



KING'S CHAPEL

Daily Devotional - Philippians Study

Week 1 - Day 2

Introduction:

“Each of us is a product of the time and culture in which we live, and as such, we bring certain biases to our reading of Scripture. This is why certain passages can cause us great difficulty the first time we encounter them—passages like, well, basically the entire book of Leviticus. Exegesis (interpreting the bible) pushes on the boundaries of our personal understanding of culture and history, asking us to go back to the time that a text was written and hear it with the ears of its original hearers. Exegesis says, “Before you can hear it with your ears, hear it with theirs. Before you can understand it today, understand it back then.” It asks us to take on the perspective of the author and his audience in their original setting. Exegesis asks us to be archaeologists as far as we are able, and to call in the help of more able archaeologists where we need it.”

Jen Wilkin - Woman of the Word

Today we are looking at the last chapter of the book of Acts, where the apostle Paul arrives in Rome for the first time in approximately 62 AD and 10-12 years after first planting the church in Philippi. It is there where he will be immediately placed under house arrest, released for a short season, and then rearrested somewhere around 64 AD. During this time, Paul wrote his prison letters (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon) Understanding the time period, characters, setting, and cultural climate Paul was writing in and from will help us lay a strong foundation for our journey through the book of Philippians. Take some time to read through today's passage and work through today's questions. If you have time you can also read the short section entitled: ***Imprisonment in the Roman World*** in the Resources for Further Study section.

Bible Reading & Meditation: Acts 28:11-31

11 After three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island, a ship of Alexandria, with the twin gods as a figurehead. **12** Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. **13** And from there we made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium. And after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. **14** There we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. **15** And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage. **16** And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier that guarded him.

17 After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. **18** When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. **19** But because the Jews objected, I was

compelled to appeal to Caesar--though I had no charge to bring against my nation. **20** For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain." **21** And they said to him, "We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. **22** But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

23 When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. **24** And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. **25** And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:

***26**"Go to this people, and say, You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive. **27** For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them."*

28 Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; and they will listen." **30** He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, **31** proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Introductory Background Questions About Paul in Rome

- What were 2-3 things that stood out to you about how God was working in Paul's ministry in the early days in Rome?
- What might Paul's movements in these verses tell you about his ministry strategy? What is he doing? Who is he meeting with? Where is he going?
- What is encouraging or challenging about today's passage? What one thing do you think the Lord wanted to show you from this passage today?

Close in Prayer: Verse 24 says, "And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved." Take some time to think about 1 or 2 people in your circle (family, friend, co-worker) who might be struggling to believe or on the fence about Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to give them eyes to see and faith to believe in Christ. Pray that God will use this Philippians study to encourage your heart and to grow in your knowledge of God's word.

Resources for Further Study

Imprisonment in the Roman World: (from the Archaeology Study Bible)

In the Roman world, imprisonment was rarely a long-term punishment. Most prisoners were awaiting either trial or execution. Debtors could be imprisoned until their friends or family paid off the debt (Matt. 18:30). The length of imprisonment depended on the swiftness of a trial, which could be drawn out for years, especially in political cases. Conditions of imprisonment were closely linked to the status of the prisoner. Non-Roman citizens, even of high status, were often harshly treated. In contrast, house arrest was typically more comfortable for the prisoner, who was usually physically chained to a guard but could still host visitors.

Paul experienced a wide variety of prison conditions. He was chained in a common holding cell in Philippi (Acts 16:23–30), imprisoned in probably better conditions in the praetorium at Caesarea (Acts 23:35), and held in relative comfort while in house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:16). In Rome, Paul was responsible for maintaining himself during his imprisonment, including his meals and clothes (Acts 28:30). Paul's Roman citizenship meant he was eligible for a daily food allowance, but Paul depended on his friends and fellow believers to supply this food. While under house arrest in Rome, Paul was guarded around the clock by soldiers of the elite Praetorian Guard (see note on Phil. 1:13).

Finally, when he was later rearrested and executed (likely a few years after his letter to Philippi), Paul was probably placed in an underground cell somewhere in Rome. It is possible that he was then imprisoned in the Mamertine Prison in the Roman Forum. This was where major convicted enemies of the state were strangled or kept before being thrown off the Tarpeian Rock on the Capitoline Hill.

(Mamertine Prison cell in Rome with altar)

Paul's Prison Letters

Paul wrote to the Philippians from prison, prompted in part by his reception of their latest gift. Paul wanted to encourage the Philippians in their faith and his imprisonment meant he could only do that through a letter. Even a house imprisonment could have been a source of great anguish, particularly with the possibility of execution looming, and so Paul wanted to assure the church that he was still in good spirits through his faith in Christ.

