

Being Disciples: Practicing the Way of Jesus

A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS

Practicing the Way of Jesus Together For Brooklyn

Dear RPS family,

In our passage this week, Philippians 1:27-30, the Apostle Paul invites the Philippians to engage in the same conflict that he has and is still having as he writes this letter. Paul is asking the Philippians and us to become an apprentice of him as he is an apprentice of Jesus. Our world is so deeply divided by conflict that to listen to Paul might sound like more of the same and only further deepen lines and ideologies around which these conflicts take place.

But a careful reading of this passage shows us how we can engage in a world even when we face rejection and conflict for our beliefs, which we hold not only for ourselves but for our neighbors and the world. So often the church either seeks refuge or retreat when faced with either real or perceived rejection. We place our primary identity and loyalty in political parties or ideologies which then divide the church even further. Paul, however, is calling us to place our primary loyalty in our coming King Jesus, and therefore equipping us to suffer for the sake of the world. This is what our neighbors need from us and this is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus - to cultivate a loyalty to King Jesus and suffer for the sake of the world.

In Christ,
Chris

LOOKING AHEAD:

10.4 | Philippians 2:1-4 The Way of Unity

10.11 | Philippians 2:5-11 The Way of Lordship

10.18 | Philippians 2:12-18 The Way of Love

10.25 | Philippians 2:19-30 The Way of Friendship

11.1 | Philippians 3:1-11 The Way of Worship

11.8 | Philippians 3:12-4:1 The Way of Citizenship

11.15 | Philippians 4:2-9 The Way of Leadership

11.22 | Philippians 4:10-23 The Way of Stewardship

One of the elements of God's rule and His "business" is His heart for oneness, also known as unity. Unity can be defined in its simplest of terms as oneness of purpose. It is working together in harmony toward a shared vision and goal. Unity is not uniformity, nor is it sameness. Just as the Godhead is made up of three distinct Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—each unique in personhood and yet at the same time one in essence, unity reflects a oneness that does not negate individuality. Unity does not mean everyone needs to be like everyone else. God's creative variety is replete displaying itself through a humanity crafted in different shapes, colors, and styles. Each of us, in one form or another, is unique. Unity occurs when we combine our unique differences together as we head toward a common goal. It is the sense that the thing that we are gathered for and moving toward is bigger than our own individual preferences.

John Perkins

The Way of Apprenticeship

Study for the Week of 9.27 | Philippians 1:27-30

Look to the Scriptures

- Open in prayer ask God to for wisdom to discern, for eyes to see and ears to hear.

Look to the Text

- What's happening in this passage? What phrases jump out at you?
- Faith - Philippians teaches us what to believe about Jesus. Start at v. 29, how does Paul link our faith to our suffering? What does Paul mean in v. 27 to "let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ"?
- Love - Philippians teaches us how to love. Paul keeps directing us in two directions: love of God and love of our neighbor? Where do you see that in this passage? What is Paul's vision for the church in the second part of v. 27? How might we strive side by side for the sake of the gospel? How does Paul's call to suffer connect with our call to love our neighbors?
- Hope - Philippians teaches us how to hope in Christ. Within the context of what we have read up to this point in Philippians, how does Paul call the Philippians to hope in this passage? Paul is encouraging the Philippians in these verses to have a public faith and therefore a public hope. How might we bear witness to our hope in Jesus' resurrection and his promise to come again?

Listen to one another

- Consider sharing places where you are facing hardship in this season of your life.
- Or pray a version of the Examen such as sharing the following:
 - Consolation: A time in the past week where you felt close to God.
 - Desolation: A time in the past week where you felt far from God.
 - Looking ahead: What are you looking forward to or most worried about in the coming week

Pray

- Spend time praying for one another and our world incorporating both what you have studied and prayer requests in your time of prayer.

Practice

- Paul encourages the Philippians in Phil 4:9 to “practice these things”, so take this time over the next few weeks on 1 or 2 spiritual practices that you would like to work on. It could be something you are currently doing or a new practice you want to take up. You can do this as a group together or as individuals, but consider how you can practice the way of Jesus together during this time. Some suggestions: Daily Scripture reading, keeping Sabbath, fixed-hour prayer, memorize Philippians 2:5-11 together, etc. Talk about how what you have discussed in your group might help your daily/ weekly practices.

How are your spiritual practices leading you away from refuge and retreat and towards loyalty and love to which we are called?