

# Community Bible Church

## Introduction to 2024-2025 Study

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, I Timothy and II Timothy

This year we will be studying five of Paul's epistles; three of which were written by Paul while imprisoned in Rome (**Philippians, Colossians and Philemon**) and two pastoral letters written to Paul's son in the faith Timothy; **First Timothy and Second Timothy**. Our study this year will focus on the church, the assembly of the redeemed.

Charles Spurgeon describes the church as the “dearest place on earth”. As Spurgeon wrote “For the redeemed, there should be no place sweeter or more cherished than the church”. This will not be an exhaustive study of the church (*Ecclesiology*), but rather some very practical instruction for living a life within relationships with other saints all for the purpose of exalting the Lord Jesus Christ and growing in Christ likeness. It is our prayer that all of us this year will grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and come to appreciate and love His church even more deeply than ever before.

We will **start with a study of Philippians**. Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians while he was in prison under house arrest awaiting trial on fake legal charges brought against him. Philippians was written between 60 and 62 A.D. during the first of Paul's two Roman imprisonments. It was during this first imprisonment that Paul wrote the letters Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon, which are referred to as his prison epistles.

The Philippian church, which Paul founded on his second missionary journey, provided support and encouragement to Paul while in prison, by sending Epaphroditus with an offering and to minister to Paul's needs. Because Epaphroditus suffered a near fatal illness while with Paul, Paul sent Epaphroditus back to Philippi with this letter (Phil. 2:25-29).

**Philippians** has been described by numerous commentators as the **epistle of joy**. Paul uses the word joy four times in this letter. He uses the related verb “rejoice” nine times. In the first 2 chapters, Paul refers to joy to describe his own experience with life in Christ. Then, beginning in chapter 3, Paul provides spiritual direction to us as believers where he exhorts us to rejoice in the Lord (3:1). Three times in the letter of Philippians Paul revealed that his joy was “in the Lord”. (3:1, 4:4 and 4:10) Paul was able to look beyond the difficult, painful and constantly changing circumstances of life as he continuously placed his confidence and hope in the character and nature of God. As we study and apply this letter to the Philippians in our own lives, pray that God will use this study to cause us to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ as we rejoice in the Lord, trusting that God is using all circumstances, afflictions and experiences in our lives for our good and His glory (Rom. 8:28).

**Community Bible Church**  
**Pauls' Letter to the Philippians**  
**Introduction**  
**Week of September 16**

**We will begin our study of Philippians** by looking at the birth of the church in Philippi during Paul's second missionary journey. In this first lesson, we will consider Paul's difficult and challenging circumstances during his long period of incarceration. Paul was arrested in Jerusalem on phony charges of criminal activity. Paul was held in the custody of the Roman authorities for an extended time, until he appealed his legal case to Caesar. After he appealed, he was transported as a prisoner to be jailed in Rome and held until his appeal was heard by the Roman authorities. While in transit from Caesarea to Rome, Paul experienced great hardship, difficulty and danger. Once in Rome, he was constantly chained to a Roman guard during the two years he was under house arrest there. During this extended time of incarceration, hardship, affliction and difficult circumstances, Paul penned his epistle of joy.

1. Read **Acts 16:6-10**. How did God direct Paul to Macedonia, the district in which Philippi was located?
  
2. When Paul arrived at a city, he would first go to a local synagogue to preach the gospel to the Jews assembled in that city. Jewish tradition required an assembly of at least ten men who were heads of households to establish a synagogue in a city. If there was no synagogue in a town, Jews and God worshippers would assemble at a river on the sabbath, so Paul went first to the river in Philippi.
  - A. Read **Acts 16:11-15**. What was the result of Paul's proclamation of the gospel at the river in Philippi?
  
  - B. From **Acts 16:16-24**, where Paul encountered a slave girl, What occurred, what was the motive of the girl's owners and what was the result of the encounter?
  
  - C. Read **Acts 16:25-34**. How did Paul respond to the arrest and unjust beating by the Roman authorities?
  
  - D. From **James 1:2-4**, what motivated Paul to respond to the unjust, severe treatment the way he did?

**Acts 16 concludes in vs 35-40** with the Roman authorities begging Paul and Silas to leave the city. After encouraging the Philippian church, Paul and Silas departed, continuing on their second missionary journey. The church in Phillipi was launched and growing.

At the end of Paul's second missionary journey, he traveled to Jerusalem where Jews from Asia stirred up the crowd gathered at the temple and *"laid hands on Paul"* *"seeking to kill him"* when the commander of a Roman cohort intervened and placed Paul in jail. Paul remained in prison for several years awaiting the resolution of the legal matter; the last two years in custody in Rome, where he penned Philippians.

3. Read **Acts 21:27-36**. How do you see God working in Paul's life to effectively further the communication of the gospel in these difficult circumstances?

In **Acts chapters 22 to 26**, Paul appears before several tribunals on these false charges culminating in Paul's appeal of his legal case to Caesar in Rome. Paul begins his journey to Rome as a prisoner to be held awaiting trial.

4. Read **II Corinthians 11:24-28** and **II Cor. 12:7** and describe the hardships and constant, unrelenting physical affliction Paul experienced while being transported to Rome.
5. What does **Philippians 4:10** and **II Cor. 4:17-18** tell us about Paul's focus that produces joy rather than complaining, discouragement and despair?
6. As followers of Christ how do the following passages instruct and encourage us as we encounter afflictions and difficult circumstances of life?

**Psalm 4:7-8**

**Rom 14:17**

**I Peter 1:6-8**

**James 1:2**

**Jude 24**

7. Which of the verses above provides comfort, hope, joy and encouragement when you are experiencing hardships, afflictions and difficulties?