

Philippians: Joy Under Pressure — 4-Week Sermon Series

Four Sundays through Philippians — one chapter a week — built around Paul's insistence on joy while chained to a Roman guard.

Whole-church preaching series, adaptable for small groups

About this series

Philippians is short enough to preach in a month and deep enough to reorder a congregation's expectations. Paul writes from prison, mentions joy sixteen times, and never once explains it away.

This series takes one chapter per Sunday. Each week below gives a big idea, a three-point outline, the key KJV verse, and an application question you can hand to small groups midweek.

The arc of the series

Chapter 1: joy in circumstance. Chapter 2: joy in humility. Chapter 3: joy in loss. Chapter 4: joy in contentment. The arc moves from what happens to you, to who you become, to what you let go, to where you finally rest.

Planning notes

- Announce the series two Sundays out and give the congregation a one-page reading card — a chapter a week.
- Pair the series with a four-week small-group study using the application questions below.
- Week 4 works well as a communion or commissioning Sunday.

Joy When Things Go Wrong

Big idea

Circumstances do not have the final word on a Christian's joy, because the gospel advances through them, not around them.

Outline

1. Confidence in the unfinished work (v. 3-6)
2. The gospel furthered by adversity (v. 12-18)
3. To live is Christ, to die is gain (v. 21-26)

Key verse

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:21 (KJV)

Application question

What circumstance are you waiting to change before you allow yourself joy?

Sermon notes

The Mind of Christ

Big idea

Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is the downward motion of Christ Himself, and it is commanded of the church.

Outline

1. Unity through lowliness of mind (v. 1-4)
2. The descent and exaltation of Christ (v. 5-11)
3. Working out what God works in (v. 12-16)

Key verse

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:5 (KJV)

Application question

Name one relationship where you are holding on to being right.

Sermon notes

Counting It Loss

Big idea

Every credential Paul could have trusted he calls dung — not because achievement is evil, but because Christ is better.

Outline

1. The résumé Paul refused (v. 4-6)
2. Loss recalculated as gain (v. 7-11)
3. Pressing toward the mark (v. 12-14)

Key verse

I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

Philippians 3:8 (KJV)

Application question

What is on your résumé that you would struggle to lose?

Sermon notes

Learned Contentment

Big idea

Contentment is learned, not received — and the peace of God guards the person who has learned it.

Outline

1. Anxiety exchanged for prayer (v. 4-7)
2. Thinking on these things (v. 8-9)
3. I have learned, in whatsoever state (v. 10-13)

Key verse

I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Philippians 4:11 (KJV)

Application question

What would change this week if you actually believed verse 19?

Sermon notes

Verse set — the whole series at a glance

Every key verse in this series, King James Version. Print this page for the worship team, the bulletin, or a memory-verse card.

Week 1 — Joy When Things Go Wrong

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:21 (KJV)

Week 2 — The Mind of Christ

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:5 (KJV)

Week 3 — Counting It Loss

I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

Philippians 3:8 (KJV)

Week 4 — Learned Contentment

I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Philippians 4:11 (KJV)

Frequently asked questions

Is this sermon series free to use?

Yes. Preach it, adapt it, print it for your team, or rework it entirely. No attribution required, though a link back is always welcome.

How long should each sermon be?

Each week's outline supports a 25-35 minute message. Cutting to two points per week makes a comfortable 20 minutes.

Can this be used as a small-group study?

Yes — read the chapter, walk the three points, and close with the application question.

More free KJV preaching resources at biblesundays.com/for-pastors — sermon outlines, Sunday service readings, printables, and free Bible widgets for your church website.