### St. Joseph's Episcopal Church Presents:

DISCIPLESHIP EXPLORED:
WHAT'S THE IS THE BEST LOVE
YOU'VE EVER KNOWN?

## Opening Prayer & Welcome

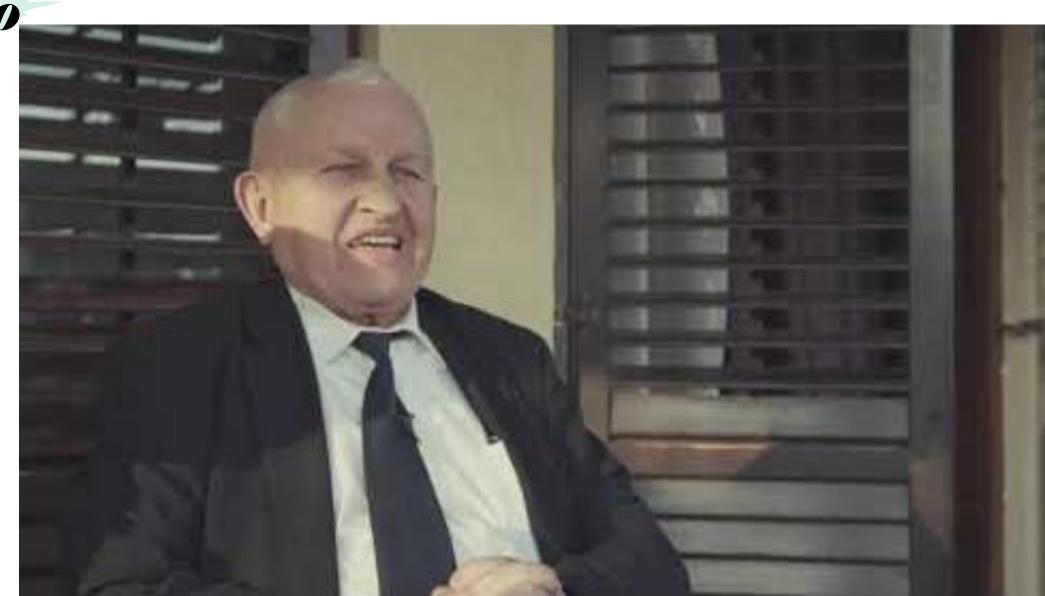
# Session I: Confident in Christ

PHILIPPIANS 1:1-11

### Opening Discussion Question

How can I be confident that I really am a follower of Jesus?

Session I Video



#### Video Reflection

How can I be confident that I really am a follower of Jesus?

#### Video Reflection

- God in his goodness is completely in control of everything
  not just when things are going the way we want, but also when they aren't.
- We see this played out as Jesus was dying on the cross: the greatest imaginable good was being achieved by God even when human beings were doing their very worst.
- Because God is in control, we can be confident that nothing can prevent him from completing the good work he has begun in every believer (Philippians 1:6).
- We can be confident that God is working to change us internally if our lives start to reflect this externally.
- Because God is at work in us, we won't be passive. We'll want to respond by growing in our knowledge and love of him (Philippians 1:9-11).

#### Introduction to Philippians

#### Who wrote it?

- The apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians.
- Not only does Paul identify himself as the author within the letter, but Paul's writing style is much in evidence, and the early church unanimously believed it to be his work.

#### Where was it written?

- Philippians 1:13-14 tells us that Paul wrote the letter while "in chains."
- Most likely, this was the period of his life when he was under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:14-31).
- Paul was allowed to live by himself in his own rented house, albeit with a soldier to guard him.
- He was also free to receive visitors, teaching them about the Lord Jesus Christ "with all boldness and without hindrance!"
- The evidence suggests that it was written around AD 61.

#### Who was he writing?

- Followers of Christ in Philippi, Macedonia (in modern-day Greece).
- The city of Philippi was a bustling Roman colony whose inhabitants prided themselves on being Roman citizens.
- Many Philippians made a point of speaking Latin, and even dressed like Romans. This is perhaps why Paul makes a point of stressing, "But our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20).

#### Why was it written?

- Paul wrote because he dearly loved the believers in Philippi.
- He says, "God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:8).
- But Paul also wanted to thank the Philippians for the gift they'd sent via their messenger Epaphroditus, when they found out Paul had been detained (Philippians 4:10, 18).
- As he writes, Paul reports on his present circumstances, encourages them to stand firm and rejoice in the face of persecution, urges them to be humble and united, warns them against certain dangerous teachers, and reminds them of the righteousness that is theirs in Christ.

#### What's distinctive about the letter?

- It's been called the New Testament letter of joy.
- The word "joy," in its various forms, occurs sixteen times in Philippians.
- It's also the letter of koinonia, a Greek word meaning partnership or oneness. See for example Philippians 1:4-5, where Paul writes, "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy, because of your partnership (koinonia) in the gospel from the first day until now..."
- Koinonia is a word that stresses how communal the Christian life must be.
- If someone were to say to Paul that they loved Jesus, but weren't committed to their local church, Paul would have had little confidence that they were followers of Jesus at all.
- The word is also used to describe our union with Christ as believers: "Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing (koinonia) in the Spirit..." (Philippians 2:1). For Paul, koinonia with Christ leads to koinonia with other believers

#### Philippians I:I-II

#### Philippians 1:1-11

1Paul and Timothy, servants\* of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops\* and deacons:\* 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 I thank my God every time I remember you, 4constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, 5because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. 6I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. 7It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart,\* for all of you share in God's grace\* with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. 8For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. 9And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight 10to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, 11having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

#### Discussion

- 1. According to Philippians 1:6, what is Paul confident about?
- 2. How can he be so confident? (See verse 5.)
- 3. What do you think that phrase means, in practical terms? (See Philippians 2:25 and 4:14-16.)
- 4. So how can we be confident that God is working in us? What might that look like in your life and in your day-to-day relationships?
- 5. Someone might say, "If God will finish this work he started, why do I need to do anything?" What would you say to them?
- 6. A Christian friend is going through a tough time. They don't feel confident that God loves them and is in control of what is happening to them. Is there something from the film or our discussion that might encourage them?

#### Wrap Question

1. What has been most striking for you during this session?

#### Upcoming Sessions

Session 2: Living in Christ

Session 3: One in Christ

Session 4: Obedient in Christ

Session 5: Righteous in Christ

Session 6: Transformed in Christ

Session 7: Rejoicing in Christ

Session 8: Content in Christ

July 20, 2020

July 27, 2020

August 3, 2020

August 10, 2020

August 17, 2020

August 24, 2020

August 31, 2020