paul to Timothy? **Very attentive and caring**
6. Do you have or have you had a mentor? **Answers will vary.**
7. How did/does he/she impact your life? **Answers will vary.**
8. Is there someone you can mentor? **Answers will vary.**
9. Give some thought to how you might go about mentoring, including the approach. (Sharing optional)
10. 1:1 Servants - There are different meanings for the word “servant.”

One type would be a servant who earned wages and was free to go at the end of a work day. This would be like many employees today.

The other kind was a slave who didn’t even earn wages. He was the property of his master and was completely bound to his master’s will. Since this slave received no wages, all he had to look forward to after a hard day’s work was rest under the shade tree or in a shelter. He was on call 24 hours a day. For Judaism in the time of Jesus, as well as in the Greek world, the slave was on a lower level of humanity. By law the slave was classified with immobile goods, had no legal rights and could not own property. Even his family did not belong to him; it was the property of his master, who might give him a favorite slave in marriage. They had no genealogies, and therefore there was no possibility of controlling their bloodline.

God forces no one into His kingdom at gun point. He calls them through Word and Sacrament. Christians volunteer willingly for such status because God’s love burns so brightly in their heart. Paul believed that he needed to do anything laid out before him to much higher level than anyone around him.

1. What helped Paul to be set ablaze with such fervent motivation to serve Christ? **God’s love carried out in His Son Jesus is the motivation for all Christians.**
2. What can you do to raise your passion for service in Christ’s kingdom? **Attend church where Word and Sacraments are offered and be in your Bible as much as possible. Have them evaluate their devotional life and see what they might add. Don’t require them to report on this activity.**
3. 1:2 Overseers and Deacons - Overseers and deacons are mentioned in verse 1. The overseer, bishop, is a term Paul sometimes interchanges with elder and pastor. Deacons tended to the more common chores and duties of the congregation.

Paul’s singling out of these church leaders is unique to this letter, quite possibly a way to recognize their part in gathering the gift they had sent to Paul.

1. What could this imply about the degree or stage of development of this congregation? **This congregation may have existed for some time before this letter is written.**
2. What does it say about the spiritual maturity of at least some of its members? **Answers will vary but actions of these Christians illustrate a strong faith life.**
3. 1:2 Grace and peace - The words “grace” and “peace” were a standard part of Paul’s greeting in his epistles.

“Grace” was the Gentile greeting word. This was grace like Christ’s grace.

Grace always denotes the undeserved goodness of God.

“Peace” was the Jewish greeting word coming from the OT Shalom. It is a state of feeling of happiness where one’s welfare is secure. It wished prosperity in body and soul to the person being greeted. Peace denotes the condition of those who are reconciled to God.

The order of the two is significant, especially in this letter and in verse 2. First there must be grace; then peace follows.

1. Why do you suppose that we humans have so little peace? **Many people do experience God’s loving grace in their lives and know Christ as their loving Savior.**
2. How does this apply to our personal lives? **The greater our use of God’s Word and Sacraments, the more peace we will have even in turbulent situations.**
3. 1:3.Remember. “Remember” here is a habit.
4. How are habits formed? **Repetition helps form habits. Some have said that if you do something 20 days in a row you will have formed a habit.**
5. What does this say about Paul’s feelings toward the Philippians? **He obviously remembered them often, perhaps daily or more.**
6. How do you think the Philippians felt when Paul told them that he was thanking God for them? I am sure they were honored.
7. How do you feel when someone says that they thank God for you? **Answers will vary.**
8. What difference would it that make in your life to be told this frequently? **It might buoy you up during difficult times.**
9. Whom do you remember? (Sharing optional)
10. What do you do about that remembrance? (Sharing optional)
11. 1:4.Pray with joy - People can and do disappoint us. The Philippians (at least some) probably disappointed Paul at times.
12. What does that say about his declaration in this verse? **It seems to show that his love for them is unconditional. He is very sincere about his care for them.**
13. How could you follow his example in your own life? (Sharing optional)
14. 1:5. Partnership. - The Greek word for “partnership” is koinonia. It is often used for fellowship. But here it is “having a partnership with someone.” They are not just spectators from a distance but are full partners.
15. What are the conditions that go into partnerships in businesses, friendships or marriage? Answers may vary but might include equal effort, investment, and profit/reward.
16. How do you suppose the Philippians reacted to such an honorable status? **To be a partner with an apostle like Paul had to have made them very excited and happy.**
17. How does God work with us as partners in His kingdom work? **God does all the work and we get the reward.**
18. 1:6.Confident - To be confident means to be convinced, to be assured and to totally rely on something that has been promised.
19. How do the following passages give us further assurance: 1 Corinthians 1:8 **God will through the Holy Spirit keep us in the one true faith. We will be blameless in God’s sight as He sees us through the blood of His Son Jesus;** Matthew 28:20b **God will be with to the end of time**; Hebrews 13:5 **God promises to never leave nor forsake us.** Hebrews 13:8? **Jesus never changes.**
20. Can you think of some other verses that express the same certainty?
21. How are these texts comforting in daily life? **God keeps every promise He has made and will keep every promise in the future. We can fully rely on Him at all times and in all situations.**
22. 1:7 Share in God’s grace - Being locked up might not seem to be working from a position of advantage.
23. How do the following passages assure us that our location or circumstances do not restrict the gospel? (See Isaiah 55:11 **God’s people, Israel, have not been listening to the prophets He has sent. It is getting discouraging to Israel. But, God assures Isaiah that the word he has been preaching is going to bear fruit and people will believe**. **That means when we share God’s Word it will bring faith somewhere**; Hebrews 4:12 **This shows that God’s Word can go everywhere and do anything that will not only convict people of their sin and see their need for a Savior.**)
24. Can you think of some other examples from Paul as well as other Christians where being in prison was not an impediment? **See Acts 16:11-34 for at least one other example.**
25. What does that mean when it comes to you being a powerful witness? **The power is in the Word and not in us.**
26. 1:8. Affection - Affection literally means “desire…with the inward part”; the location within a person where the deepest feelings reside.
27. What does “for all of you” tell us about Paul’s feelings for the Philippians? **He does not judge them on the basis of what they may have done in the past. He cares about each one of them.**
28. How does that compare with John 3:16? **In this verse God expands it to the entire world.**
29. How can we become more caring? **As we are in His Word and Sacrament where He continues to shower us with His love.**
30. 1:9. Abound more and more…depth of insight - Our actions are based on our attitude. Our attitudes are influenced by what we have learned or are learning.

a. What kind of behavior does this fact suggest? **They are urged to grow in the Word so that their faith continues to grow stronger.**

b. What kind of behavior changes might you want to make? (Sharing optional)

c. What does it mean to grow in “depth of insight? Use Ephesians 1:17 in

answering this question. **By being in His Word we grow in our knowledge of His love and make our faith ever stronger.**

d. How can we 21st century Christians grow in depth of insight? **We need to be in the Word more and more and use the Sacraments when whenever they are offered. While this concept may have been offered already in this study, it cannot be over emphasized. Where possible, suggest that the participants review that personal spiritual life and make improvements.**

1. 1:10 Discern - To discern literally means “that you may test the things that differ,” i.e., to distinguish between good and evil, lawful and unlawful.”
2. What are some good practices for spiritual learning that you find in Acts 17:11? **They continued to be in the Word and checked out what Paul was preaching.**
3. What are some culprits that sometimes or even often get us sidetracked from doing God’s will? (Sharing optional)
4. How will discernment help avoid Satan’s traps? **Satan often quotes Scripture but not accurately and wants to mislead us. Genesis 3:1-7 and Matthew 4:1-11 (see especially verse 6 and Psalm 91:11-12 which is quoted) give us examples of the Satan’s tricks.**
5. 1:11. Filled with fruit of righteousness.
6. What can we learn from Luke 6:43-45 **This passage illustrates the saying “You are what eat.” As we are filled more and more with God’s Word the more it will show itself in our lives;** Ephesians 2:8-10 **This text shows that salvation only comes from God’s grace through the faith He gives us. Verse 10 points out that God has specially crafted/gifted to works that He will put into our path without us having to making a “To Do List.”** **He even forgives us when we fail to see what He has placed into our path and gives yet another opportunity**. and how it applies to this passage? **If we have faith it will bring forth fruit. This happens as a natural result of the faith that is in our hearts. We do not need to obsess about it, only be in the Word and feed on the Sacrament and watch God at work in our lives.**

Luther says that “when we feel Satan’s temptations coming we should immediately run to the Lord for help.” He also says that “our life as a Christian is one of constant repentance.”

1. How might this Luther quote be of help? (Sharing optional)
2. What is your most meaning passage or phrase from this section? Why?

**They don’t necessarily have to have one and they certainly do no need to share why.**