



christ church  
moreton

*THE GOSPEL  
THAT BRINGS  
JOY*

CHRIST CHURCH  
HOME-GROUPS  
Summer 2020



# 1. Praise and Prayer

## WELCOME

What would you most like to receive as a present from someone?

## WORSHIP

In Psalm 63 David expresses his devotion to the Lord – he is the one David desired above everything else. Ask God to help you to use these words with integrity.

## WORD

“I would like about £3 worth of gospel, please. Not too much – just enough to make me happy, but not so much that I get addicted. I don’t want so much gospel that I learn to really hate covetousness and lust, I certainly don’t want so much that I start to love my enemies, cherish self denial, and contemplate missionary service in some alien culture. I want ecstasy, not repentance; I want glory, to transformation. I would like enough gospel to make my family secure and my children well behaved, but not so much that I find my ambitions redirected or my giving enlarged. I would like about £3 worth of gospel, please.” *(Adapted from ‘Basics for believers’ by Don Carson)*

I guess that even if we wouldn’t express it so honestly as this, most of us have been tempted to opt for a

domesticated version of the gospel. But that is something which Paul’s letter to the Philippians challenges head on

## Read Philippians 1:1-11

We know that Paul was writing this letter from prison (see 1:12-14) He wrote to a church which he had first planted (see Acts 16), but which he was now unable to visit. So there is some similarity between Paul’s experience here, and our experience of being separated from one another.

- What are Paul's feelings towards the church in Philippi?
- How does that compare with your feelings towards Christ Church?
- When Paul first visited, God had begun a good work in Philippi. How could Paul be so confident that God would carry it on?
- What does Paul pray for for the Philippians?
- Why are these things important? How do they compare with the things you pray for others at Christ Church?

## Read Philippians 1:12-30

- What do you think Paul means when he says, ‘For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain’?
- Could you say that?
- What does it mean to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel?

- How can we encourage one another do this?
- Paul says that it has been granted to these Christians not only to believe in Christ but also to suffer for him. (v.29) How can suffering for Christ be a gift? Is it a gift you would want?

### WORK

It has been said that our love and concern for others can be measured by how much we pray for them. Even though we can't meet physically, and though many of our usual activities at Christ Church have been put on hold, we can still pray for one another.

Using Paul's prayer for the Philippians, spend some time praying for each other in your home-group.

Pray that at this difficult time, the Holy Spirit will still be at work in people's lives; that we will be growing in our knowledge and love of God and producing the fruit of righteousness.

## 2. *Being like Jesus*

### WELCOME

Who in the world would you most like to be?

### WORSHIP

Psalm 96 helps us to express the greatness of God and the praise he deserves from all of creation. Use these words together

### WORD

Probably most people at some time or another have thought that they would like to be like someone else – maybe a great musician or sports person, maybe a film star or a famous Christian. For some people it goes beyond just day-dreaming about being someone else, and becomes a case of copying how their idol dresses, trying to do the things they do.

Paul wants us to all be like that – not in copying some human hero, but in modelling our lives on Jesus.

Before we return to Paul's letter, let's look at Luke's account of the planting of the church in Philippi.

### **Read Acts 16:11-34**

Luke introduces us to the first 3 members of the church in Philippi – Lydia, the un-named slave girl and the jailer.

- What do we know about each of them?
- How do they show how God builds his church?
- What does this tell you about the nature of the gospel?

### Read Philippians 2:1-4

- What is the difference between humility and poor self-image?
- How should our experience of Christ and of the Holy Spirit affect our relationships?
- In what areas of your life are you most tempted to be conceited or selfishly ambitious?

### Read Philippians 2:5-11

This is a wonderful picture of Jesus. But Paul gave it to us not just to tell us about Jesus, but so that Jesus can be an example for us.

- How did each of Christ's actions illustrate humility and a concern for the interests of others?
- How can the example of Jesus help us when we are tempted to be self-centred rather than humble?

### Read Philippians 2:12-18

In Luke's account in Acts 16 we see both God's action and human action were at work in the origin of the church at Philippi. Now Paul tells the Christians there to 'work out your salvation', and that it is 'God who works in you'. How important is it to you to know that God is at work in you?

- How seriously do you take the discipline of working out your own salvation?
- In what ways does Paul want us to be different from the society in which we live?
- How can we be distinctive without being considered 'odd'?
- I guess we would all agree that not grumbling or arguing is important for our enjoyment of church. But Paul says that it is just as important in terms of our witness. Why?
- Why would 'holding firmly to the word of life' help us to 'shine like stars' in our community?

#### WORK

Are there areas of your life where you find it difficult being like Jesus? Pray for each other about these things: Are there those within Christ Church who you struggle to 'be one in spirit and of one mind?' At this time when we can't meet together, what could you do to have a more Christ-like attitude to them?

## 3. *New Ambitions*

### WELCOME

If you could go back to being a teenager, and could do anything you wanted, what career would you choose?

### WORSHIP

Psalm 116 helps us to remember God's goodness to us in salvation, and to respond to him. As you use it, ask God to help you appreciate all that he has done for you in Jesus.

### WORD

Some people have huge self-confidence. The writer George Bernard Shaw said, 'My speciality is being right when other people are wrong.' There are other people whose confidence lays in the money they have, or their education, or their family background.

On the other hand, some people have very low self-confidence. They just can't believe that anything they try has anything to offer to others.

I think the apostle Paul would see a problem with each of those. Because he would want us to be confident in what Jesus has done, rather than in what we have or have not done.

### Read Philippians 2:19-30

- How is Timothy an example of the Christ-like attitude we thought about last time?
- It would be wonderful to have Timothy come to visit us at Christ Church. But since he won't be coming, what are some of the practical ways in which you could follow his example?
- How is Christ's attitude evident in the relationships among Paul, Epaphroditus and the Philippians?

### Read Philippians 3:1-11

- How do you think rejoicing in the Lord (verse 1) is different from other reasons for joy?
- Paul talks about 'putting confidence in the flesh' – a confidence based on what he has done rather than on what God has done. What sort of things do people today put their religious confidence in?
- Have you ever placed your confidence in something, thinking it would bring you closer to God, which you now consider to be worthless?

Paul says that in comparison with knowing Jesus, everything that he has tried to achieve humanly speaking is 'garbage.' It again brings us back to our theme verse for the year – it is the gospel of what God had done which brings salvation.

- What is the difference between a righteousness that comes through the law, and one which comes through Christ?

Paul wants to know the power of Christ's resurrection and participation in his sufferings.

- Why do the 2 things go together?
- What might each of them look like in your life today?

### WORK

At the start of the study, we saw the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus who served the church in Philippi. In our current circumstances serving one another remotely might seem difficult, but what could you do over the coming week to serve each other?

Are there any you know in Christ Church who need support at the moment? How could you serve them?

## 4. *Run the Race*

### WELCOME

Would you rather climb a mountain, swim across a lake, or sit in the garden?

### WORSHIP

Psalm 31 expresses confidence in the Lord, even when faced with troubles. Use these words to tell the Lord of your trust in him, even in our current situation.

### WORD

At the start of Study 2 we thought about the way in which most of us at some time have people we would like to be. There is something about them that we admire and would like to copy.

But how would you feel if this was the other way round, and someone told you that they really admired you and that you were their role model? What would you say to them?

### Read Philippians 3:10—16

- In verses 12-14 Paul compares himself to an athlete who is running a race. Why is this such an appropriate description of the Christian life?
- What goal do you think Paul is straining for?
- How important is this to you?

## Read Philippians 3:17 — 4:1

Paul contrasts Christians with those who live as 'enemies of the cross'.

- What is it that characterises these 'enemies'?
- In what ways might you be tempted to live as an enemy of the cross?
- In verse 17 Paul asks us to follow his example (and he does this again in chapter 4). Looking back over Philippians so far, in what ways is Paul a good example for us?
- In verse 16, Paul urges us to 'live up to what we have already attained.' And in 4:1, Paul says, 'this is how you should stand firm in the Lord.'
- Do you think your stand in the Lord is firmer or weaker than it was a year ago?
- What has made the difference?

### WORK

What practical things can you do to help each other to stand firm and not slip back?

## 5. Don't worry!

### WELCOME

What is your happiest memory?

### WORSHIP

Psalm 100 encourages us to shout for joy to the Lord, and reminds us of some of the reasons we have to be joyful in him. Use these words together

### WORD

I wonder what word first comes into your mind when you think of what it means to be a Christian. Salvation? Hope? Faith? Love? All good words. But as we come towards the end of Paul's letter to the Philippians, I think we have enough evidence to suggest that he would add another word: JOY. This short letter is full of Paul talking about his own joy and encouraging the Christians in Philippi to rejoice.

Yet as Paul wrote these words, he was in chains in prison – hardly the sort of environment you would expect to lead to joy. But Paul's joy was rooted in something deeper than his physical hardships – it was rooted in the Lord Jesus himself.



## Read Philippians 4:2-9

- What experiences in your life have brought you greatest joy?
- What experiences have you had which have drawn your attention away from Jesus?
- In verse 2 Paul pleads with Euodia and Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. 'Why do you think he is so concerned about their relationship?
- What should your response be to disagreements within Christ Church or within your Home Group?
- Does knowing that you belong to Jesus make you feel like rejoicing?

The last few months have made many people anxious. I guess that even now, over a month since I wrote these notes, there is still a lot of uncertainty and anxiety about the situation in our country.

- In what ways has your faith in Jesus helped you over the last few months?
- How can the promises and commands listed in verses 4-7 help you to rejoice and to know peace?
- In verse 8 Paul encourages us to take control of our thoughts. How can improper thoughts rob us of the peace God desires for us?
- How can we make sure we think about things that are noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy?

## Read Philippians 4:10-23

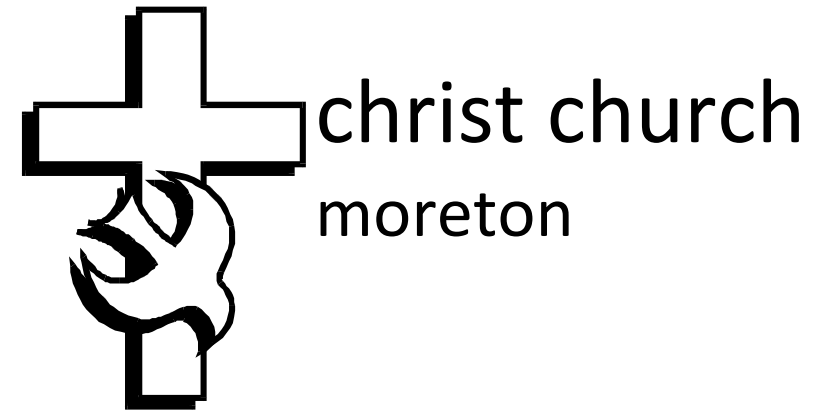
Many people believe that they can only be content if they have enough money.

- What is the secret of contentment for Paul?
- How can we cultivate this attitude ourselves, even when there are so many problems around us?
- How had the Philippians helped Paul both in the past and the present?
- What opportunities do we have to support those who need special support?

### WORK

In the introduction to this series I said that “The big challenge each week as we study this letter is to ask ourselves how we will be different as a result of what we have read.”

So, as we end the series, what one thing will you make sure is different in your life as a result of what we have studied? How can other members of your group help you to keep the change up?



making disciples

growing disciples

being disciples