



A STUDY ON THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

Living A Joyful Life

A PUBLICATION OF RAY REYNOLDS RAP

BIBLE CLASS STUDY GUIDE

Prepared by Ray Reynolds



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INTRODUCTION

Author: Paul, the apostle (**Philippians 1:1**), formerly Saul of Tarsus (**Acts 8-9**) identifies himself as the author of this letter. The early church unanimously accepted it as from Paul, but there are questions about the date and place of writing. This letter is considered to be one of the most loving, warm, and personal of all that Paul wrote.

Date: It is generally accepted that Paul wrote it around 60-62 AD in the city of Rome, while in a Roman prison (**Philippians 1:12-20**). This is why it is lumped with the other prison epistles (Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon). He also wrote another letter to the Laodiceans (**Colossians 4:16**), unfortunately, Paul's letter to the Laodiceans has been lost (**I Corinthians 5:9**). We can see from the other Prison epistles the spirit that must have been reflected in that lost epistle.

There are a few who doubt whether or not Paul wrote it from a Roman prison cell, however, there are clues. For instance, in **Philippians 1:13** Paul mentions the palace guard and in **Philippians 4:22** he references Caesar's household. It also seems from his writing that wherever he was staying it was a long ordeal. Those who do question the location of the writing try to point to his time in Ephesus (**Acts 19-20**) or his imprisonment in Caesarea (**Acts 24-26**) as possible locations. However, we have no reference to an imprisonment in Ephesus and the imprisonment in Caesarea was further from Philippi than Rome.

Theme: This letter is about living a joyful Christian life. Paul is attempting to encourage his readers but also challenge their way of thinking. If we could choose to be a member of one of the New Testament congregations, we would probably choose Philippi. If we could choose to receive a letter, this would probably be it. This group seemed to embody the spirit of Christ. The church seems to have a spirit of love and generosity (**II Corinthians 8:1-5**) as it would have been a part of all the Macedonian churches described there.

Paul wanted the congregation in Philippi to know that he was experiencing trials but he got through them because of his faith and strength in Christ. Therefore, he has only praise for them and reflects a positive state of mind despite his imprisonment. The terms "joy" and "rejoice" appear sixteen times in this letter. In order to reveal the need for the church to have joy Paul evaluates his own life and circumstances (**Philippians 3:12-16**). He tells his secret of own contentment in Christ (**Philippians 4:10-13**). Paul was not perfect, and his life was not free of problems, but he found a way to rely on God no matter the circumstances (**Philippians 2:1-11**).



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Audience: The church of Philippi was the intended audience. The origins of the church are recorded in **Acts 16**. The church began because of the work of Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke because of the Macedonian call. Remember that Paul received a vision of a Macedonian man saying, “Come over and help us” (**Acts 16:9**). The missionary team had success early on with a ladies prayer group that met outside the city (Lydia). It should be noted that it was Paul’s usual custom to go to the synagogue first, so why did he stray from that pattern (**Acts 13:14, 17:1-2**)? We really don't know, but it is assumed that there was not a synagogue in Philippi, and that the Jews in the city were already restricted from group assembly, and meeting on their own. Traditionally you needed ten men to start a formal synagogue so there may not have been enough men to form one yet.

The Jews were not embraced in Macedonia. The people in that region saw Yahweh as a foreign God. Some prominent Roman cities restricted worship to outside the city gates. There is a very interesting statement in **Acts 16:20-21** that hints to this fact. The mission team was accused of being Jews, or at least followers of a branch of Judaism, so they were advocating an illegal practice (and stirring up the locals over the slave girl).

By the end of their ministry in Philippi three households became the nucleus of a new congregation. There was the aristocratic family of Lydia (**Acts 16:11-15**), the middle-class family of the jailor (**Acts 16:25-34**), and the lower class slave girl (**Acts 16:16-18**). Within ten years this nucleus had become a full-fledged congregation with “bishops and deacons” (**Philippians 1:1**). On his first visit we see Paul casting out demons, and performing miracles, but ten years later he simply trusts in God for the recovery of the sick (**Philippians 2:25-27**). This should tell us something about the purpose and duration of miracles in the first Christian century and the maturity of the churches of Christ. He also commended two church leaders including Timothy who was a regular visitor, and Epaphroditus (the minister in Philippi).

Key Verses: **Philippians 1:6, 1:21, 1:29, 2:3, 2:5-11, 3:9-10, 3:13-14, 3:20, 4:4, 4:6-8, 4:13, 4:19**

Outline:

- I. *Unbreakable Fellowship (Philippians 1:1-18)*
- II. *Unsinkable Faith (Philippians 1:19-30)*
- III. *Unshakable Unity (Philippians 2:1-18)*
- IV. *Unshockable Ministry (Philippians 2:17-30)*
- V. *Unstoppable Zeal (Philippians 3:1-14)*
- VI. *Unbeatable Retirement (Philippians 3:15-21)*
- VII. *Unfathomable Peace (Philippians 4:1-9)*
- VIII. *Unmatchable Contentment (Philippians 4:10-23)*



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REASON TO REJOICE #1 = Unbreakable Fellowship (Philippians 1:1-18)

Introduction: We live in a world filled with sorrow, trials, and turmoil. God never expected us to get comfortable because this world is not our home! However, He does hope we will find joy. He said, “*These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full*” (**John 15:11**). **Psalm 5:11** says, “*But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name be joyful in You.*” The book of Philippians is a great place to turn for some reasons to rejoice. The apostle Paul finds himself in a Roman prison, but he does not forget that God has called him preach, teach, and encourage the people of God. Therefore, he writes the book of Philippians and mentions the words “joy” or “rejoice” at least thirteen times. What advice did he give to that congregation? What can we learn? Let’s study together...

Discussion:

I. Remember the Good Things (1:1-2)

Philippians 1:1, 4:22, I Timothy 3:1-13, Acts 16

Why is it so important that we remember the grace and peace of God?

II. Remember the Goodness of God (1:3-5)

Romans 5:3-5, Philippians 4:8, Romans 8:28, Romans 12:12, I Peter 5:5-7, Luke 18:1-8

What can we learn about Paul from this introduction?

III. Remember the Good Work of the Family of God (1:6-11)

Ephesians 4:11-16, James 5:16, Romans 1:16, II Timothy 1:12, Hebrews 11:6, Acts 16,

I Corinthians 12-13, John 15:1-8, Matthew 25, Ecclesiastes 9:10

Why did Paul write this letter?

Who prompted him to write the letter?

Who else could have been members of this church family?

IV. Remember the Good News of the Gospel (1:12-18)

Philippians 1:1, 8, 13, 20, 21, 26, John 15:1-7, Colossians 1:25-27, Romans 1:16,

I Corinthians 1:18, 9:16, II Timothy 4:2, I Thessalonians 5:19

What seems to be the theme of this chapter?

Why was Paul so passionate about sharing the good news?

Conclusion: We live in a divided world, but the church should not follow the same pattern. We can have unbreakable fellowship! Will you take Paul’s words into your heart and mind? Will you allow his message to change your attitude? Have you experienced the joy of salvation? Do you need to refill your joy cup? The Lord is ready to give you His joy, if you will receive it!



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REASON TO REJOICE #2 = Unsinkable Faith (Philippians 1:19-30)

Introduction: We live in a world filled with sorrow, trials, and turmoil. God never expected us to get comfortable in this world, but He does hope we will find contentment in Him. Jesus told His disciples He came to give everlasting joy. He said, “*These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full*” (**John 15:11**). The apostle Paul finds himself in a Roman prison, but he does not forget that God has called him to preach, teach, and encourage the people of God. Therefore, he writes the book of Philippians and 13x he is going to mention the words joy or rejoice. What are the benefits of an unsinkable faith? Let’s study together...

Discussion:

I. Unsinkable Faith Reflects on a Higher Prayer (1:19-20)

Philippians 1:3, Philippians 1:4, Philippians 1:19, Philippians 4:2, Philippians 4:6, Romans 16

What can we assume about Paul’s prayer life?

Why does he emphasize prayer so often? How can it strengthen our faith?

II. Unsinkable Faith Reflects on a Higher Purpose (1:21-22)

Romans 1:16-17, Romans 8:28-39, I Peter 2:21, Galatians 2:20, Acts 9, 22, 26

What was Paul’s purpose? What do we know about his calling?

How can focusing on our purpose-driven life help our spirituality?

III. Unsinkable Faith Reflects on a Higher Prospect (1:23-26)

Philippians 1:6, 10, 23, II Timothy 4:6-8, II Corinthians 11, II Corinthians 12, I Corinthians 13

How can Paul be pressed without being stressed?

How can the encouragement of others keep us on track?

IV. Unsinkable Faith Reflects on a Higher Privilege (1:27-30)

Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Philippians 2:24, Acts 2:42-47, Acts 16:22-24

How should we practice our faith, according to these verses?

What must we keep in mind when we suffer and struggle?

Conclusion: Paul is challenging us to endure all things through faith. He is urging us to have an unsinkable faith. Remember the story of Peter in **Matthew 14:22-32**? Why did Peter fail to walk on the water with Jesus? He didn’t have an unsinkable faith. Not at that moment, but he would grow in his faith. In that moment, he let the turbulent waves and the storm distract him. He lost his focus on Jesus. Will you keep your eyes on Jesus? Will you allow Paul’s message to change your direction? Have you experienced the joy of salvation? Do you need to refill your joy cup? The Lord is ready to give you His joy, if you will receive it!



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REASON TO REJOICE #3 = Unshakable Unity (Philippians 2:1-18)

Introduction: We live in a world filled with sorrow, trials, and turmoil. God never expected us to get comfortable in this world, but He does hope we will find contentment in Him. Jesus said, *"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full"* (**John 15:11**). On Sunday nights we are considering Paul's letter to the Philippians. Each week we are noticing some of the reasons he gave them to rejoice. So far in this series we have noticed how he told them to rejoice over unshakable fellowship and unsinkable faith. Next, let's see the benefits of unshakable unity. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Unshakable Unity in the Holy Spirit (2:1-2)

John 16:7, I Corinthians 2:12-16, II Timothy 3:16-17, Romans 8, Philippians 2:2, Ephesians 4:3, Acts 2:40-47

What are the four things that should motivate us to pursue unity? How does the Holy Spirit aid us?

II. Unshakable Unity in the Family (2:3-4)

I Corinthians 3:16-17, I Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 2:19, John 1:12, I John 3:1-2, John 3:3-8, Acts 2:38-39, Romans 8, Galatians 6:10, I Timothy 3:15, Matthew 7:12

What are the four things that help us to maintain unity? Why does the family need it?

III. Unshakable Unity in the Son of God (2:5-8)

John 3:16, John 10:10, John 11:25, John 14:6, I Corinthians 6:14, I Corinthians 15:19, I Thessalonians 4:13-18

What is said about the character of Jesus?

IV. Unshakable Unity in the Heavenly Father (2:9-14)

Matthew 6:9-13, James 4:10, Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28, I Peter 4:16, John 17

What has the Father done for the Son?

V. Unshakable Unity in Yourself (2:15-18)

Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 19:19, Matthew 22:39, Mark 12:31, Luke 10:27, Romans 13:9, Galatians 5:14, James 2:8, James 1:2, II Timothy 4:6-8

What is the significance of a drink offering? How can we pour ourselves out?

Conclusion: Paul is challenging us to keep unity among God's people. He is urging us to have unshakable unity. Remember the prayer of Jesus in **John 17**? What did Jesus hope for among His people? Unity. He wants us to stand united for the kingdom of God. Will you keep unity in the body of Christ? Will you allow Paul's message to change your heart? Have you experienced the joy of salvation? Have you been added to the family of God? The Lord has great plans for you! Will you stand in His way?



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REASON TO REJOICE #4 = Unshockable Ministry (Philippians 2:17-30)

Introduction: We live in a world filled with sorrow, trials, and turmoil. God never expected us to get comfortable in this world, but He does hope we will find contentment in Him. Jesus said, *"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full"* (**John 15:11**). On Sunday nights we are considering Paul's letter to the Philippians. So far in this series we have noticed unshakable fellowship, unsinkable faith, and unshakable unity. Now, we will focus on unshockable ministry. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Unshockable Ministry of Paul (2:17-18)

Acts 9-28, Romans – Philemon, II Timothy 4:6-8

What do we know about Paul (a.k.a. Saul of Tarsus)?

Why do we have so many of his stories and letters in our Bible?

II. Unshockable Ministry of Timothy (2:19-24)

Acts 4:36-37, 9:26-31, 11:22-26, 16:1, 17:14-15, 18:5, 19:22, 20:4, Romans 16:21, I Corinthians 4:17, 16:10, II Corinthians 1:1, 1:19, Philippians 1:1, 2:19, Colossians 1:1, I Thessalonians 1:1, 3:2, II Thessalonians 1:1, I-II Timothy, Philemon 1:1, Hebrews 13:23

What do we know about Timothy? What do we know about his relationship to the apostle Paul?

How does Paul describe Timothy and his ministry?

III. Unshockable Ministry of Epaphroditus (2:25-30)

Matthew 4:19, 10:38, 16:24, Mark 10:23, Luke 9:23, Romans 12:1-2, Philippians 4:18

What do we know about Epaphroditus? What do we know about his relationship to the apostle Paul?

How does Paul describe Epaphroditus and his ministry?

IV. Unshockable Ministry of the Church

Philippians 3:1-4:23, Ephesians 4:11-16, Matthew 25:14-30, John 15:1-8

Why is it important for us to emulate these great men of God?

How can we be more like these men? What can we expect in our ministers and implement in our own congregations?

Conclusion: Paul is focused on bringing joy to God's people. We should never discourage people in the kingdom. There is enough animosity and hatred in the world. The church family needs to be welcoming, inviting, and positive. Paul is urging us to rejoice, no matter the circumstances. Consider the ministry of Jesus. We are His hands and feet! Will we continue the ministry of Christ? Will you allow Paul's message to change your heart? Have you experienced the joy of salvation? Have you been added to the family of God?



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REASON TO REJOICE #5 = Unstoppable Zeal (Philippians 3:1-14)

Introduction: We live in a world filled with sorrow, trials, and turmoil. On Sunday nights we are considering Paul's letter to the Philippians. Each week we are noticing the reasons he gave them to rejoice. So far in this series we have noticed unshakable fellowship, unsinkable faith, unshakable unity, and unshockable ministry. In this lesson we will study about having an unstoppable zeal. Let's study together...

Discussion:

- I. Unstoppable Zeal Comes When You Consider Your Lord (3:1)**
Luke 9:62, Psalm 123:2, Hebrews 12:1-2, I Peter 2:21-25
How could the words of Paul keep them safe?
- II. Unstoppable Zeal Comes When You Consider Your Spirituality (3:2)**
Isaiah 1:18, Mark 12:28, John 5:39, Acts 17:11, Ephesians 4:15
Whom did Paul warn them about in this passage? Why?
- III. Unstoppable Zeal Comes When You Consider Your Past (3:3-6)**
I Timothy 1:15, Acts 9, 22, 26, Jeremiah 29:11, Proverbs 14:12
How does Paul consider his past? What can we learn from him?
- IV. Unstoppable Zeal Comes When You Consider Your New Life (3:7-9)**
II Corinthians 5:17, Romans 6:4, Colossians 3:1-2, John 3:3-5, Galatians 5:22-23
Why must we forget about our past? How can this help us in the present?
- V. Unstoppable Zeal Comes When You Consider Your Goal (3:10-11)**
II Timothy 4:6-8, Revelation 2:10, II Corinthians 5:9, II Corinthians 5:1, Philippians 1:21
Why must we focus on the future? How can this help us in the present?
- VI. Unstoppable Zeal Comes When You Consider Your Example (3:12)**
I Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 3:17, II Corinthians 7:1, Hebrews 11-12, I Peter 2:21-25
How can we know it is important to not just see the goal, but to pursue it?
- VII. Unstoppable Zeal Comes When You Consider Your Calling (3:13-14)**
Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Romans 11:29, I Corinthians 1:26, I Corinthians 7:20, Ephesians 1:18, Ephesians 4:1,4, II Thessalonians 1:11, II Timothy 1:9
Who has called us? Why must we remember that fact? How can that move us forward?

Conclusion: Paul is focused on bringing joy to God's people. First, by leading them to salvation, but then he understood that joy would lead us to have unstoppable zeal! Are you on fire for the Lord? Do you feel a burning passion for God? Do you need to refill your joy cup? The Lord is ready to give you His joy, if you will receive it!



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REASON TO REJOICE #6 = Unbeatable Retirement (Philippians 3:15-21)

Introduction: We live in a world filled with sorrow, trials, and turmoil. We have been considering Paul's letter to the Philippians. Each week we are noticing the reasons he gave them to rejoice. So far in this series we have noticed how he told them to rejoice over unshakable fellowship, unsinkable faith, unshakable unity, unshockable ministry, unstoppable zeal... and now it's about an unbeatable retirement. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Unbeatable Retirement Leads Us To Spiritual Maturity (3:15-16)

Philippians 3:12-14, Luke 9:23, Romans 12:1-2, II Corinthians 5:7, Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 119:105, Deuteronomy 5:32-33, Hebrews 12:1-2, I Corinthians 1:10

Who leads us? Why can't we lead ourselves?

What are the benefits of having the same mind?

II. Unbeatable Retirement Leads Us To A Splendid Pattern (3:17)

Philippians 3:12, I Corinthians 4:16, I Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 2:17-30, I Peter 2:21-25, Colossians 3:12-17

The Lord is our primary example, but who else can lead us?

III. Unbeatable Retirement Leads Us To Supernatural Knowledge (3:18-19)

Philippians 3:10, I Thessalonians 4:1, Jude 18, Matthew 7:13-14, Acts 20:31, Philippians 1:9-11, 27, Philippians 2:2-3, Philippians 1:29, Philippians 3:10, Colossians 3:2

How can knowledge affect our walk with God?

IV. Unbeatable Retirement Leads Us To Secure Citizenship (3:20-21)

John 3:1-17, Ephesians 2:19, Colossians 1:13, I Thessalonians 2:12, I Thessalonians 4:13-18, I Corinthians 15:42-54, Revelation 21:1-5, I John 3:2

Where do we belong? Where is our home? Why is this important to remember?

What happens when we get caught up in the things of this world? Explain.

Conclusion: Why do we wait so long to make things right with the Lord? We have an unbeatable retirement plan, but the benefits are available now! **I John 5:13** tells us that John wrote his letter for one purpose: *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.* Do you know you are saved? Have you taken the appropriate steps to salvation? Don't wait until it's too late. You can have a reason to rejoice tonight! Will you allow Paul's message to change your heart? Have you experienced the joy of salvation? Have you been added to the family of God? The Lord is ready to bring you into the body of Christ! Do you need to refill your joy cup? The Lord is ready to give you His joy, if you will receive it. Give your life to God!



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REASON TO REJOICE #7 = Unfathomable Peace (Philippians 4:1-9)

Introduction: We live in a world filled with sorrow, trials, and turmoil. On Sunday nights we are considering Paul's letter to the Philippians. Each week we are noticing the reasons he gave them to rejoice. We have noticed how he told them to rejoice over unshakable fellowship, unsinkable faith, unshakable unity, unshockable ministry, unstoppable zeal, and unbeatable retirement. Next we will notice unfathomable peace. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Unfathomable Peace Directs Us Toward Steadfastness (4:1-3)

Psalm 133:1, John 17:11, I Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:3-13, Philippians 1:3-11, Philippians 2:1-2, I Corinthians 15:58, Matthew 7:24-27

How does Paul describe the church?

Who is Euodia and Syntyche? Is it possible this entire letter was written to help their conflict?

II. Unfathomable Peace Directs Us Toward Humbleness (4:4-5)

Psalm 122:1, James 1:2, John 15:11, Romans 12:9-16, Matthew 11:18-20, Matthew 5:16

Why are we to let our gentleness (or moderation) be known to all men?

How can we remain humble in this world?

III. Unfathomable Peace Directs Us Toward Hopefulness (4:6-7)

Psalm 40:13, Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 18:9-14, John 16:23-24, Ephesians 6:18, James 1:6, I John 5:14-15, Romans 8:33-35, Isaiah 50:7

What is the antidote for anxiety? How can we know this works?

What will the peace of God do for us? How can it surpass our understanding?

IV. Unfathomable Peace Directs Us Toward Thoughtfulness (4:8-9)

Matthew 5:27-30, Matthew 22:36-40, Mark 12:30, Romans 12:1-2, I Corinthians 2:6-16, Philippians 2:5, Isaiah 9:6, Romans 5:1, Romans 15:33

What are the eight things we need to for meditation? Why?

Conclusion: Look again and consider Paul's words in **Philippians 4:4**: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" This is the focus of this entire book. Two sisters needed to hear the message. The church family needed to hear it. And, we do too! Do you want everlasting peace with God? Are you ready for unfathomable peace? Then you need to give your life fully to God. Not just on Sunday or Wednesday or on special holidays, but every day! The peace of God can be in you and can go with you every day of your life! Do you need to refill your joy cup? The Lord is ready to give you His joy, if you will receive it. Give your life to God!



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REASON TO REJOICE #8 = Unmatchable Contentment (Philippians 4:10-23)

Introduction: We live in a world filled with sorrow, trials, and turmoil. On Sunday nights we are considering Paul's letter to the Philippians. Each week we have noticed the reasons we have to rejoice. We can rejoice over unshakable fellowship, unsinkable faith, unshakable unity, unshockable ministry, unstoppable zeal, unbeatable retirement, unfathomable peace, and finally we will see unmatchable contentment. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Love Brings Contentment (4:10-12)

Mark 12:29-30, John 13:34-35, Romans 12:9, I Corinthians 13:4-8, Ephesians 3:18, Matthew 5:43-44, I Peter 4:8, Matthew 6:33, Mark 12:30-31

What was Paul's source of great joy in this imprisonment? Why?

Why is love such a powerful blessing from God?

II. Faith Brings Contentment (4:13-15)

Genesis 15:6, Luke 17:6, Romans 3:28, Romans 5:1, Romans 10:17, Hebrews 11:1, 7-12

What had Paul learned? How did he learn it? Explain.

Where did Paul get his strength? How effective was this strength?

III. Work Brings Contentment (4:16-20)

Genesis 31:38-42, Exodus 36:1, Matthew 25:24-30, Proverbs 12:14, Proverbs 28:19, John 15:1-8, I Corinthians 15:58, Ephesians 6:5-9, Romans 12:1-2, Philippians 4:19-20, II Corinthians 9:8

Why was Paul really pleased with their offering sent by Epaphroditus?

What made it such a special gift? Where did it really originate?

IV. Hope Brings Contentment (4:21-23)

Romans 8:28, Romans 15:13, I Corinthians 6:14, I Corinthians 15:19, Titus 1:1-2, Hebrews 11:1

Why is Paul repeatedly speaking of faith, hope, and love? What happens when they are together?

Who sent greetings to the Philippians? Why is that significant?

Conclusion: Have you noticed a pattern in this series? What can you see in the title of each lesson? Anything is possible with God! The question is: Will you trust in God? Will you allow Paul's message to change your heart? Will you find contentment with God? Have you experienced the joy of salvation? Have you been added to the family of God? The Lord is ready to bring you into the body of Christ! Do you need to refill your joy cup? The Lord is ready to give you His joy, if you will receive it!