



A Vision of the  
Resurrected Life  
from Philippians

*week five*

## Reading Philippians 2:1-4

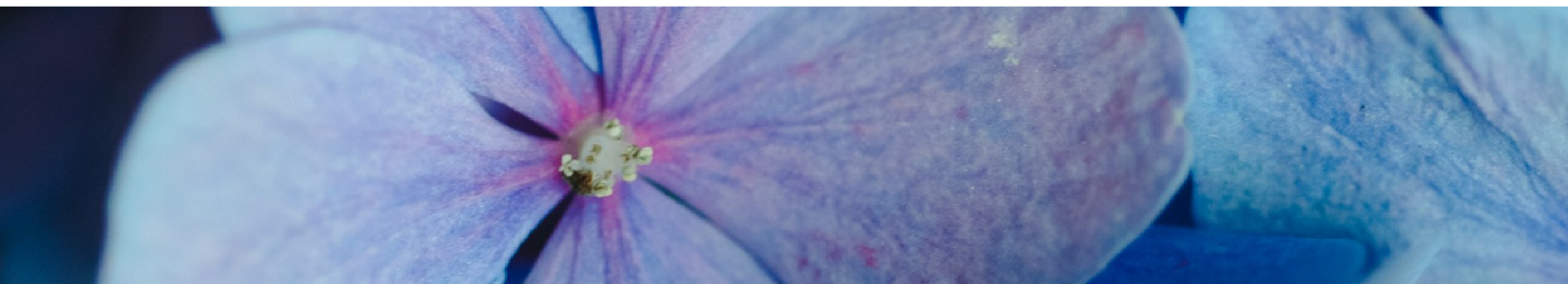
**1** Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, **2** then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. **3** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, **4** not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. (NIV)

### Festoon this passage...

**1 PAUSE TO BE STILL**  
Take a few deep breaths and calm your body and mind before you read the passage.

**2 CONSIDER**  
What images, questions, or musings come to your mind as you read the passage?

**3 REWRITE THE PASSAGE**  
Rewrite each line of passage in your own words.



## Reflection

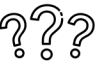
When I read Scripture, especially when reading passages that are instructive, sometimes I notice myself skipping to the end to “get the gist of what I’m supposed to be doing.” Sometimes that’s an efficient way to read the Bible, but other times reading this way can leave me with an incomplete understanding, or an emphasis on a particular detail instead of the actual “gist,” which is the essential meaning of the passage.

On first hurried reading, Philippians 2:1-4 might seem to be saying, “remember, good Christians put themselves down and go along with what others’ say, because if you don’t, then you’re being selfish and proud, and God doesn’t like that.” But maybe a more fair reading of this passage might sound like, “because you are connected to Jesus’s power of the resurrection and have known the comfort of his love, you have more freedom to understand others and recognize that their worth in Christ does not diminish yours.” If I felt a pull to value myself above others or look to my own interests, it could be related to losing sight of how God values me and cares for my needs

## Questions to Consider with God

When does it feel tricky to keep sight of how God values me and cares for my needs?

When I remember the encouragement of my unity with Jesus, how does this impact how I relate with others?



**HAVE THE SAME** *love*



## Reading Philipians 2:5-11

- 5** Adopt the attitude that was in Christ Jesus:  
**6** Though he was in the form of God,  
he did not consider being equal with God something to exploit.  
**7** But he emptied himself  
by taking the form of a slave  
and by becoming like human beings.  
When he found himself in the form of a human,  
**8** he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death,  
even death on a cross.  
**9** Therefore, God highly honored him  
and gave him a name above all names,  
**10** so that at the name of Jesus everyone  
in heaven, on earth, and under the earth might bow  
**11** and every tongue confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (CEB)

## While Reading...

- 1 PAUSE AND READ AGAIN**  
Slowly read through the passage multiple times.
- 2 SKETCH**  
Use the space provided to sketch images, symbols, or words that come to your mind as you read this passage.
- 3 PAUSE AND READ AGAIN**  
What image pulls at your heart as you reflect on this passage?



## Reflection

Many believe this collection of verses is one of the earliest Christian hymns; Words of praise put into a memorable cadence to aid in teaching and transmission from one setting to the next. In scholarly circles, this text is known as an encomium. A poem or speech written to honor someone. Our most common modern parallel is probably a eulogy where we highlight the best traits of the deceased person.

Many ancient encomiums contained hyperbole - exaggerations of the subject's positive (or sometimes negative) qualities. So how do we speak of the risen Christ? What might our personal encomium of Jesus sound like? And how might we even begin to practice hyperbole about the One who conquered death?

## Creative Reflection

Practice: Write a brief encomium for Jesus (think short speech or poem). Begin by choosing which characteristics of Christ you want to focus on. Next, make it memorable and repeatable. Consider using rhymes, alliteration, an image, acronyms, the points of the compass, or some other natural progression. Or perhaps build an association to a particular setting or sensory response.

God delights in the creative process. Have fun and enjoy this time reflecting on the greatness of our God who has given to Jesus the name above all names!



**Reading** Philipians 2:12–13

**12** Therefore, my loved ones, just as you always obey me, not just when I am present but now even more while I am away, carry out your own salvation with fear and trembling. **13** God is the one who enables you both to want and to actually live out his good purposes. (CEB)

**Reflection**

Has the obligation of verse twelve ever sounded a lot louder in your head than the “want to” of verse thirteen? We know what we are supposed to do, and we have often committed to it, but how do we move from what we have to do, to what we desire to do?

For a long time, I think I had God on the wrong list. I remember being admonished when I was young to make sure that God had the first part of my day: “Read the Bible first thing in the morning.” “How can you feed your physical self before you feed your spiritual self?” I thought I had to get 20 minutes of Bible reading done so that I could check it off before I could fill my cereal bowl. Even after I came to terms with eating breakfast and packing school lunches first, reading the Bible sometimes remained on the same list as scheduling dentist appointments and buying dryer sheets.

My other “list”—walking with a friend after her daughter goes to school, meeting my husband for lunch near the university where he teaches, connecting with a friend for coffee, has an entirely different feel. Sometimes it isn’t an actual written down list at all. They are the moments that give me life, the conversations that nourish me and shape me and keep me focused on what really matters. I don’t schedule time with these people out of a sense of obligation. None of them have boxes next to their names. I want to linger with these people, walk home the long way, get one more refill of our Diet Cokes, sip our lattes a little more slowly. I am better for being with them.

One of the most formative practices for me has been learning to put God on the other list. Spending time with him has become less like an item on a checklist, and more like a walk with a friend or getting coffee with someone who sees me and hears me—where the conversation meanders its way through both familiar and new stories and I walk away wanting to be who he’s called me to be. Obedience moves from obligation to desire.

Desire doesn’t erase obedience. We still engage in the practices of “carrying out our salvation,” but the end-goal of spiritual disciplines isn’t just a piece of paper with a bunch of boxes checked off. It is living life with God in a way that aligns our affections and desires with his, and being empowered by his Spirit to live in obedience to his will.

Let’s pray together that God does not end up on our dryer sheet list, or have a box next to his name. May his desires become our desires, and by the power of his Spirit, may we live the life he gave his life for us to live.

**While Reading...**

**1 PAUSE AND READ AGAIN**

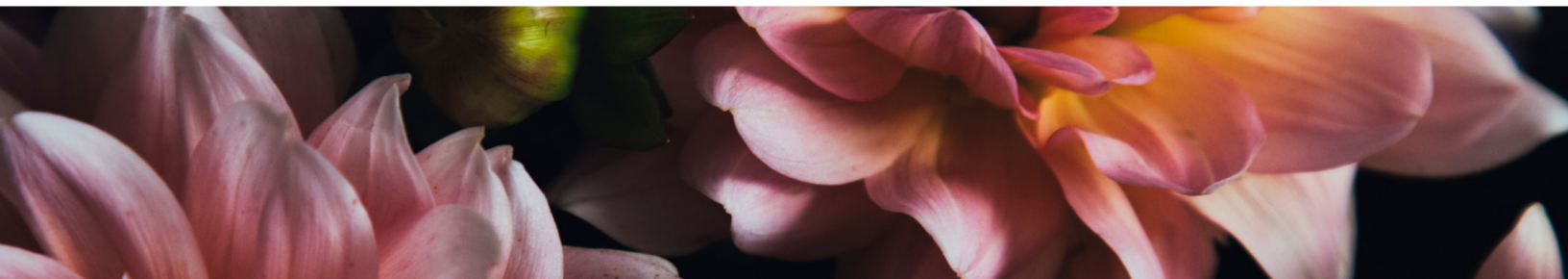
If you are able, read the passage out loud.

**2 CONSIDER**

What are some words or phrases that stand out to you as you read this passage?

**3 PAUSE AND PRAY**

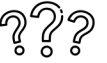
Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you as you read.



## Questions to Consider with God

Where would you like to ask God to change your “have to” to “want to” in your obedience to him?

Where have you already experienced the way God “enables you both to want and to actually live out his good purposes”? Spend some time in gratitude for how he is doing that in you.



## Creative Reflection

Choose a place where you like to go with a friend, and schedule a time on your “other list” to meet God there. Take a Bible app or a print out of a Scripture passage you want to read with him and ask him to help you hear something in his story that you haven’t noticed before. Tell him whatever you would talk to another friend about. Let the conversation go wherever it goes and walk away with a prayer that God will continue to align his desires with yours and enable you to live in obedience to his will.

**Reading** Philippians 2:14-16

**14** Do everything without grumbling or arguing, **15** so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky **16** as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. (NIV)

**Reflection**

It is impossible to recognize the brilliance of a star filled sky until you leave the urban haze and venture out into the quiet, rural places where nature still dominates the landscape. The complexity of our night’s sky is only visible to our eyes in these dark and distant spaces. There we can glimpse galaxies that pool and twist together. There we can catch a shower of meteors on their final journey. Still, we are only able to witness less than a speck of the beauty and movement of the space that envelopes our earthly home.

I want to want to shine like a star in the sky. I want to want to be an echo of God’s voice that first formed light from darkness and set the stars in their place. I want to want to be a part of a community that provides guidance and lights a path for those who need direction. I want to want to shine more brightly when darkness is at its most pervasive.

But instead, I choose to be frustrated with my friends. I choose to be irritated by strangers who I could love as neighbors. I choose to be angry for past hurts and reopen old wounds. I choose to complain under the guise of being helpful or concerned when I really just want to feel superior or justified in my actions. I choose to notice what is wrong and point it out instead of being a voice of encouragement. I choose to let my own anxiety drive me to demand that others take on responsibilities or blame that are not their’s to hold.

I want to want to be a star.

I want to emit a desire for collaboration and connection with others. I want to be a part of a galaxy that pierces darkness with color, depth, and movement. I want our community to be know as children of God by the love that we have for one another, by the way that we elevate reconciliation and compassion.

I pray that God will transform my desire and show me how to crave light instead of perpetuating darkness. Just as Moses’ face shone after he spent time in the presence of God, I pray that we will continue to draw closer to the source of all light in order to reflect his light.

We want to shine like stars.

*Those who impart wisdom will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.*

*Daniel 12:3*

**While Reading...****1 PAUSE AND READ AGAIN**

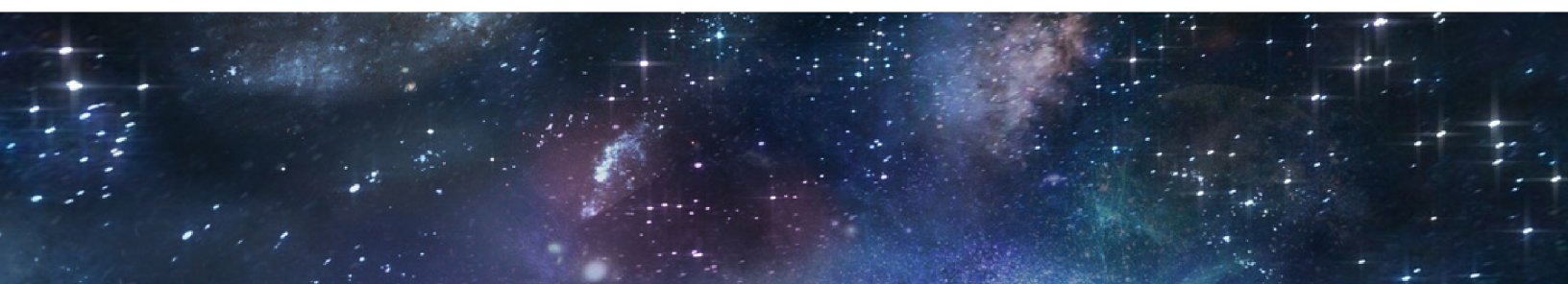
If you are able, read the passage out loud.

**2 CONSIDER**

What are some words or phrases that stand out to you as you read this passage?

**3 PAUSE AND PRAY**

Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you as you read.

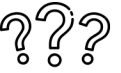




## Questions to Consider with God

Take a moment to compassionately reflect on your desires. What motivates your responses to others in the midst of frustrating situations?

In what ways is Jesus inviting you to shine like a star and emit his light? How can you practically take small steps to embrace this new way of responding to others?



## Creative Reflection

Stars shine brightest when they are closely connected to other stars. Constellations help guide travelers because of their clear prominence overhead.

It can be very difficult to alter the motivations and desires that drive our behaviors. It is important that we draw wisdom from Jesus' presence in others and connect ourselves to a community that can support our efforts to be more like a shining star.

I invite you to prayerfully chose a small group of people who you feel comfortable sharing your challenges and struggles around how you interact with others. Choose people who you admire for their embodiment of Jesus' love for others in the midst of frustrating situations. Ask them to help you move towards Jesus in this area.



**Reading** Philippians 2:17–18

**17** But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. **18** So you too should be glad and rejoice with me. (NIV)

**Reflection**

Life with Jesus and the way of the cross often sounds counterintuitive: the first will be last; to be great, become a servant; value others above yourself. And this idea from our passage today: Pour out your life like a drink offering and you will be glad. What does that mean, and how do we even do that?

Drink offerings were a part of the Old Testament sacrificial system that Paul, the writer of these verses, and other Jews in his first-century audience grew up with. Some of the first hearers of this letter may have grown up tending family vineyards, nurturing grapevines and pressing harvested fruit into wine, some of which may have become drink offerings at the temple. All of the animal sacrifices for sin and guilt required an accompanying grain/bread offering and a drink offering. So with every atoning sacrifice, bread and wine were offered in gratitude and praise for God's faithful provision, and in surrender—the belief that giving back and pouring out was the path to God's blessing.

We've been thinking through the second chapter of Philippians this week, reflecting on Paul's desire for the church to be united by the Spirit in love and compassion, valuing others above ourselves. Jesus, the ultimate example of humility and self-sacrificing love, took on the nature of a servant, loving us all the way to the cross. The language of being "poured out like a drink offering" is another way to see surrender and giving of ourselves as the path to joy and a fulfilling life. Paul wanted the church to know the surprising blessing that comes when we pour out our lives for the sake of Christ.

I wonder if it is important that God did not ask Israel to just toss a cluster of newly picked grapes onto the altar. Grapes can't be poured out. First, they have to become wine. Vineyard workers tended grapevines through growing seasons and paid attention to the soil and the sun and the rain. There was pruning and waiting and trusting God for what they could not control. After harvesting, the grapes were dried in the sun to produce sweeter wine. In the winepress the juice was pressed out of the fruit with just the right amount of pressure so that the seeds were not crushed, which would have made the wine bitter. (Bare feet were perfect for this!) The juice ran from the press into vessels beneath the floor where it fermented to become wine, then it was stored in clay jars until it was needed. After all of that, God asked these workers and families to take the best wine and pour it out before him on an altar. No safe-keeping, no hoarding, no second best. And the return? The faithful provision of God and the contentment and joy of knowing that surrender and trusting him was the safest and best place to live.

**Festoon this passage...**

- 1 PAUSE TO BE STILL**  
Take a few deep breaths and calm your body and mind before you read the passage.
- 2 CONSIDER**  
What images, questions, or musings come to your mind as you read the passage?
- 3 REWRITE THE PASSAGE**  
Rewrite each line of passage in your own words.



Somehow for Paul, and for us, the image of pouring our lives out as a drink offering is a beautiful picture of how we are called to live. We pour out, he pours in. The grape to wine illustration is not meant to be so linear that we get stuck wondering when we will become wine so that we can be poured out. In every season we offer to God what he is helping us become. We nurture our minds and hearts by abiding in Jesus and immersing ourselves in his words. We endure hard seasons of pruning and find trusting God a little bit easier on the other side. We are pressed into "wine" that can be poured out. I wonder if Paul was thinking about wine pressing when he said: "We are hard pressed on every side but not crushed ... so that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our body" (2 Corinthians 4:7-8,10).

Paul loved the people in the church at Philippi. His great joy was that they knew Christ. Their commitment to the way of Jesus didn't compare to an easier, less stressful way of living. He was willing to be "poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from [their] faith" because the joy it produced was far greater and more fulfilling than any other way of living.

Just in case you are thinking, "I get how Paul could say that, but I've never been shipwrecked or thrown into jail or started a church," here are a few ways I see my friends pouring out their lives: They make meals for their adult kids to come home for Sunday dinner. They give generously and grow gardens to feed the people in the neighborhood. They slow down to have conversations with their kids. They work behind the scenes to create space for us to gather and make amazing communion bread for us every week.

May we continue to know the joy of being poured out.

## Questions to Consider with God

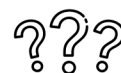
Wine fermentation in the first century only required three to five days in those underground vessels, so the idea of becoming "wine" that God can use doesn't mean we have to wait until we are really old. Every season, we offer what we have and God continues to pour back into our lives. If you are nine years old, or eighty, or somewhere in between, ask God to give you some ideas about how you can love or care for or serve someone this week.

Do you ever feel like you are being pressed to the point of feeling crushed? Talk to God about that and ask him to guard your heart so that you don't become bitter.

Jesus said that with the measure that we give, it will be given back to us.

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Luke 6:38).

Where have you experienced the joy of giving your life to others?



## Creative Reflection

Try to get this song stuck on repeat in your head today, and make it your prayer:

I want to know Christ  
and the power of his rising.  
Share in his suffering;  
conform to his death.

When I pour out my life  
to be filled with his Spirit,  
joy follows suffering  
and life follows death.



Examine your week with God. Use the following prompts to reflect on the previous week with God.

### **Reveal**

Ask God to open your eyes to where God was present throughout the week.

Ask God to deepen your awareness of yourself: your actions, your attitudes, your emotions.



### **Relish**

What gifts did you receive this week? What are you thankful for from the past week?



## Replay

Replay the events of the week with God.

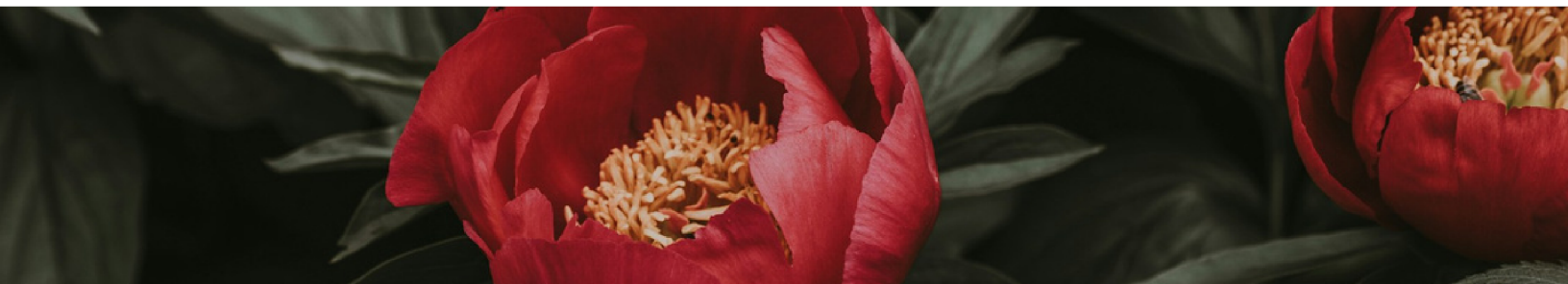
Pay attention to the moments when you experienced strong emotions. Notice where God was present.



## Remorse

With grace and compassion, reflect with God over the difficulties of the week.

What actions or attitudes did not allow you to be a light in the world?



## Resurrection

Ask God to give you direction on how to walk in resurrected life In the week ahead.



How are you embracing resurrected life?

*“Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 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.*

*In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

*Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed - not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence - continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.*

*Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.”*

Philippians 2:1-18