

Morning Overview

Lesson: *Philippians: The Humility of Christ*

Lesson Objective:

Today we weave the letter of Philippians to the journey through the book of Acts and the New Testament. Philippians is a letter written to the church at Philippi. Paul would write letters to encourage suffering churches, rebuke Christians of certain sins, or remind churches what they should believe and practice. In Philippians Paul reminds the church to remember Christ's humility and to practice it. Humility, for the sake of our audience, should be defined or explained as either thinking of others more than yourself or putting others before yourself. The opposite of humility would be selfishness and pride – thinking more or highly of yourself than others. Christ's sacrifice was the ultimate act of humility, and because of His sacrifice and through the power of the Spirit, we can display and have that same spirit of humility!

Teaching Summary:

- God's promises do not change despite circumstances, people and even our inability to believe them. God keeps His promises even when we do not trust Him or follow His commands.
- God has promised to always be with His people. He is with us through the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- The Church is growing, but also experiencing persecution. Because of the persecution, followers of Jesus scatter.
- The scattered Church takes the Good News and tells others about Jesus.
- Paul writes to the Philippian Church to look to Jesus always – this is the only way they will be true followers of Jesus!
- Paul wants his Philippian friends to look to Christ's humility as the way they should act.
- Paul tells his Philippian friends that Christ's life and sacrifice on the Cross was the ultimate act of humility.
- Paul encourages his friends to practice this humility. Christians can have this humility because of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and life in the Spirit.

Scripture: Acts 16:6-15, 20:6; Philippians 2:1-11; 3:12-21

Story: Gospel Story Book Bible, Pages 292-293

Scripture Memory for August: Acts 26:17b-18 (ESV)

I am sending you (*point up to God and then to yourself*)

to open their eyes (*close your eyes with hands closed beside them then open hands wide as you open your eyes*)

so that they may turn from darkness to light (*turn around and lower your head covering it with your arms and then face the front again raising arms, lifting your hands to the light*)

... that they may receive forgiveness of sins. (*open wide your hands out in front of you*)

Craft: Star

Supplies: Black cardstock, shiny star, Bible sticker, verse sticker

Instructions: 1. Glue star to top of cardstock.

2. Place Bible sticker on star.

3. Place verse sticker at bottom of cardstock.

If child has already done craft first hour, have them work on a coloring sheet



Story

Transition

Boys and girls, is it hard to share? (Allow time for answers) Sharing is hard because we must consider letting others have part of something we want to keep to ourselves. In our story today, we learn about something like sharing; it's called humility (have kids say it a few times). Humility means putting others before ourselves. Let's find out more about humility...

The Church Is Growing

The Church was growing. The Bible tells us every day more and more people believed the Good News! They believed that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to rescue us from our sins and He rose from the dead! This was called the Good News. More and more people believed in Jesus and the Church was growing!

Followers of Jesus went to tell others about the Good News. The Good News was spreading far and wide. Some people, however, did not teach the right things. But the Apostles taught that good works were a result of believing the Good News.

Paul left Galatia and continued to travel. As he was in the city of Troas, Paul had a dream. In the dream a man from Macedonia appeared and said, "Come help us!" The Bible tells us Paul immediately awoke and traveled to Philippi.

Paul Lands in Philippi

Once Paul landed in Philippi, he and Silas met a lady named Lydia. Lydia was a follower of Jesus. Paul and Silas baptized Lydia and her whole household. Paul and Silas spent much of their time in Philippi telling others about Jesus, praying, and encouraging Christians.

While also there, a young girl, who had a spirit in her, was freed from the spirit by Paul and Silas. This made the young girl's owners angry. The owners had used the young girl to make lots of money. The young girl had been able to tell people their future, but this was because she had the spirit in her. Now that the spirit was gone, the young girl could no longer tell the future. This meant she could not make money for the owners. The owners eventually got Paul and Silas beaten and thrown in jail!

A Letter from Jail

In the cold, dark, and smelly jail Paul and Silas prayed and sung songs to God. Also, while Paul was in jail, he wrote a letter to his friends in Philippi to encourage them to follow Jesus. Paul, more than anything, wanted all the Christians he met to obey Jesus, to follow Jesus, and to be like Jesus.

Paul said these words to his friends, "I hold you (Philippian friends) in my heart, for you all share in God's grace with me. We share God's grace together while I'm in prison and while I am defending the Good News" (Philippians 1:7). Paul told the Christians in Philippi to be filled with the fruit of the good and right things that come through Jesus Christ, so that God will be glorified and praised (Philippians 1:11).

One of the most important things Paul wrote to his friends was to look to Jesus. Paul wanted his friends to know Jesus loved them, saved them, and that He is the Person they were supposed to be like. Paul told his friends:

In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus.

Christ himself was like God in everything.

Jesus was equal with God.

But Jesus did not think that being equal with God was something to be held on to.

Jesus gave up his place with God and made himself nothing.

Jesus was born as a man

and became like a servant.

And when Jesus was living as a man,
he humbled himself and was fully obedient to God.
Jesus obeyed even when that caused his death—death on a cross.
So God raised Jesus to the highest place.
God made the name of Jesus greater than every other name.
God wants every knee to bow to Jesus—
everyone in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.
Everyone will say, “Jesus Christ is Lord”
and bring glory to God the Father.

Jesus is God. Jesus was powerful, mighty, and strong. However, Jesus did not think that kept Him from obeying the Father’s plan. Jesus willingly came to be with us – born like a baby! Jesus was humble (humility!) and did everything God asked Him to do even dying on the Cross. God raised Jesus up from the dead and made Him known for forever! Everyone will worship Jesus forever and ever. The Bible tells us Jesus had humility. He thought of others before Himself and He did not think He was better or too good to do something asked of Him.

Paul wanted his Philippian friends to be humble like Jesus. To not think too much of themselves or what they could gain, but to give up everything – even their lives – to follow Jesus. This is really hard! Jesus is God’s Son. Jesus is perfect in every way. So, having humility and being humble is not easy. Paul himself wanted to be humble, but he knew he needed to try really hard to be humble.

Paul told his friends: “I’m not already perfect or exactly how God wants me to be. I have not yet reached that goal. I’m trying though, and Christ wants me to do that. Because Jesus has made me part of His family.”

Paul knew he was not perfect, and he still failed a lot. But he told his friends to “forget what lies behind and try as hard as you can to reach the goal that is before you.” The goal was to be humble like Jesus. This is a hard thing to do! Every person wants to do what they want to do, but Jesus told his disciples, and us too, “to follow me.” Paul told his friends if they were confused or unsure of what it meant to follow Jesus, to pray and God would make it known what to do. Paul also warned his Philippian friends to be careful. There were people who were bad examples to follow. Paul called these people enemies! These enemies do things that are bad, instead of serving God; they do whatever they want! Shameful and hurtful things they are proud of instead of living a life serving God and being humble.

Paul truly wanted his friends to know that “what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.” Paul asked his friends in the letter, “Does your life in Christ give you strength? Does his love comfort you? Do we share together in the Spirit? Do you have mercy and kindness? If so, make me very happy by having the same thoughts, sharing the same love, and having one mind and purpose. When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves. Do not be interested only in your own life but be interested in the lives of others.”

Just as Jesus was humble and gave His life for us, followers of Jesus are called to be humble and care for others more than themselves.

Philippian Jailer

How did Paul practice humility? Thinking of others more than himself? From our story last week we learned about the earthquake that shook the whole jail and all the chains fell off the prisoners. The jailer, the guy that was supposed to keep all the prisoners in jail, was going to hurt himself. He thought all the prisoners would run away and he would be punished! But Paul and Silas told him not to hurt himself. All the prisoners stayed in prison – they put the life of the jailer above their own comforts or lives. Who wants to stay in a cold, dark prison? No one! But Paul, Silas, and a bunch of other prisoners did so the jailer would not hurt himself. Paul practiced humility just like Jesus!

Questions for Review

Have children answer “yes” or “no.”

- The Church is growing – adding more and more people. (Yes)
- The Holy Spirit is growing the Church. (Yes)
- Did Paul visit the city of Philippi? (Yes)
- Did Paul and Silas free a little girl of her spirit? (Yes)
- Did this make the people happy? (No! It made the owners mad)
- Were Paul and Silas beaten and thrown in jail? (Yes)
- In prison did Paul write a letter to his Philippian friends? (Yes)
- Did Paul remind his friends to be humble like Jesus? (Yes)
- Did Paul want his friends to pray to God for help in being humble? (Yes)
- Was Paul perfect in his humility? (No! He was still working to be humble!)
- Did Paul practice humility by staying in jail when he could have escaped? (Yes!)