# TALKING POINTS

# Uniting Heaven and Earth:
## Christ in Philippians & Colossians
### Q1L1: "Persecuted but Not Forsaken"

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**MEMORY VERSE:** "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice."
Philippians 4:4, NKJV

## LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week's lesson looks at Paul's commitment to missionary service even under persecution and his strategic approach to evangelistic labor.

### 1. For Paul, even prison was a pulpit (Sun, Mon)

- Though none of Paul's "prison epistles" (Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon) mentions where he was imprisoned, evidence points to Rome.
    - Paul mentions the "praetorium" (Phil. 1:13) in terms of "the whole palace guard," likely meaning more than merely a Roman official's residence in an outpost territory but the thousands of soldiers stationed in Rome.
    - Paul also mentions believers "in Caesar's household," strongly implying a personal connection with people serving in the imperial headquarters in Rome.
- Paul was "an ambassador in chains" (Eph 6:20).
    - Paul was imprisoned or similarly imperiled numerous times (see 2 Cor. 11:23-28), yet he accepted all these dangers as part of his ministry and even rejoiced that he could suffer for Christ (see 2 Cor. 6:3-10).
        - For this reason, Paul regarded himself not as unfairly persecuted but merely "the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles" (Eph. 3:1; see also Phil. 1).

### 2. Successful evangelism requires wise strategy (Tue)

- Paul raised up the church in Philippi in obedience to a vision directing him to "come to Macedonia" (Ac. 16:9).
    - There were many other cities in Macedonia where Paul could have begun his work, but he chose Philippi on purpose.
        - "In his evangelistic activity, Paul always thought strategically. Philippi was 'the chief city of that part of Macedonia' (Ac. 16:12)…. Establishing an important Christian presence there enabled them to bring the gospel to many other nearby cities, including Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, and Berea (see Ac. 17:1, 10)."
        Qtly, Tue, par 2

- Furthermore, the conversion of influential people like Lydia, a prominent businesswoman (see Ac. 16:13-15), provided stability and support for the gospel work in that region (for more on Paul's strategy, see Teachers Ed, pp. 15, 16).

- Pastors and church leaders today should approach the work of evangelism with the same strategic mindset.

### 3. The church is organized for service (Wed, Thu)

- One key to Paul's evangelistic success was his commitment to organizing churches and training members to win souls.
  - Incredibly, Paul had likely never even visited Colossae, but it was nonetheless the fruit of his labor!
    - "We have no record of Paul ever visiting Colossae, which again tells us something about the effectiveness of his evangelistic strategy. First, it was Epaphras, a resident of Colossae (Col. 4:12), who brought the gospel to that city (Col. 1:7). But how was he converted? Most likely, it was in the mid-50s, when Paul was in nearby Ephesus and 'all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus' (Ac. 19:10; compare Ac. 20:31)." Qtly, Wed, par 1

- Philippians was written to "the saints" and the "elders and deacons" (Phil. 1:1); likewise his letter to the Colossians was addressed "to the saints and faithful brethren" (Col. 1:1, 2).
  - "When the New Testament speaks of "faithful brothers," they have a specific ministry in the church (see Eph. 6:21, Col. 4:7, 1 Pet. 5:12). So, it appears Paul is addressing not only the church members but also the church leaders in these cities" (vs. 7, 8)." Qtly, Thu, par 2

> The organization of the church at Jerusalem was to serve as a model for the organization of churches in every other place. Later in the history of the early church, when in various parts of the world many groups of believers had been formed into churches, the organization of the church was further perfected, so that order and harmonious action might be maintained. Every member was exhorted to act well his part. Each was to make a wise use of the talents entrusted to him. AA 91.1

## CONCLUSION

> [God] requires that order and system be observed in the conduct of church affairs today no less than in the days of old. He desires His work to be carried forward with thoroughness and exactness so that He may place upon it the seal of His approval. Christian is to be united with Christian, church with church, the human instrumentality co-operating with the divine, every agency subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all combined in giving to the world the good tidings of the grace of God. AA 96.1