

Philippians choral reading

CHARACTERS: Paul (37), Silas (10), Timothy (26), All, Jailer (2)

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: about 3 minutes/page

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Philippians 1-4, Acts 16 (HCSB)

Background from Acts

SILAS: Paul and I traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia.

PAUL: Silas (*patting SILAS' shoulder*) stayed there several days.

SILAS: Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth and worshiper of God, heard our message

PAUL: The Lord opened her heart and the members of her household were baptized.

SILAS: But trouble came when Paul cast a demon out of a servant girl.

PAUL: She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.

SILAS: When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone,

PAUL: they seized us and dragged us before the magistrates.

SILAS: The magistrates ordered us severely beaten with rods

PAUL: and threw us into prison.

SILAS: Around midnight, we were praying and singing hymns to God,

PAUL: The other prisoners were listening to us.

SILAS: (*excitedly*) Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. PAUL: The doors flew open and everyone's chains came loose.

SILAS: The jailer was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted,

PAUL: Don't harm yourself! We are all here!

SILAS: The jailer asked

JAILER: Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

PAUL: Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.

JAILER: I and my household were baptized.

SILAS: We were released from prison that morning.

Chapter 1

TIMOTHY: From Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

PAUL: To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi,

ALL: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

PAUL: I thank my God every time I remember you.

TIMOTHY: In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy

ALL: confident that he who began a good work in you

PAUL: will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

TIMOTHY: And this is our prayer:

PAUL: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,

ALL: so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,

TIMOTHY: filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ

ALL: to the glory and praise of God.

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PAUL: As I write this, I am in chains for the gospel. But what does it matter?

TIMOTHY: The important thing is that Christ is preached.

PAUL: And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,

ALL: For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

PAUL: If I am to go on living in the body,

ALL: this will mean fruitful labor for me.

TIMOTHY: Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two:

PAUL: I desire to depart and be with Christ,

ALL: which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

TIMOTHY: Convinced of this, I know that I will remain.

ALL: Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Imitating Christ's Humility (Chapter 2)

PAUL: make my joy complete by being like-minded,

TIMOTHY: having the same love,

ALL: being one in spirit and of one mind.

PAUL: Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

TIMOTHY: Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,

ALL: not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

PAUL: In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

TIMOTHY: Who, being in very nature God,

ALL: did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

PAUL: rather, he made himself nothing

TIMOTHY: by taking the very nature of a servant,

ALL: being made in human likeness.

PAUL: And being found in appearance as a man,

TIMOTHY: he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—

ALL: even death on a cross!

PAUL: Therefore God exalted him to the highest place

TIMOTHY: and gave him the name that is above every name,

ALL: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

PAUL: in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

TIMOTHY: and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,

ALL: to the glory of God the Father.

PAUL: God works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

ALL: Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure,

TIMOTHY: children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.

ALL: Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.

Chapter 3

PAUL: Whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

ALL: I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him

TIMOTHY: not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law,

ALL: but having that which is through faith in Christ

PAUL: the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

ALL: I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings,

TIMOTHY: becoming like him in his death,

ALL: and attaining the resurrection from the dead.

PAUL: Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal,

ALL: but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

TIMOTHY: One thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,

ALL: I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

PAUL: Our citizenship is in heaven.

ALL: And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

TIMOTHY: That is Jesus, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control,

ALL: will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Chapter 4

PAUL: Stand firm in the Lord!

ALL: Rejoice in the Lord always.

PAUL: I will say it again: Rejoice!

TIMOTHY: Let your gentleness be evident to all.

ALL: The Lord is near.

TIMOTHY: Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation,

PAUL: by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,

ALL: present your requests to God.

PAUL: And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,

ALL: will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

TIMOTHY: Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble,

ALL: whatever is right, whatever is pure,

TIMOTHY: whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable

PAUL: if anything is excellent or praiseworthy

ALL: think about such things.

PAUL: I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

TIMOTHY: I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty.

ALL: I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation,

PAUL: whether well fed or hungry,

TIMOTHY: whether living in plenty or in want.

ALL: I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

PAUL: My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

ALL: To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

TIMOTHY: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

ALL: Amen