

Philippians

Lesson 3: Philippians 2:1-11

Review Questions

Take a few minutes to answer these questions to get your thought process started:

In the second half of Philippians 1, why does Paul say that he still wishes to live?

On an early-impression level, what do you make of a letter so focused on imminent death but so cheerful at the same time?

As Paul faces execution at any moment, what would make his joy complete? Thinking back on what you know of Ephesians and other letters of Paul, how central is this wish to his thinking?

According to Paul, by what means should the community strive towards oneness? How does this match up with efforts you're aware of to seek for Church unity?

How do verses 3 and 4 relate to a general sense of civic or other sorts of duty to one's neighbors? To what extent is Paul calling the people to something they're already familiar with, and to what extent is he calling them to something unknown among the Gentiles?

Verses 6 through 11 constitute one of the most famous poems in the New Testament. (Most of the others are in Revelation.) What rationale does Paul give in verse 5 for reciting or inventing this poem?

Trace out the chain of cause and effect in the song—what turns are most surprising (even though the poem is likely familiar), and how does this link up with Paul's exhortation to unity?

What do you make of verse 10? To what extent is Paul (or the song) being hyperbolic, and to what extent do you think this should be the basis for thought about the world to come?