

PHILIPPIANS

Rejoice In
The Lord!

Two Gifts

Lesson Twelve

Philippians

Rejoice In The Lord!

Lesson Goal: To show students that suffering with Christ is as much a gift as is salvation.

Scriptures: Philippians 1:28-30

For Memory: “For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for Him...” Philippians 1:29

Two Gifts

In these last words in chapter one, Paul sent a very strong message. It is not one that is easily heard by Christians who want to live easily and on their own terms. It is a message that affirms the joy of knowing Jesus is your Savior. It is also a message that challenges us to find joy in the difficulties that come with serving God.*

Now, Paul and the Philippians had to deal with persecution in their day. Paul, as we have said over and over, was a prisoner in Rome because of his faith in Jesus. He would not be quiet about that faith, so he had to suffer the consequences. The same was true of the people in Philippi. Even though they might not have been arrested and sent to prison, their neighbors and the government officials looked down on their Christian faith and threatened them with punishment for being witnesses for Christ.

Paul had just told the folks that they should not be afraid. They were to *stick with it* and live as *Kingdom citizens* right in the middle of it. Then, he used an unusual picture. When we face those who would lead us to do wrong, or say wrong things, we are not to shy away like a horse, frightened by something suddenly appearing in his path. In *The Message*, Eugene Petersen translates this “not flinching or dodging in the slightest before the opposition.” The Apostle goes on to say that their courage will be a sign that their enemies are wrong and that they will face ultimate destruction. On the other hand, such courage is proof that the faithful Philippians will be saved from destruction by God Himself.

Then we come to the center of our lesson for today. That is: Christians have been given two gifts. These are straight from God. Do you remember what it is like to receive a gift that is very special. We are not talking about just something like a Christmas or birthday present. This is like a gift that makes a difference for all your life. Think about someone who is blind being given the ability to see. Think about someone who has a bad heart being given a new heart. Think about two people who love one another very much being given a baby to share their love.

Paul says that God has given these dear friends in Philippi two wonderful, life-changing gifts. They have something special to celebrate...something that they share

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with Paul. This probably had not occurred to them any more than it occurs to us today.

Now, God's grace gift of salvation is ours and we are aware of that and appreciate it. It is certainly a life-changing gift. It is the other thing that we don't think of as a gift.

Paul says that not only has God given us the privilege of believing in Him, but also to "suffer for Him." Wow! That comes out of nowhere and surprises us. How can suffering be a gift. That seems more like a courtroom sentence for doing something bad.

Sometimes when we tell someone else about Jesus, that person thinks we may be a little weird, or "sticking our nose into their business," or pushing them to do something they are not willing to do, or they have some other defensive idea. They may react and say or do something that makes us feel bad. Sometimes when we must stand up for Christian principles...for doing the right thing...people may react by calling us names, telling us to "get lost," or using some other negative word or action. That just affirms how right you are and God puts a mark down in your eternal record that says you are living for God and for right things.

Paul says that God has given us two wonderful things: Salvation, from God and our suffering, a gift given for Christ's sake. What a privilege!

*Underlined statements in this Teacher's Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher's Guide.



Teaching Tips:

1. From the earliest words in this "challenge to Christian growth," 1:27 to 2:30, Paul let's his friends at Philippi know that there is work to do which may bring suffering.
2. Songs that emphasize telling the Good News, serving God with other Christians, Christian courage, working and even suffering for Christ's sake will be appropriate.
3. Pray with your students to live as courageous witnesses.
4. Thank God with your students for the privilege to join Jesus in His suffering and for giving us examples of Christian courage like Paul and many others before us.
5. Ask your students to tell about other Christians who served God courageously in spite of suffering. You might want to have a few stories of such people ready. For instance: Steven died for his witness, Acts 7; William Tyndale died in 1536 for translating the Scripture into English; there are many current examples and a web search would reveal some of these.

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Student Worksheet

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For Memory: “For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for Him...” Philippians 1:29

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=Paul sent a very strong message that affirms the joy of knowing _____ is your Savior. It is also a message that challenges us to find _____ in the difficulties that come with _____ God.

=Even though the Philippians might not have been arrested and sent to _____, their neighbors and the government officials looked down on their Christian _____ and threatened them with punishment for being _____ for Christ.

=Paul goes on to say that their courage will be a sign that their _____ are wrong and that they will face ultimate _____. On the other hand, such courage is proof that the faithful Philippians will be saved from destruction by _____ Himself.

=Paul says that not only has God given us the privilege of _____ in Him, but also to “_____ for Him.” Wow! That comes out of nowhere and _____ us.

=Paul says that God has given us _____ wonderful things: _____, from God and our _____, a gift given for Christ’s sake. What a _____!

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that there is a God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God’s Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus’ name. Jesus’ death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.

Fifth, believe that He has answered your prayer and be determined to live for him all the rest of your life.