

Outline of Philippians

Setting:

Philippi was a strategically located city. It was built on a mountainside and moved toward a well-watered plain just up the road from the port of Neapolis. One of the main roads from Rome ran through the city, thus enriching it with trade. The city was settled by soldiers and so had a very Roman character. Emperor worship was also at the heart of the city. Paul used the city as the base of his first evangelistic endeavor in Macedonia. When he arrived he found no synagogue, only a few women who worshipped the God of Abraham. One of them, Lydia, took him in. Paul raised a ruckus in the city when he cast out the demon from a woman who told fortunes. The ensuing riot caused Paul and his friends to be asked to leave, which they did. Nonetheless he was able to plant a church.

The Church:

The church was Paul's favorite and he had a deep love for its members. It was composed of Gentiles.

Purpose:

Paul wrote to the church for several reasons. One was theological error. Another was to check on his friends. A third was to give thanks for their love and support.

Outline: (From Frank Thielman in the NIV Application Commentary Series: Philippians)

1. Introduction (1:1-11)
 - a. Greetings (1:1-2)
 - b. Two prayers (1:3-11)
 - i. A Prayer of thanks (1:3-8)
 - ii. A Prayer of intercession (1:9-11)
2. The Significance of Paul's Circumstances (1:12-26)
 - a. The Gospel progresses through Paul's imprisonment (1:12-18a)
 - b. Christ is exalted through Paul's life or death (1:18b-26)
3. The Challenge of the Philippians Circumstances (1:27-4:9)
 - a. Standing United (1:27-2:18)
 - i. Standing united against opposition from Outside (1:27-30)
 - ii. Standing united against division from within (2:1-4)
 - iii. Standing united by following Christ's example (2:5-11)
 - iv. Working out salvation by standing united (2:12-18)
 - b. Two examples of Christian unity (2:19-30)
 - i. Timothy (2:19-24)
 - ii. Epaphroditus (2:25-30)
 - c. Warning against theological error (3:1-4:1)
 - i. A Seam in the letter's argument (3:1)
 - ii. A warning against Judaizers (3:2-11)
 - iii. A warning against perfectionists (3:12-4:1)
 - d. Concluding admonitions (4:2-9)
 - i. A plea for unity for two co-workers (4:2-3)
 - ii. A brief set of admonitions (4:4-9)
4. Conclusion (4:10-23)
 - a. An expression of gratitude (4:10-20)
 - b. Closing Greetings and Benediction (4:21-23)