



# PHILIPPIANS & COLOSSIANS

**OCTOBER 2018**

Read on your own or with others,  
which ever you prefer.

This leaflet is just a brief overview of the 'big picture' of these books. If you have been reading the Bible for some time you will be aware there is much more to them than you'll find here.

If you are new to reading the Bible don't worry too much if there are details you do not quite get at the moment - focus on the 'big picture'.

## **INTRODUCTION**

These letters were written by Paul, an apostle of Jesus, to the churches in Philippi and Colosse. As with his other letters they contain a mix of encouragement and challenge as the Gospel is explained and applied to their different contexts.

## **PHILIPPIANS**

The story of Paul's visit to Philippi is told in Acts 16. From the beginning we get the clear picture that this church had a special place in Paul's heart (Philippians 1:3-6). Not only was he involved in planting the church, but they had continued to support him in prayer and giving.

### **PHILIPPIANS 1: LIVING FOR JESUS**

Paul shares his prayer for the church (1:9-10), for himself (1:20) and encourages the church to live in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ (1:27). Throughout this chapter we see a desire to put Jesus first. Verse 21 is a key verse in this section.

### **PHILIPPIANS 2: IMITATE JESUS**

Here we are encouraged to be humble (2:1-4) and to live in obedience to God (2:12-13). Paul shows us Timothy and Epaphroditus, two examples of people who are living this out. However, the main example held up to us is that of Jesus himself (2:5-11).

### **PHILIPPIANS 3: DESIRE JESUS**

How can someone be made right with God? There is only one answer that works, put your trust in Jesus (3:1-9). For Paul, this truth transforms what he sets his heart on. His desire is to know Jesus (3:10), take hold of all that he's been given in Jesus (3:14) and one day be with Jesus (3:21).

### **PHILIPPIANS 4: ENJOY JESUS**

As God's people, saved by grace, Christians should be joyful. Yet, there are so many things that tarnish or dampen that joy. Here we

are urged to deal with several of these: broken relationships (4:1-3), harsh behaviour (4:6), anxiety (4:7), wrong thoughts (4:8-9), discontentment (4:10-13). We also see the joy that comes from practical fellowship together as God's people in Jesus (4:10).

## **COLOSSIANS**

Colosse was a city in the middle of southwest modern day Turkey. Paul had never visited this city (2:1). Epaphras who had come to Paul to seek his help had preached the gospel to them.

The main theme of this letter is the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ. False teachers had infiltrated Colosse. We don't know exactly what they were teaching, but it is clear that they were minimizing Jesus.

### **COLOSSIANS 1-2 : IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS**

Like Ephesians, which was written at the same time, Colossians can be split into two parts. The first two chapters focus more on Gospel teaching and the last two on how this should be applied in our lives.

Throughout chapters 1 and 2 we are reminded just how incredible Jesus is. He is supreme (1:15-23), the heart of the message that Paul has been at pains to preach (1:24-2:5) and the one who brings salvation, something rituals, asceticism and other religious things cannot do (2:6-23).

### **COLOSSIANS 3-4 : PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE**

Verse 1 of chapter 3 marks a turning point in the book. As those who have been raised with Christ through faith in him, he urges Christians to live that out in thought (3:2-4), behavior (3:5-11), relationships (3:12-14), heart (3:15-17), family life (3:18-21), work life (3:22-4:1) and in witness (4:2-6).

It is amazing to see just how fully the Gospel should affect lives. The letter ends with introductions and commendations of various people. Remember the church in Colosse was being confused by false teachers, here Paul gives them a list of those they can trust and should listen to.

## **ASKING THE QUESTIONS THE BIBLE WANTS YOU TO ASK**

What does this book teach you about Jesus? (Luke 24:45-47)

What does this book teach you about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you encouraged? (2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you corrected? (Romans 15:4)

What difference do the truths of this book make in your life (Matthew 7:24-27)