

The Message of Philippians

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Preacher: Nick Louw

[0 : 00] Good morning. Good to see you all and hello to those in the overflow facility. Thank you for taking one for the team so that the rest of us could be here together.

And hello to all those watching online. It's great to be together even in weird ways and gather around God's Word, which we're doing now. And we're going to continue in the series, The Birth of the Church, which helps us to get back to the root and the heart of what the church is and what the church is called to be.

And that's what we're going to be looking at the whole book of Philippians this morning with God's help because it's got some very important things to say to us as Christians. An alternative lifestyle is defined as a way of living perceived to be outside of the cultural norm.

And maybe you can think of some examples as we look around in our world today of alternative lifestyles. So some examples that I can think of and looked up was people who live off the grid. No technology. There are seriously people who live with no technology. They hate technology. They're technophobes. And so they go live out in the woods with no Internet access, no devices, not even electricity.

[1 : 18] Living totally off the grid. It is possible to live without your phone. And people do. Other examples of alternative lifestyles is living in a particular subculture where you dress a certain way and hang out with particular people like the bohemian or the gothic subcultures.

There's also a clothing optional lifestyle if you're into that. And there's commune living, of course. People who live in kibbutzes or eco-villages which are becoming quite popular today.

So there's lots of these alternate ways of living that are outside of the norm. But there's an alternative lifestyle that is more radical than any of those that I've just mentioned.

And it's the lifestyle that Paul calls the Christians in Philippi to live. And that's really what this book, Philippians, is about. If you want to understand what Philippians is all about, what is at the heart of it, it's a call to live an alternate lifestyle.

It's a call to live differently. And it's best summarized in chapter 2, the beginning of chapter 2. Now there's a lot that he says in this letter. We won't be able to cover it all.

[2 : 26] But hopefully I'll give you enough to know what the main thrust of this book is about. But the real summary of this alternate lifestyle that these Christians are called to is there in Philippians chapter 2, verse 3 to 4.

Let's read that. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves.

Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Do you see why I say this is so alternate?

Why it's so different to the norm? It is the most radical kind of lifestyle you can live. And if you read that and you think about it, it seems almost impossible.

Really? Consider others more important than myself. Really? I mean, it would be great if everyone else did that, but do I have to do that? You know, that's almost impossible.

[3 : 29] And it is very radical. It's a nice ideal, I'm sure we'd all agree, if everyone lived like that. But come on. Paul, are you serious? Do you really expect that? We're not that perfect.

And that's why Paul writes this letter to the Philippians, to not just describe this alternate lifestyle that Christians are called to, and to teach not just that it's possible to actually live this way, but it's essential.

If we are people who claim to live in Christ, that's what the book of Philippians is here to tell us, that there is a particular way of life that we are called to, if we call ourselves Christians, and if we live in Christ.

If we claim to have the benefits of being in Christ, which are forgiveness of our sins, and hope for eternity. If we claim to have those benefits, then we also need to live a life that reflects that we are in Christ.

We can't have the benefits of being in Christ, and not then take up the responsibility of being in Christ. And that's really what the Apostle Paul wants to convince the Philippians of, and us of.

[4 : 47] And that's also why this phrase, in Christ, if you looked over the letter to the Philippians, and you looked for that phrase, depending on the translation you have, you'll find over and over again, is that phrase, in Christ, in Christ, in Christ.

It starts that way. I mean, look at verse 1. Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints, in Christ Jesus. And he goes on.

He talks about having confidence in Christ Jesus, having hope in Christ Jesus. Now, we read that because it's a phrase that's often used in the New Testament, and I think we don't really get it.

We just read over, and we think it's a way of saying that we're Christians. But actually, that is a deeply theological, and important phrase to understand, this idea of being inside Jesus.

It's a weird phrase, actually. It's a weird idea. But it's essential to understanding the message of Philippians, and why and how we can live an alternate lifestyle that we're called to as Christians.

[5 : 47] And so to understand this book, we first need to start by understanding this teaching, not just in Philippians, but in the whole of the New Testament, of being in Christ. What does that actually mean?

Let's think about that for a while. Let's apply our mind. Because it is a very profound New Testament doctrine, also known as union with Christ.

And I only fully understood it when I was at Bible college. I'd been a Christian for many years, but it's only when I was at Bible college, and we got taught on this particular doctrine that it hit me.

And I got it, and it was much more than I ever thought it was when I read in Christ. And I hope you can understand a bit of that today. This idea of union with Christ, being in Christ, refers to a real connection with Jesus Christ that binds our life with what He did 2,000 years ago, and which binds our future to His future.

So it's a connection. It's like a spiritual umbilical cord, without which we would have no salvation, no faith, and no hope. It's a real connection. You know, when we hear the words of the Bible, and we put our faith in Christ, we don't suddenly change the way we think.

[7 : 07] Something else does that. There's a whole lot, if you're a Christian, you'll know that when you actually put your faith in Christ, there's a lot of change that happens in your life. You don't engineer that change. Something is happening.

Something from outside is happening to you, right? When you grow as a Christian, when you become a Christian, well, that is because there is a real connection with something outside, namely with Jesus Christ, even though He's in heaven.

This connection that is as real and vital as a physical umbilical cord between a baby and a mom, even though it's invisible. And we need to start realizing there is actually a real connection we have with Christ actively now.

In fact, I think it's more appropriate and more modern to describe it as being connected to a Wi-Fi network. You know how when you connect to a Wi-Fi network, suddenly your device, once you establish that connection, can do so much more and can access so much more than it could when it wasn't connected.

And it's real. It's a real connection, right? A Wi-Fi connection with your phone to a router. It's a real connection, but it's invisible. You can't see it. You can't see the data flying through the air, but it's there, and you know that connection is established, and you can confirm the connection is established because it makes a real difference.

[8 : 20] That is how we should understand this union with Christ, what it means to be in Christ, have this connection with Him. Even though He's in heaven and we're here on earth, there is a real connection between Him and His people who are in Him.

And as Paul writes to the Philippians and he talks about being in Christ and what it means and what it calls us to, he's wanting to convince them that this, being in Christ, is everything that matters.

It's all they need, nothing else. It's everything comes down to that. God's end plan of saving people, His end game of bringing people into His covenant and into His new creation and making them new people is to bring them into His Son, Jesus Christ.

That's it. Everything in the Bible up until this point has been for the purpose of getting to that point. And so what Paul says, and he's quite adamant about it in Philippians, have a look in your Bibles, in chapter 3, is that the law, the Jewish law, has no bearing anymore on your salvation.

So if you look from kind of verse 2 of chapter 3, he is talking about the teachers who are still coming in very much like the Galatian church we heard about two weeks ago, the teachers who are coming into the Philippian church telling them that they need to keep the Jewish law if they want to be God's people.

[9 : 46] And Paul hears this and he is angry and you can see it in his words. Look what he says. Verse 2 of chapter 3, Watch out for the dogs. Watch out for the evil workers.

Watch out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision. The ones who worship by the Spirit of God boast in Christ Jesus and do not put confidence in the flesh.

And so he's adamant to tell them, if you are in Christ, then you don't need the law anymore. You can't be saved through the law and you don't need it.

And that's why he goes on with some of his greatest and most emotional words from verse 4. He says, Although I have reasons for confidence in the flesh, if anyone else thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more.

So he's actually saying, okay, if you want to go according to the law of Israel, well, look how well I do. Circumcised on the eighth day of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew, born of Hebrews, regarding the law, a Pharisee, regarding zeal, persecuting the church, regarding the righteousness that is in the law, blameless.

[10 : 54] And so he's a good Jewish boy. He fits all the criteria, ticks all the boxes, but look what he says next. But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ.

More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ. Jesus, my Lord, because of Him, I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them as dung, that's actually a polite version of the real word he used, so that I may gain Christ, and look at this, and be found in Him.

Paul, that's all that matters. He's willing to throw off all his history, all his Jewishness, all his achievements, if he will be found in Christ because he realizes that's all that matters.

That is all that matters for salvation, to be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own through the law, but one that is through faith in Christ. And so it's not the law, it's being in Christ, that's what it's always ever been about, and that is the only way to be saved, and that is all that matters for you and me and Paul and everyone else, is being found in Jesus Christ.

And that is unique to Christianity. No other faith system has an idea like that. It's all about, you know, other faith systems, all about religious works and what you need to do to be right with God, but Christianity is not that at all.

[12 : 23] Christianity is about being in Christ and having this connection with Him, and once you have this connection, nothing else matters. That's why this idea of being in Christ and union with Christ is so important.

It's like, when you're connected to the Wi-Fi, you don't need to use your mobile data anymore, right? Your phone actually refuses to use mobile data when you connect it to the Wi-Fi because it doesn't need it.

And it's the same with being connected, being in Christ. You don't need the laws, you don't need to be told how to live because in Christ you have everything you need.

You don't need a bunch of rules to follow to be saved because in Christ you have that, you have everything. And I hope I'm stressing this enough and I want to stress it more. If you're in Christ, then you have everything you could ever want and you don't need anything else.

And the whole Bible really is about what God has done to allow you to be in Him and to be found in Him. You're connected to the Wi-Fi because God has given you the password and that password is Jesus is Lord.

[13 : 32] And faith in that, if you say that and you believe it, you have the connection with Christ and that's all you need. It's as simple as that. Like Dylan said earlier, it's through faith. It boggles the mind.

But if you say, you know, the words that we said in the Apostles' Creed but which are all summed up pretty much in the words Jesus is Lord and you believe that and you believe what it means, that is the Wi-Fi password to the connection that will save you, the connection with Jesus Christ.

In fact, we should make that our Wi-Fi password in the alphabet. And I'll tell you why that's all that is needed. Okay, so Paul wants these people to know that's all you need.

You just need to be in Christ and that's why you've got to watch out for anybody who tells you another gospel that is not by faith alone. We've seen that in Galatians. We see it here as well. We see it throughout the New Testament.

And this is why being in Christ is all that you need because this is what union with Christ means. It means that his death counts as yours, for one.

[14:36] His death counts as yours. In Romans, Paul, especially in chapter 6, teaches on this idea of being in Christ and union with Christ in more detail.

And he says, Christians have already died with Christ. Those are the words he used. You've died with Christ. Which means that if you have that connection and you are in Christ, then it means if you are in Christ today, it means you were in Christ 2,000 years ago when he was on the cross.

And when he died, your sins were paid for then. The sins you're committing now and are still going to commit in your life were already paid for because you were there 2,000 years ago even though you weren't born yet.

It's amazing, isn't it? But that's how important union with Christ is because when you have that connection with him, his past is your past. His present is your present and his future is your future. That's what it means to have this union with Christ, to be in Christ.

And that's why Romans 8 verse 1 says, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. There is now, today, no condemnation for you if you are in Christ Jesus because his death counts as yours.

[15:44] Secondly, his mind is shared with yours. This is quite profound and interesting. The way you think now, if you have that connection and you've connected, through faith, you've said and believed Jesus is Lord and you've connected to him, what that means is you start to think a different way by no effort of your own.

But literally, electrical signals in your brain change. You think different things. You want different things. You desire different things. Am I right? As a Christian, if you look back over the years you've been a Christian, if you've been a Christian for any length of time, you'll realize you do start to think a different way.

And you don't, it's not because you did a course or read a book or watched a YouTube video.

There's something inside that is changing. Literally, physical things in your brain are changing the way you think because of this connection with Christ.

It's a real thing. It's not just an idea or a nice thought. It's a real connection which changes how you think. We see this reflected, actually, in a very important verse in chapter 2, verse 5.

Now, unfortunately, this is hidden by most translations, including the one I'm using. Look at what it says, verse 5. It says, adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus or have the same mindset as that of Christ Jesus.

[17:07] Think the same way as Jesus. But that's not actually what Paul says. This is an example where you need a more literal translation like the ESV or New King James Version.

You get those that are not very pleasant to read because it sounds like Yoda is talking because all the words are in the wrong order. But they do actually, sometimes, you need to read verses in the more literal translation because the more literal translation says this in that verse.

It says, have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus. So it's actually not saying try to think the same way as Jesus. It's saying you already do think the same way as Jesus.

Now just do it more because you already have a new mind in Christ Jesus because when you're connected with Him His mind starts to become well, your mind starts to become His mind.

His mind is shared with your mind and you start to think in different ways. It doesn't happen instantaneously. It's a process and that's why even though you have that connection you must now nurture this new way of thinking that is yours in Christ Jesus.

[18:21] And the way for example Paul elaborates this in Romans is he says you have a newness of life. A new way of thinking a new desire a new direction in life. And Romans 6 verse 6 you are therefore no longer enslaved to sin and that is one of the biggest advantages of sharing the mind of Christ is that you don't want to sin anymore and sin doesn't rule how you think anymore.

All because of this connection with Christ. You see how having this being in Christ is the most important thing and all of the other aspects of salvation are bound up in whether you are united to

Christ or not.

And then there's one final actually there's a lot of benefits but the one final one I want to mention is that if you are in Christ your future is bound to His future. Romans 6 verse 5 Turn actually with me back to Romans keep your finger in Philippians look at what Paul the apostle outlines is true of your future if you are in Christ.

Romans 6 verse 5 For if we have been united with Him there's that idea union with Christ being in Christ if we have been united with Him in the likeness of His death we will certainly also be in the likeness of His resurrection or however your translation puts it.

What it's saying is if you are united to Him not only did you die with Him and your sin was paid for but you will rise with Him even though He's already risen after you die when He comes back you will rise because He rose and that's because of that connection you have.

[20 : 03] If you don't have that connection with Him you won't rise like Him but if you have that connection with Him just as God raised Him from the dead He will raise you too you can be sure of that.

And so as long as a person has this connection this being in Christ this united with Christ they are justified they are being sanctified their mind is being transformed and they will be glorified in Christ. And that's what Jesus Himself teaches this doctrine of being in Him using different words but in John 15 He talks about the vine and the branches and how you need to be in the vine if you're to be a fruitful branch you know His teaching on that?

And He ends off by saying He who remains in Me produces much fruit without Me you can do nothing He who remains in Me and so He encourages His disciples remain in Him keep that connection with Christ because if you don't you can do nothing you can have no salvation no justification no sanctification and no hope of glorification with Him and so this union with Christ I hope you've seen now is absolutely essential to everything in some ways it's the very core of Christian doctrine but now this is where we go back to Philippians and what Philippians is talking about with the privilege of being in Christ all these things we've thought about now comes the responsibility to live now a new way that being in Christ calls for which is as Paul puts it in Philippians 2 to live out His story because you're united with Him and everything that He did counts for you now

His story is your story and you need to learn how to live out His story in a thousand small ways in your story day to day and that is why the heart of this letter Philippians is a description of Christ's story because if you understand the story of Christ that is the call to Christians of this new way of life we're called to to be the church and that's why we must look at that story it's in chapter 2 verse 6 to 11 this really is the beating heart of Philippians because it's it's what sets the tone for all of Paul's ethical instructions that follow really this if you look at it look in your Bibles look at 2 6 to 11 it might be indented like Psalms are because depending on what Bible you have because it's actually a quotation of an ancient Christian hymn that Paul is quoting and this here is the fuel to this book it's the fuel to doing all the stuff that Paul calls us to do as God's people in Christ if we are in Christ and I'm speaking to you as Christians because you're at church so it's an assumption

[22 : 59] I've got to make but maybe you're not in Christ well you can be you've seen through faith there's a wifi password God has given it to you you can connect with Christ through coming to him and admitting that he is Lord and confessing and being baptized and that is that is coming into this this connection with Christ that God does everything for us through okay but this this chapter 2 6 to 11 is the fuel for the rest of the book and so we must read it and think about it now from verse 6 who that's Christ existing in the form of God did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant taking on the likeness of humanity and when he had come as a man he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross for this reason

God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord with the glory of God the Father okay so this is the story of Christ in a very summarized form but I want you to notice firstly so the shape of it is it starts from the highest of heights and then it goes to the lowest of lows death as a slave on a cross not even a Roman citizen would suffer that and then it goes back to the highest of heights again so that's the movement from high to low to high but look at how it contrasts with our story as humanity now this is very interesting because if you think of Genesis 3 to 11 which is the summarized story of

humanity and why we got into the state we're in today think of Adam our first forefather and think of how different he was and mankind his children were to

Christ's story here because Adam wanted to be like God so he tries to grab it even though he wasn't like God and remember in the tree Adam and Eve the serpent tempted them to eat from the tree why he said you'll be like God and so they wanted to be like God they tried to grab it Christ on the other hand verse 6 he did exist in the very form of God but he didn't consider equality with God as something to be exploited he was willing to let that go and not grasp it completely opposite Adam became therefore enslaved to sin against his will what does Christ do verse 7 he becomes like a slave to free us from our sin willingly he did that see the opposite Adam then died because he was disobedient to God Christ verse 8 dies because he's obedient to God and then Adam's children remember at Babel chapter 11 of Genesis what does humanity do at Babel they try to build themselves up to God status and God responds by bringing them down what does

Christ do he does the opposite he empties himself of his divine privilege he brings himself down and God responds by exalting him and raising him up verse 9 for this reason God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name so you see how when we look at the story of Christ and we compare it to the story of humanity we see two totally different patterns of living two totally opposite ways of living and those are the two ways of living our story the story of humanity for thousands of years has been one of us trying to exalt ourselves trying to increase our own status and our own name and our own reputation a constant effort of trying to rise above others in esteem or success and we see it every day don't we it's instinctive at work to try get above the others to try outsell the other salesmen to try climb the ladder faster than everyone else to be better than others to get above others in social media you see it you see everybody trying to show a better version of their life on their profiles trying to out argue everyone else and have a better point and trying to get above others it's how we live it's how we think the way we talk about others so often is in a way that doesn't help them like we learnt in

Ephesians we should but the way that we talk about others more often than not is to try show how we look good we talk about others in a way that makes us look good don't we because we want to get above we want to exalt ourselves in business in society and how we talk we're so used to it it's like the air we breathe it's in our nature to do that we don't even realise we're doing it that's mankind's story that's the pattern of living of this world it is normal it is expected Christ's story is the opposite Christ's story is one of him willing to put aside his own interests and status and name for the sake of others put aside his rights to give rights to those who have no rights us and that is a completely foreign concept to us who does that it's so foreign and yet that is the life we are called to live in

[28 : 53] Christ because that is the life that Christ lived that is the new pattern of life that he came to this earth to live and if we are in him and we enjoy the benefits of being in him that is the pattern of life we must now adopt in our own lives with each other and with the world outside because not only is it part and parcel of being in Christ but if you think about it Jesus from heaven look at verse 6 again existing in the very form of God he had equality with God and yet he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant you know what that's telling us that's telling us that this humbling of oneself for the sake of others is at the very heart of who God is God is a God who does that and always has that always has been part of God's character and we see it in the person of Jesus Christ when Jesus came he expressed the essential character of our God and creator as one who is willing to give up everything and humble himself completely and become a slave for people who don't deserve it that is the nature of God gracious love undeserved and it's always been in the essential character of God it's just when

Jesus came to earth that we saw it display and therefore if we are made in God's image Genesis 1 and 2 then that is also think about that if that's at the heart of who God is that he's a being who gives of himself for the sake of others and we're made in his image then that is the essential nature of what he intends humans to be as well right that's what he's always intended for humans to be creatures who look out for the interests of others before their own and he has intended the creation to be filled with people who are always looking out for the interests of others imagine that you don't have to imagine it because one day that's what it will be because that's what God has always intended beings who are outward focused a world full of outward focused self humbling beings who look out for the interests of others first and in

Christ so that's his intent for humans and it's in Christ in his son that he both calls us to live that life and he enables us to live that life now what that looks like in our lives day to day practically that's what the book of Philippians really outlines and I'll mention a few before we finish but I hope you've seen so far that foundational to what Paul is calling us to this alternate lifestyle is understanding that we are in Christ that we have this connection with him and what enables us to do that and what the call is the story of Jesus himself the pattern the new way of life that he came and lived and showed us how to live and so now we go into what that looks like practically so I'll mention a few we won't have time to get into all of them but the most I'll start with the most difficult one it's the one I've already mentioned chapter 2 verse 3 to 4 do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves everyone should look out not only for his own interests but also for the interests of others it's you know I said earlier it sounds almost impossible doesn't it to really do that yes we can pretend

I've seen I've spent ministry looking at seeing Christians pretending to do this but how can we really do it well it's because of the story of Christ that is that follows verse 6 to 11 when we grasp that that we can actually it's the fuel that enables us to do this and primarily because of how it ends verse 9 to 11 it's because of how his story ends that you and I can actually be equipped and freed up to live this kind of life look at how it ends this is vital verse 9 to 11 for this reason God highly exalted him notice he didn't exalt himself and gave him the name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father it's God who raised Jesus up to have the greatest status in the universe which he will when he returns and every knee will bow and every tongue confess even if they don't want to that he is the

Lord but this is the important thing to notice about the story of Christ God exalted Christ and gave him a name that he didn't need to seek for himself God exalted him because he didn't exalt himself you know the reason I think we struggle to obey this instruction and to look out for others over ourselves the reason we struggle with that is because in the back of our mind is the thought well who's going to look out for me then right the reason that when we read this instruction to see others value others more than yourself and look out for their needs before your own the reason that everything in us resists that is because we are scared that no one will look out for us and that's why we can't do it but if you are in Christ you can know

[34 : 48] God will look out for you so you don't have to God will exalt you in his time so that you don't have to God will give you a name and a status far greater than you could ever give yourself and so you don't have to which live this way just as God exalted Christ and gave him a name so God will do and has done that for all who are in Christ we have already citizenship in heaven a status far above any status we could wish for and that knowing that knowing that it's God who raises us up and exalts us and gives us a name and status is what will free us to live this that we're called to as Christians and we believe that when we trust God to exalt us so that we don't have to exalt ourselves so that that doesn't have to be our default way of living when we get that then it frees us to do some of these things that is listed all throughout the book it frees us to be reasonable look at chapter 4 verse 5 let your graciousness be known to everyone or reasonableness or gentleness it's a difficult word to translate but essentially what it means to be reasonable is to not insist on every right you have you know how you get people who when they have a particular right to something they will insist on it and make sure everybody knows about it and they will not rest until they get that right you know what

I'm talking about well reasonableness is actually not insisting on getting even if you have a right to something not insisting on taking it or getting it it's this idea of being united with Christ and knowing that God will exalt us in his time frees us up it enables us to be unified chapter 4 verse 2 Paul writes specifically to two women in the church who were great partners of him but he heard that they were having a fight and it was a fight everyone knew about Euodia and Syntyche were their names and look what he says to them in his letter I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to agree in the Lord again he's reminding them that they are in the Lord and in the Lord only in the Lord can they truly agree because what it means is either Euodia or Syntyche had to apologize even if it wasn't their fault in order for them to make peace that's how it works you go to fight with someone the only way that fight is going to be resolved is if somebody is big enough to apologize and to forgive even if they weren't primarily the one at fault and it's only because we think why should we do that why should we back down well because you know what

Jesus backed down from judging you for your sin and he did the opposite and he took it on himself he gave up his rights to give you rights you don't have a right to okay so that's how the pattern of Christ is seen in a thousand different ways in our own lives if we are in him being in Christ enables us not to grumble yes it does grumbling is a scourge of the church but in Christ we can actually learn how not to grumble look at chapter 2 verse 14 it's very clear do everything without grumbling like the Israelites did in the wilderness remember God rescued them miraculously and it was no time before they started grumble grumble grumble I'm not happy with this complain complain complain where's the complaints department but you know what we realized about the Israelite story is that grumbling is the result of not trusting that God is looking out for you and trusting that God has got you and God is so we shouldn't be people who grumble if we are in Christ rather we can do this chapter 4 verse 8 we can focus not on what is bad about the world and about our lives and our situations but we can do the opposite we can focus on what is good finally brothers and sisters whatever is true whatever is honorable whatever is just whatever is pure whatever is lovely whatever is commendable if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy dwell on these things people in

Christ knowing that God has got them are able actually to be the most positive people in the world even in suffering we can we can show an amazing positivity if we are in Christ and that's another big theme in the book mostly in chapter one Paul talks about how it is own suffering and in the Philippians suffering we can rejoice still in suffering it's a big theme of Philippians and one of the people listening to this letter when it was sent by Paul and it arrived in the church in Philippi and it was opened up and the elders of the church stood up and said we've got a letter from Paul and they read it family who had experienced in a dark dungeon in Philippi one night before he became a Christian a group of people who had been beaten the day before singing hymns and rejoicing in prison he knew from experience what it looked like to rejoice in suffering and this alternative lifestyle is also seen in other things that the book mentions not being anxious but being prayerful like [41 : 38] Dylan read for us earlier 4 verse 6 do not worry about anything but in everything through prayer and petition with thanksgiving possess your requests to God do not worry about anything are you kidding Paul have you seen the stress that I'm under but if you believe God has got you and God will exalt you in due course and you don't have to exalt yourself you also don't have to worry about anything if you believe in a sovereign God and you believe that he hears your prayers you can just pray instead of worrying and this alternative lifestyle is also seen in partnering in Philippians there's this big idea of partnering Christ's mission if you are united with Christ then what he wanted and what he came to earth to do should be what you think about this book and what it's all about this call to live an alternate lifestyle in Christ and why you can because we are in Christ and what that means and so you see how realizing this truth of being united with

Christ having this real connection with him should change how we live an alternative lifestyle that we as a church are called to live and display to each other and to the world around us and when we learn to do that that's when Christ will be highly exalted in our community in us as he was in Paul and in these early Christians let's pray that the same would be for us as a local church let's pray now Lord we we thank you that we can pray right now because of this invisible but real connection we have with Christ being people who are in him through faith we thank you that you hear these prayers we thank you that you give us everything to live a godly life in Christ Jesus Lord we pray that you would help us to want to live this new way of life that Christ showed us how to live that you made us and created us to live

Lord help us to realize that this idea of putting others in front of ourselves in priority is not foreign it's actually the very thing we were made for and Lord in Christ as we know that our future is his future help us to have a faith such that it will free us up to live out his story in our own stories and so that you will be glorified in it in Jesus name Amen P