Philippians:

Peace of God Through the Mind of Christ

“...and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7)
Lesson 1: Introduction and Background

This lesson will provide background to the church in Philippi. We will discuss relevant historical and cultural facts about the city, the establishment of the church by the Apostle Paul and his companions, opposition to the gospel and Paul’s imprisonment in the city, and the conversion of the Philippian jailer. We will also learn about the Apostle Paul’s situation as he writes the letter.

Objectives (the student will be able to…)
- Locate Philippi and identify the region of Greece
- Tell the story of the origin of the church in Philippi, including a description of the first converts there.
- Describe the culture of the Philippians

Reading: Acts 16:11-40

Directions: To prepare for class, read Acts 16:11-40 and answer the questions below.

A. The City of Philippi
   1. In what modern-day country is Philippi located?
   2. In which region was Philippi located during Paul’s time (see v. 12)?
   3. What empire controlled this region?

B. Establishment of the Philippian church
   1. Where did Paul go first in Philippi to preach?

   How is this different than Paul’s usual method when he came into a new city?

   2. Who were the first Christians in Philippi?

11 Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day came to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days. 13 And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. 14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us.

16 Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” 18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour. 19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

20 And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; 21 and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.” 22 Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. 23 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.
C. Opposition and persecution in Philippi
1. What did Paul and his companions do that angered some people in Philippi?

2. How were Paul and Silas punished?

3. What did Paul and Silas do while in prison?

D. Jailer’s conversion to Christ
1. Why was the jailer going to kill himself? What did the jailer do instead after speaking with Paul and Silas?

2. Why did the city officials apologize to Paul and Silas?

Discussion Questions. Be prepared to discuss these questions in class:

A. Consider the culture in Philippi when Paul arrives. Were there likely to be many Jews in Philippi?

Why or why not?

B. What motivated the slave girl’s owners to reject Paul’s message and have Paul and Silas thrown in prison?

How do worldly motivations cause people to reject the gospel today?

C. Was Paul and Silas’s punishment fair?

Why didn’t Paul and Silas take advantage of the earthquake and flee?
Lesson 2: The Mind of Christ in Brothers and Sisters in Christ

This lesson will cover the partnership between Paul and the Philippian church and their mindsets towards each other. We will consider the strengths and accomplishments of the church, especially in light of Paul’s sufferings there and as he writes.

Objectives (the student will be able to…)
- Name the author(s) of the letter
- Describe Paul’s situation at the time of writing
- List at least 2 things Paul and the Philippians were partners in
- List at least 3 things Paul prays for on behalf of the Philippians

Reading. Philippians 1:1-11

Preparation. Read the text and answer the questions below.

A. Introduction: Who are the author(s) of this letter?

B. Paul’s relationship with the Philippian church
   1. Why was Paul thankful for the Philippians?
   
      Why was he confident?
   
   2. Who was working in the Philippian church?
   
   3. In what ways and at what times did the Philippian church partner with Paul?

C. Paul’s desire for the Philippians
   1. What did Paul pray the Philippians would be “filled with”?

Discussion Questions. Be prepared to discuss in class:

A. How could the things Paul prays for bring peace to the Philippians, individually and as a church?

B. Consider Paul’s situation as he writes this letter. What was the risk of the Philippian church in partnering with him?

What does this risk-taking show about their relationship with Paul and their view of themselves?
Lesson 3: Peace through the Mind of Christ in Adversity

This lesson will cover the attitude we can have by accepting Jesus’ way of thinking when facing other people who are doing the wrong thing or doing the right thing for the wrong reasons. We will consider the strength and peace that Jesus’ mind will give us if we accept it and the impact we will have on other people when we do.

Objectives (the student will be able to...)
- List at least 3 unpleasant “things” that happened to Paul
- Explain how these things help spread the gospel
- List at least 3 wrong motives for preaching the gospel

Reading: Philippians 1:12-19

Directions: Before answering the questions below, read the text and summarize in your own words what attitude Paul had toward adversity because of the mind of Christ.

The Principle – Verse 12

A. Unpleasant things will happen to Christians
   1. What “things” might Paul be referring to here?

   2. What other “things” does Paul mention in 2 Cor 11:23-27?

   3. What are some unpleasant things that can happen to us in the service of Christ?

B. Such things can advance the gospel
   1. Did Paul complain about the things that happened to him? Did he seek sympathy?

   2. Explain Paul’s attitude.

The Results Specified

A. Spreading Influence of Paul
   1. How widely were Paul’s bonds known?

   2. What was known about them?
3. Who do we know in our day to day lives that should know about our relationship with Christ? And what are a few ways they could see it?

B. Increasing proclamation of the Gospel

1. Effect on “most of the brethren”
   a. What affect did Paul’s chains have on “most of the brethren”?
   b. What motivated them (v. 15-16)?

2. Effect on a minority of brethren. List four characteristics of the preaching of some as an effect of Paul’s chains:
   a. “Proclaim Christ of ______________ and ______________”
   b. “Proclaim Christ of ______________”
   c. “Not ______________”
   d. Purpose:

3. Explain the reasoning of this latter group.

Paul’s Reaction

A. Philippians 1:18

1. Present attitude:
2. Future Attitude:

B. Reason:

1. Why did he react in this manner?
2. Was Paul unconcerned about motives? Explain what he was saying.

Discussion Questions

A. Write down a time when either you or someone you know has had something happen that seemed bad at first, but actually helped spread the gospel.

B. Suppose Paul had become involved in a bitter dispute, what effect would it have had?
Lesson 4: Peace through the Mind of Christ in Life and Death

This lesson will cover the attitude we can have by accepting Jesus’ way of thinking when facing the next 150 years. We will consider the strength and peace that Jesus’ mind will give us if we accept it and the impact we will have on other people when we do.

Objectives (the student will be able to…)

- State what Paul wished to accomplish in his body
- List four advantages for Paul to continue living
- List at least 3 things that characterized conduct worthy of the gospel

Reading: Philippians 1:20-30

Directions: Read the verses and summarize Paul’s attitude toward:

- Life
- Death

Paul’s Goal

A. Based on what he says in the text, what do you think were Paul’s reasons to write this to the Philippians?

B. What did Paul wish to be accomplished in his body?

Had this been accomplished in the past?
If so, suggest some ways.

What were two possible ways it might be accomplished in the future?

C. Advantages of living. List at least four advantages Paul seemed to see in living (vss. 21-26).

1.
2.
3.
4.
D. Advantages of dying.
   1. Who would benefit most from his dying?
   2. What would be the benefit?

**Living a worthy life**

A. What is the definition of worthy?

B. How were the Philippians supposed to be living? (v. 27)

C. What parts of Paul’s prayer, earlier in the chapter (v. 9-11), would help the Philippians live their lives worthy of the gospel of Christ?

D. How were the Philippians supposed to be acting towards each other (v. 27)

E. How were the Philippians supposed to be acting towards people who didn’t believe in Jesus? (v. 28)

F. What is usually “granted” to those who believe in Jesus (v. 29)?

   With whom do we share that suffering (v. 30)?

**Discussion Questions**

A. How could it be said of you that “to live is Christ?”

B. What encouragement should these last verses be to us in our surroundings today?
Lesson 5: Unity and Humility in the Mind of Christ

Here Paul reminds the Philippians of the humble attitude of Christ, encouraging them to be united together in the same attitude. He reminds them that because Christ humbled himself in obedience even to death on a cross, God exalted Him above all things.

Objectives (the student will be able to...)
- List at least 3 descriptions of a humble mind like Christ's
- Describe the “before,” “during,” and “after” states of Jesus’ coming to earth.

Reading: Philippians 2:1-11

Directions: To prepare for class, please read the Scripture referenced above and answer the questions below.

Unity and Humility vs. Division and Pride
A. In Chapter 1, we saw the close partnership between Paul and the church in Philippi, Paul’s affection for them, and Paul’s joy in them. What does Paul say would make his joy complete?

B. Based on this vs 1-5, what is the foundational character that enables unity (or oneness)?

C. Fill in the chart below based on verses 2-5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unity and Humility</th>
<th>Division and Pride</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Being ______ - ________, having the same _______</td>
<td>- ...Be done through ________ ambition or ________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>same ______, being of one ________, of one ________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In __________ of mind let each esteem others ________ than himself.</td>
<td>- Look[ing] out (or primarily) for ______ _______ interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Look out ... for the interests of ________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Christ’s humble attitude

A. Read verses 6-8. Then fill in the blanks on the re-statement / paraphrase of these verses below using the words from the word bank.

“Though Jesus is part of _______ himself, he was willing to _________ his status and make himself _______. In being born as a ____________, the Son of God effectively became a _______. In this role, Jesus __________ obeyed God even when it meant a humiliating death by torture on a ____________.

Word bank:
humbly          God            human being      let go of    cross      nothing
bondservant (slave)

Christ’s exaltation

A. Verse 9 says that God “highly exalted” Jesus because of his humble obedience. What are some specific ways the Father “highly exalted” Jesus? List at least 3, considering verses 9-11 and the gospel accounts of Jesus’s life (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John).

Discussion Questions

Please answer these questions to prepare for discussion in class:

A. Based on these verses, how can members of a church remain united and not to be destroyed by divisions?

What kind of attitude is necessary to be unified?

B. How would it make you feel if someone you consider very important, someone you greatly admire and respect, treated you with special attention and extraordinary kindness?

How might that motivate you in the way you treat others?
Lesson 6: Shining Like Stars in Peaceful Obedience

Based on the humble attitude of Christ discussed in the last lesson, Paul encourages the Philippians to be humbly and reverently obedient to God. Their purity and holiness will make them shine like bright lights ("stars") amid the darkness of an evil world, and will give Paul more cause to rejoice despite his sufferings.

Objectives (the student will be able to…)
- Explain the roles of God and man in our salvation
- State Paul’s depiction of Christians in an evil culture
- List 2 behaviors that keep us from “shining” in the world

Reading: Philippians 2:12-18

Directions: To prepare for class, please read the Scripture referenced above and answer the questions below.

Imitating Christ in Obedience

A. Verse 12 starts with “Therefore…”. What did Christ do, and what did the Father do for Christ that motivates Paul’s encouragement for the Philippians to continue in obedience? (hint: see verses 8-11)

B. What words in verse 12 indicate we have a role to play in our salvation?

Whose “will” and “actions” are referred to in verse 13, God’s or man’s?

C. In verse 12, the phrase “fear and trembling” does NOT mean that we are to be terrified of God. What might this phrase mean instead?

Shining Like Stars

A. What might keep the Philippians from being “blameless and innocent” and from shining like stars amid the darkness of the world?

B. How does Paul describe the culture and the time in which the Philippians lived? (v.15)

How does this contrast with the “shining as stars in the Universe” [“lights in the world”] he encourages in the believers?
C. The “word of life” in verse 16 most likely refers to the gospel message, the good news about salvation in Christ. How does holding firmly to the gospel help us to shine like stars in the universe?

D. What positive things does the light of the sun (our star) bring to the earth? How does this enrich our understanding of verses 15-16?

**Discussion Questions**

Please answer these questions to prepare for discussion in class:

A. Consider Exodus 16:1-2 and Numbers 14:26-29. What sin did the Israelites commit here when Moses was leading them out of Egypt to the Promised Land?

Why do you think God was so angry with this sin?

How does this relate to Paul’s teaching in Philippians 2:14?

B. How could someone do good things, but still displease God by “grumbling”, “complaining”, or “arguing” about having to do them?

What are some things you don’t like to do that you tend to grumble or complain the most about?

How might the concept of shining like stars and remembering Philippians 2:6-11 help you to have a godlier attitude?
Lesson 7: The Mind of Christ Regarding Self

This lesson will keep our focus on caring for others – which Christ’s mind will produce in us. We will see how Christ’s mind toward self, described in 2:5-8, was illustrated in Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus and how this love produces peace in us by focusing on the interests of others.

Objectives (the student will be able to…)

- List the admirable and unusual qualities of Timothy
- Describe Ephaproditus’ situation (events in his life)
- Describe Ephaproduts’ selfless attitude about his illness

Reading: Philippians 2:17-30

Directions: Read the Scripture and answer these questions.

Paul

A. What did Paul think might happen to him (see 2:17-18)?

B. How did he describe it in 2 Timothy 4:6?

C. What relation did all of this have to the Gentiles (see Eph 3:1, Rom 15:15-16)?

D. How did he feel about being offered this way?

E. What attitude did he want the Philippians to have about it?

Timothy

A. What would Paul gain by sending Timothy to Philippi?

B. How does this illustrate Philippians 2:4?

C. How was Timothy different from others?
   1. Could the same be said of me?
   2. List 1 thing you could do to be more like Timothy.

D. Think carefully about verses 20-22. Timothy was more concerned about at least three others more than himself. Who are they?

E. How did Timothy illustrate the instructions in Philippians 2:
   1. Verse 2
   2. Verse 3
   3. Verse 4

F. When did Paul expect to send Timothy?

G. What did Paul hope to do soon?
Epaphroditus

A. What was Epaphroditus to Paul? List one character trait associated with each description
   1.
   2.
   3.

B. What was Epaphroditus to the Philippians?
   Why had Epaphroditus come from Philippi to Paul in Rome (see verse 25 and 4:8)?

C. What problem had Epaphroditus had while he was with Paul (27)? How serious was it?

D. What seemed to concern Epaphroditus most about his problem (26)?

E. How did God mercifully protect Paul from “sorrow upon sorrow”?

F. How would sending Epaphroditus to the Philippians cause Paul to be less sorrowful?

G. Verse 30 mentions four different persons or groups – name them.
   • Which of the four groups listed above was Epaphroditus least concerned about?
   • What attitude did Paul say the church should have toward such men?

Discussion Questions: Please answer these questions to prepare for class discussion:

A. Explain why it is easier to care less about what is happening to you when you are focused on trying to meet someone else’s need. How does this relate to the idea of peace?

B. Using scripture from Acts 16 and Philippians, name as many Christians as you can find who likely worshipped with the elders and deacons in Philippi.

C. Please come up with a list of Christians who worship at Embry Hills that has the same number of people as your previous response.

D. From the Christians you named who worship at Embry Hills: What needs do they have? What are they interested in? How can I know more about their interests? What would help them love God more? Using Philippians 2 as reference, what are three things you could do today that would display the mind of Christ towards these individuals?
Lesson 8: Peace and Righteousness in Christ

This lesson will examine the peace, righteousness, and joy we have in Christ. We will consider dangers that threaten this blessing and how God’s peace encourages us to overcome them.

Objectives (the student will be able to…)

- List at least 3 things that created joy in Paul.
- Describe the errors called “the mutilation”
- Contrast righteousness from the law and righteousness through faith

Reading: Philippians 3:1-11

Directions Read the text and answer the questions.

Rejoice in the Lord

A. Look up rejoice in a dictionary and explain its meaning.

B. Does God want His people to have joy?

C. How many times do you see the words: Joy, Rejoice, or similar words in Philippians?

D. In Philippians, what things caused Paul to have joy and what actions made joy appear, grow, or be completed?

False Concepts of Righteousness (3:1-6)

A. When you consider someone you love, are you concerned about things that could do them harm?

B. Paul uses the word “beware” three times. Of what are we to beware?
   1. 
   2. 
   3.

C. Were these three different threats or different descriptions of the same threat?

D. Identify the false teaching about which Paul warns (Acts 15:1 may help).

E. What are the characteristics of the true circumcision?
   1. 
   2. 
   3.

F. Before Paul became a Christian, what things would he have boasted of as proof of his righteousness? What things do we boast about incorrectly?

3 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! 3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, 4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.
True Basis of Righteousness (3:7-14)

A. As a Christian, what was Paul’s attitude toward things on which he formerly depended?
   1. Verse 7 –
   2. Verse 8 –

B. Where does true righteousness come from and how does this explain the value that Paul put on Jesus?

C. Summarize how faith is described in:
   1. Romans 1:5 –
   2. Romans 4:9-12 –
   3. James 2:14-24 –
   4. Hebrews 11:6 –

D. How does faith relate to suffering, death, and the resurrection in Philippians 3:9-11?

Discussion Questions Please answer to prepare for class discussion.

A. Look up the definition of righteousness and explain why someone would want to have this characteristic?

B. Does our world struggle with wanting to be accepted? What are some ways that people try to achieve this?

C. God loves us, values us beyond measure, and tells us how He wants us to be saved (made righteous, accepted).
   1. How do we accept this grace?
   2. How can God’s righteousness give us peace in the face of threats (v.10-11)?
Lesson 9: Making the Mind of Christ My Own

No one can know Christ and live the Christian life for you...you must choose it and strive for it diligently yourself. In this lesson we will see how even the apostle Paul continued striving towards the goal of maturing in the mind of Christ. Paul encourages the Philippians to do the same, despite enemies of the cross in the world.

Objectives (the student will be able to...)

- Explain how Paul had not yet attained his goal
- Describe 4 characteristics of “enemies of the Cross”
- Describe the transformation of our bodies at resurrection

Reading: Philippians 3:12-4:1

Directions: Read the text and answer the questions below.

Pressing on Toward the Goal

A. Did Paul consider himself to have ‘arrived’ as a Christian? That is, did he consider that he had fully attained his goal in ministry and in his walk with the Lord, and so could ‘sit back and relax’?

What key action words does he use in verses 12-14 to describe his efforts in the Lord?

B. Considering Paul’s position as a specially appointed apostle, who had the power from God to perform miracles, to understand God’s will, and to teach through direct revelation from God, do you think it’s possible for anyone to be ‘mature’ enough in Christ to relax from working for the Lord and growing towards the goal of salvation? Explain your answer.

C. In v. 12, Paul says “I press on that I may __________ ____________.” In v. 15, Paul says as many as are ____________ should think the way he does.

D. In v. 13, Paul says he was “forgetting what lies behind...”. What exactly was Paul “forgetting” and putting behind him? (hint: see vs. 4-9).

Instead, he is “straining forward to what lies ahead.” What lies ahead of him that he is straining towards?
Good and Bad Role Models
A. What type of people does Paul encourage them to watch closely and imitate?

B. List 4 characteristics of those who “walk” or “live” as “enemies of the cross of Christ”.
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
   4. 

Transformation of Our Bodies in Resurrection
A. How is the appearance of the glory of the resurrected Christ described by the apostle John in his vision in Revelations 1:13-16?

B. How will the bodies of Christians be transformed in the resurrection according to 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 and 53-54?

C. Given the references above, how can v. 21 bring peace to Christians as we face challenges from “enemies of the cross of Christ”?

Paul’s Joy in the Philippians
A. List 6 ways Paul describes the Philippian Christians in chapter 4, verse 1, which demonstrates the closeness and affection in their relationship.
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
   4. 
   5. 
   6. 

Discussion Questions  Answer these questions to prepare for discussion in class:
A. What does it mean to make the mind of Christ your own (v. 12-13)? That is, what does it mean to take hold of faith in Christ and commit to Christ for yourself? Can anyone commit to Christ and accept the gifts of forgiveness and salvation on your behalf? Is it possible for someone to be baptized yet not make Christ their own? What might the consequences be?

B. Though Paul pressed on to “perfection”, and even suffered severely as he strove to become like Christ, he did not yet consider himself to have reached those things. Consider this with Paul’s words in Romans 7:14-25. Do we experience similar struggles? How can we be encouraged in our efforts and struggles by the fact that even the apostle Paul struggled with sin, worked hard to press on to “perfection”, and faced difficulties from “enemies of the cross of Christ”?

C. Who are the biggest role models and heroes among your peers? Professional athletes? Musical artists? Movie stars? Fashion models? War heroes? Family members? How do these role models compare with those we should “keep our eyes on” in v. 17?
Lesson 10: Peace that Surpasses Understanding through the Mind of Christ

Paul concludes his exhortations by encouraging the people to remain united, to be patient and prayerful, and to focus their minds on the things of God. By this the peace of God, which is beyond the ability of human beings to fully understand, can be ours through Christ Jesus.

Objectives (the student will be able to…)

- Name the two women that needed to get along better
- Give Paul’s recipe for overcoming anxiety
- Describe the pattern Paul said to follow in religious practice

Reading: Philippians 4:2-9

Directions: Read the text and answer the questions below.

Call for Peace and Unity Among Brethren
A. Whom did Paul plead to agree with one another?
   How were they to agree?
   How does Paul describe these people in v. 3?
B. Who was to help them?

Peace that Surpasses Understanding
A. What does Paul say (twice!) in v. 4 we should always do?
   How did Paul exemplify this teaching in this very letter?
   1. What is Paul’s recipe for having the peace of God while enduring hardship and stress (that is, anxiety, fear, etc.)?
   2. What does Paul say will happen if we do these things?
   3. Does he say the problems will immediately go away?
      If problems do not go away, how does the peace of God help us in difficult situations?
B. How is the peace of God described in v. 7? What does the peace of God do?
   List the 8 types of things Paul says we should “think about” or “meditate on”?
   What do we gain by dwelling our minds on these things (rather than on the opposites)?
   How is this teaching different from simply “thinking positive” or “thinking happy thoughts”?
C. How are the thoughts in 4:8 different from those of the “enemies of the cross” in 3:19?
   How can thinking like 4:8 lead to peace, even in difficult circumstances?
D. In your own words, describe what Paul means by “the peace of God that surpasses all understanding”.

Consider Paul’s situation as he writes and the consistent attitude he has exemplified throughout the letter. What kinds of things has Paul written in this letter that might show that he has a “peace that surpasses understanding”?

Read Ephesians 3:16-19. What attribute of God is also described as surpassing knowledge or understanding?

E. What pattern did Paul give the Philippians to guide their religious practice (4:9)?

**Discussion Questions** Answer these questions to prepare for discussion in class:

A. What kinds of things do you and your peers find yourselves thinking the most about and talking the most about?

   How do they compare with the things Paul says should consume our thoughts in v. 8?

B. What kinds of things cause you the most anxiety?

   Where do you tend to turn when you are in trouble, stressed, anxious, confused etc.?

   What advice do you give when friends turn to you with trouble, stress, anxiety, etc.?

   What might Paul recommend that will help people the most during difficult times?

C. One aspect of addiction is that it absolutely consumes the thoughts of the addict. What might your life look like if you were “addicted” to the things described in v. 8 rather than harmful addictions like drugs, alcohol, etc.?

   In the King James translation, 1 Corinthians 16:15 describes the family of a believer named Stephanas in Corinth, saying “…ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.” What does this tell us about the family of Stephanas and the depth of their commitment to the Lord?

D. It has been said that a Christian’s strongest influence and example to the world comes from how they deal with struggles, sufferings, anxieties, stress, etc.. If you face challenges and difficulties with a Christ-like mindset and the peace of God, how will you stand out in the world?

   How might your example intrigue and motivate others (in the world and in the church!) to turn to the Lord?
Lesson 11: Contentment Through the Mind of Christ

This lesson will focus on better understanding the idea of contentment and discovering the secret of being content in every situation. We will also cover the Philippian’s giving attitude and the blessings this attitude receives in the Lord.

Objectives (the student will be able to...)
- Describe what enabled Paul to be content in any circumstance
- Describe a purpose for the letter indicated in chapter 4
- Diagram the flow of funds from the Philippian church to Paul

Reading: Philippians 4:10-19

Directions: Read the text and answer the questions below.

Contentment

A. Describe Paul’s attitude toward the Philippians’ giving (v 10-11).

B. Describe Paul’s attitude in relation to all things (v 11-12).

   The word “content” (v 11) can be defined as being:
   a. sufficient for one’s self
   b. strong or possessing enough to need no aid or support
   c. in a state of peaceful happiness
   d. in a state of satisfaction

C. When Paul was truly hungry (v 12), he did not have all the physical things he needed to live. Yet, he is clearly able to have contentment through the mind of Christ (v 10-12). What does Paul say is the secret of being content in every situation (v 13)?

Philippians’ Giving

A. Philippians 4:10-20 indicates one likely purpose for the epistle – what was it (v 10,18)?

B. From Acts 16-17 we learn that after Paul first went to Philippi (and helped convert Lydia and the jailer’s households), he travelled to Thessalonica. According to Philippians 4, what did the Philippian saints do for him in Thessalonica (v 16)?

C. How did this distinguish the church at Philippi when Paul was leaving Macedonia (v 15)?

D. What had these Philippian Christians done for Paul in Rome (v 18)?

E. How did God view the gifts which they sent to Paul (v 18)?

F. What reward did Paul say they could expect as a result of their faithful offering (v 17)?
Discussion Questions  Please answer to prepare for class discussion.

A. How did the Philippians send their gifts to Paul (check one)?

- Through another organization, such as a “Missionary Society,” whose mission was to collect and distribute money from churches to men and locations it selected for world-wide evangelism

- Directly to him, by messenger

- Through a “sponsoring church” which collected money from several churches and served as the overseers (elders) of the money and Paul’s work

B. Pick one of the following verses and explain how it relates to Paul’s contentment in 4:13.

- For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. (1:21)

- Without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. (1:28)

- Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. (2:3-4)

- Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. (3:12)

- Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transscends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (4:6-7)
Lesson 12 – Case Studies

Matthew

Matthew is a 7th grader who attends the Lincoln Hills church of Christ. He was recently invited by Carson, one of his closest friends from church, to Carson’s 13th birthday party. Matthew is very excited about going, especially when he finds out that the party is going to be at Six Flags. Six Flags is also expecting to open a new ride that day that everyone is extremely excited about: the ‘Peacemaker’.

Two weeks later (a Wednesday night), Carson is still looking forward to his friends birthday party that is now only three days away – on Saturday. After services, Ms. Violet, an older widow from church who is very friendly, strikes up a conversation with Matthew and his mom. Ms. Violet has always been nice to Matthew. In fact she lives right down the street from their house. During the conversation, Ms. Violet mentions that her son, who usually does her yardwork, is out of town on a business trip and won’t be back for a couple of weeks. Matthew has even started to notice how bad her yard is looking when he is on his way to school in the morning. Ms. Violet is hosting a group potluck at her house on Saturday evening and Matthew knows that she can’t afford to hire someone to trim the bushes, cut the grass, lay out new pine straw, and do a few weeds beforehand.

Matthew wants to help Ms. Violet with her yardwork, but with his homework and sports throughout the week, he knows that if he were to help Ms. Violet it could only be on Saturday, during Carson’s birthday party.

1) Identify the challenges that Matthew faces
2) Choose one concept from Philippians that applies to this situation and explain how.
3) What advice would you give to Matthew?

Daisy

Daisy is an 8th grader who attends the Lincoln Hills church of Christ. She was recently baptized and has been friends with Carson and Matthew since they were little (they all grew up in the church). Daisy was also invited to go to Carson’s birthday party, along with the rest of their close group of friends. Like Matthew, Daisy is extremely excited about going to Six Flags. In fact, she hasn’t been since last summer when her season pass expired.

Over the past three months, after being prompted by a recent class on Philippians, Daisy has made an effort to get to know a new 8th grade visitor named Mary. Mary has a different background than most of Daisy’s friends: she was not raised in the church, her mom is divorced and recently converted, and they live in an apartment down the road from the church. Though Mary may be new to Lincoln Hills, she is not new to Daisy since they had attended the same school. They weren’t close friends before because they didn’t have much in common. But now they have been having lunch with each other at school and after getting to know her, Mary seems very likeable.

Mary doesn’t try to cause any problems at church or at school. However, she doesn’t wear the nicest clothes and doesn’t seem to have much in common with the rest of the group at church (music, TV, sports, etc.). She also doesn’t know much about the Bible and can be quiet when in group settings.

One day at lunch, Daisy and Mary are talking to each other about what their plans are for the weekend, when
Daisy mentions how excited she is to be going to Carson’s birthday party on Saturday. Mary is immediately very sad because she realizes that she wasn’t invited (even though Carson knew that Mary was really close to Daisy). Mary is quite the rest of the lunch and at church the next day, Daisy sees that Mary chose to sit by herself.

1) Identify the challenges that Daisy faces
2) Choose one concept from Philippians that applies to this situation and explain how.
3) What advice would you give to Daisy?

Carson

Carson is popular, in fact he has invited his entire group of friends to come celebrate his 13th birthday at Six Flags. He knows that everyone is going to be especially excited because of the new ride that is supposed to open that very day: the ‘Peacemaker’.

On Wednesday after services, Daisy let him know that he should consider inviting Mary to his birthday if it was at all possible. After thinking about it, he realized that he didn’t mean anything bad by not inviting her, she had just completely slipped his mind when it came to the invite list. He immediately asked his dad and mom if they would be ok with inviting one more. They were more than OK to have Mary attend and, after speaking with Mary, she happily accepted the invitation.

As big as the excitement was leading up to the day, when Saturday finally came it was actually a disaster and a very big disappointment for Carson. For starters, there was a huge crowd that had all come out to ride the ‘Peacemaker’, which meant that everyone ended up standing in line for most of the day. Also, the ‘Peacemaker’ wasn’t even open because of delays the park put in place due to safety testing. The temperature was 15 degrees hotter than the weatherman had predicted (it turned out to be 97 degrees). Carson was also pretty sad that one of his best friends (Matthew) wasn’t able to make it out. One good thing that Carson saw was how happy Mary and Daisy were together and that they were getting to know everyone else really well while standing in line.

About an hour and a half into their trip, however, James “pulled a James”. James was a bit socially awkward and always seemed to have something go wrong with him. Carson got news that James had got his finger caught in the water slide and had to go to the hospital (his parents think it may have been broken). A few people rode with James so they all left with him.

On the way home, Carson began complaining to his parents about how bad everything had went and how disappointing a birthday it turned out to be.

1) Identify the challenges that Carson faces
2) Choose one concept from Philippians that applies to this situation and explain how.
3) What advice would you give to Carson?