

#2 Philippi (published version)

GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY

People Taking Care of People

Welcome to [Philippi](#). We are by the flowing stream where it's said that [Lydia and the others](#) who gathered there to worship with her would have met Paul and first heard the Word. As our tour guide Taso has mentioned, this stream has been called "the Jordan of Europe", with the first believer in Europe being Lydia. That's a very exciting thing to consider during our time here in [Macedonia](#). And we've been concentrating on the different people who believed in the different spots.

Earlier today, we were in the city of Thessaloniki (biblical [Thessalonica](#)). At this time, we want to remember the people who believed both in Thessalonica and also here in Philippi. Understanding this is important because you had a mix of peoples who were in this part of the world. In [Thessalonica](#), you had the [chief Jewish center in Macedonia](#). But here in [Philippi](#), where we are today, it was basically a [Roman city](#). It was mainly Roman soldiers here and it was [Latin-speaking](#). It was as if the people in this city were actual [Italians](#).

[Lydia](#) was from [Asia Minor](#). She and the ladies who were with her, two that are mentioned in Epistle of Philippians are [Euodias](#) and [Syntyche](#). Paul exhorts them to be like-minded in the Lord.

Another great man who happened to be here in Philippi was [Epaphroditus](#), who is referenced in Philippians as [an apostle](#). Interestingly, he would have gone to Rome to be with [Paul](#), as it is stated there. Paul, at that time of his imprisonment, would have been through a shipwreck and would have lost all of his personal effects. It was Epaphroditus who came bearing the gifts of the believers here in Philippi to minister to Paul's wants. What were his wants? Everything he had, he had lost, and he was in prison. He did have some physical

needs. Epaphroditus, in going to Rome, exposed himself to danger of some kind that imperiled his life. He was willing to risk it all, gamble his own life, in order to be there with Paul and meet his need at that special time.

The church in Philippi was probably the most beloved of all the churches that Paul founded. The people here (unlike Thessalonica or Corinth, which had some wealth) were not wealthy. Thessalonica was a mercantile city because it was halfway between the Adriatic Sea and the Black Sea, on the Roman road called the Via Egnatia, a part of which we saw earlier today in Kavala (biblical Neapolis). The Thessalonians had some wealth. But in Philippi, the people didn't have a lot. Yet they were extremely generous and lavish in their giving.

An interesting thing, thinking about what's written in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, is that Paul exhorts both the Corinthians and the Philippians (called "the churches of Macedonia") to give. Corinth was not in Macedonia, but in Achaia, what we would today call southern Greece. So it was in Greece, the part of the world where we are this week, that the collection for the saints was organized.

The collection for the saints was something that Paul and Peter agreed on after the Jerusalem Council. They acknowledged Paul at that time to be the one with the apostleship to the uncircumcision, and Peter to be the one with the apostleship to the circumcision. Paul had his associates, like Barnabas; and Peter had his associates. The two groups were working different fields of evangelism.

But there was an agreement among them at that time to "remember the poor". "The poor" were not the poor everywhere. This was a specific reference to the destitute in Jerusalem. The Jewish Christians of Jerusalem did not have much. They were subject to famine more often in that area, and they had financial difficulties over a period of time. It was agreed that the Gentile believers in these new areas would express their thanksgiving by making a contribution to help the poor saints in Jerusalem. Paul organized that collection starting here in Macedonia with the Philippians and the Thessalonians.

They organized it in such a way that on Paul's third missionary journey, everywhere that they stopped, they would take a [collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem](#). In Acts 20 it talks about the various [men who accompanied him on his journey back](#), at the end of the third itinerary. They organized things in such a way that they had a responsible person from each of those places that was carrying the monies from there. (Paul was not carrying the monies because it wasn't a contribution for Paul.) [Sopater of Berea](#) was one of them. He's the only Berean mentioned by name in the New Testament. We were in Berea yesterday, out there in peach country and on a beautiful mountaintop. Also accompanying them were [Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica](#). [Luke](#) would have been here with Paul in [Philippi](#), and then on their way back to [Jerusalem](#), they continued on their journey with the collection to [Troas](#) (we'll be in that part of the world later on in this tour).

The [collection](#) was going to [Jerusalem, not Macedonia](#), yet the people here had such giving hearts though they didn't have much. But they wanted to share everything that they had, just like Epaphroditus, who was willing to risk his very life in order to make sure that Paul had what he needed.

It's a great inspiration to be here at this spot and to be thinking not only about [Paul](#) and [Silas](#) and [Timothy](#) and [Luke](#), who were the ones who initially organized it, but then others who took it up from there. [Lydia and her household](#) believed here in [Philippi](#), and then [the jailer and his household](#) who believed. These are the first records in the New Testament of [entire households believing](#). It happened here at [Philippi](#).

It's exciting to think about what happens when we take the Word personally, when we take it to ourselves. Then we want to share it with others and do whatever we can to take it farther, take it the next step down the road so that it can live from generation to generation.

We're having a great time as a tour group here, getting to know one another and supporting one another, loving up on one another. It's great. We've talked about the word for [hospitality](#) (in Greek it's the "[love of strangers](#)") and how our tour guide Taso has been loving to us

and we've been loving to him. As we go out and as we share our hearts and our lives with people, it touches them. That's God. That's why being "given to hospitality" is one of the things that we are commissioned to do, we are expected to do, and that is [a means for the love of God to touch another's hearts](#). That *philia*, the human love, the friendship. It's not just, "Oh, okay, yeah, we go to the same place at the same time." No, it's that we really [care about one another](#). We [take care of one another](#). We support one another. That happens through our example.

It's an exciting time to be alive and to have an opportunity like we do here. Let's do more of that on this tour.