

Philippians Outline

Introduction: Philippians is very much a tale of two cities- on the one hand it is the most joyful of Paul's letters. Paul speaks about joy and rejoicing more than he does in any other letter. Philippians is absolutely jubilant! But the setting of the letter is as far from jubilant as can be- Paul is writing this letter from prison.

Along with this dramatic setting, we are also witness to possibly the oldest fragment of text in the New Testament. Scholars believe that what is known as the "kenosis hymn" in Chapter 2 where Paul is talking about emptying ourselves was a hymn or part of the liturgy of the church and that Paul, like many prisoners, was relying upon this song or prayer he had memorized for comfort.

Chapter 1: Greetings; Paul in chains for Christ; Paul contemplates death

Chapter 2: Kenosis hymn; urge to work out salvation in fear and trembling; sending Timothy and Epaphroditus

Chapter 3: Rejoice in the Lord and ignore Judaizers; pressing on towards winning the goal

Chapter 4: Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice; Paul asking for help- Able to be happy in all circumstances

Stories/texts to know: Paul in chains for Christ (Chapter 1); the "kenosis hymn" (Chapter 2); rejoice in the Lord (Chapter 4)