

Philippians Life Groups September-November 2017

Philippians

As the CAP preaching team (Kim Pierrot, Rod Wilson, and others) thinks about preaching throughout the year we try to keep a number of things in mind—balancing Old and New Testament (i.e. Nehemiah and James), topical and book study (i.e. Holy Spirit and Genesis), and congregational needs (i.e. February 2018 will be focused on Fear and Anxiety).

At this point we believe that CAP church has settled down from the disruption of recent years, those who are committed to the body of Christ among us are attending and showing interest, and we all want to have a passion for Christ along with a compassion for our neighbour. As we have discerned what this means for us as a church, we believe that we are being called to be attentive to the faithful presence of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and are being captivated and formed by God's dream to restore flourishing and wholeness (shalom) to our relationships, neighborhoods, communities, and world.

This means that 'what happens at CAP' on Sunday or during the week is not as important as 'what happens in our homes, families, relationships, workplaces, etc.' during all the hours we are not at CAP. Church for us is less about the provision of programs to give people things to do as it is about preparing and equipping people to bring shalom to their world. To phrase this in different language—we are more interested in the church scattered than the church gathered. So CAP's 'success' is less about how many people show up on Sunday morning than it is about how many CAP people are bringing God's shalom to every sphere of their life. Sunday is best assessed by its impact on the rest of the week than by how we may feel in the service.

So when CAP church does gather we want the preaching to be biblically centered, enthusiastically and creatively presented, and easily applicable to the other six days of the week. If we not doing that, let us know!

Paul's letter to the church at Philippi has 4 chapters and a total of 104 verses. Jesus is mentioned in 51 of those verses along with thematic reflections on gospel, unity, humility, joy, maturity, suffering, peace and contentment. All of these are relevant for the way we live our lives in contemporary culture as we are invited to build a solid relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ and bring his shalom/wholeness/flourishing to all the places we work and play.

A 7-Part Recommendation

1. Start your evening with light refreshments and general conversation.

2. Have everyone give a brief consolation and desolation from the last week.

3. Pray

4. Read the Scripture passage and summary from last week's sermon on Philippians.

5. Allow 3 minutes of silence to either recollect the sermon or to reflect on what you just heard.

6. Share one takeaway from the sermon that you will believe will have impact on your knowledge, understanding, attitude, or behaviour.

7. One aspect of seeing Jesus' 'kingdom come' is that we are bringing shalom/flourishing/thriving/wholeness to all spheres of life whether it is home, church, friendships, culture, workplace, family, parenting, marriage, neighbourhood, cyberspace, etc. Is there any connection, for you, between this week's sermon and one of these spheres?

Summaries

September 24 Philippians 1:1-2 Introduction

What was Philippi like? Why this letter? Why themes like Jesus, gospel, unity, maturity, suffering, and contentment? You were invited to read the whole book at one sitting—4 chapters and 104 verses—to see which themes jumped out for you and how they might impact the various spheres of your life.

October 1 Philippians 1:3-11 Thanksgiving

Paul offers thanksgiving for the Philippian church expressed in his prayer, confidence, partnership, and affection. He prays in particular that the church will increase in love that will show up in greater knowledge and depth of insight, as well as a level of discernment that will produce purity and fruit.

October 8 Philippians 1:12-29 Gospel

Because Paul was in prison he talks about his ability to speak about Christ. As he considers the reality of death he grapples with the benefits of staying versus leaving and in the process invites his readers to consider their own relationship to suffering, the gospel, and the natural fear of opposition.

October 15 Philippians 2:1-11 Unity

Relational harmony is important in the body of Christ and it is expressed through unity, tenderness, compassion, and humility. This posture toward others is best exemplified through the downward steps of Jesus from heaven to earth, to being human, to being obedient to death, and ultimately to the cross.

October 22 Philippians 2:12-30 Light

We live our Christian lives in a crooked and depraved generation so our light needs to shine like stars in this dark context and not be characterized by complaining and arguing. Paul's relationship with Timothy and Epaphroditus illustrate the warmth of the gospel light as well as a practical expression of it.

October 29 Philippians 3:1-11 Confidence

While it is easy for him to rely on his ethnic, linguistic, and religious background, Paul puts it all in proper perspective and weighs it up alongside the benefits of knowing Christ. His relationship with Christ requires a quality of faith that is unrelated to what he has done or not done.

November 5 Philippians 3:12-4:1 Maturity

Christian maturity is not about perfection but rather a particular kind of forgetting, straining, and winning. Paul not only writes about this approach, but he embodies it himself, and contrasts it with those who are absorbed with earthly things missing the true nature of their citizenship.

November 12 Philippians 4:2-9 Peace

Peace is not a nebulous concept but one that needs to characterize our relationships with others and with circumstances, as well as our thoughts and feelings. In bringing these areas of angst to God we find out He is the God of peace who will bring shalom to our inner and outer life.

November 19 Philippians 4:10-23 Contentment

In the context of the church giving him money, Paul teases out the real meaning of contentment and in the process articulates where he gets his strength and who it is who meets our needs. In so doing he provides an understanding of giving money that goes far beyond a financial transaction.

November 26 Whole Book Celebration

Sunday provided a big picture overview of the whole book with a re-emphasis on some of the important themes and their implications for all the spheres of our lives.